

The Shapinsay Sound

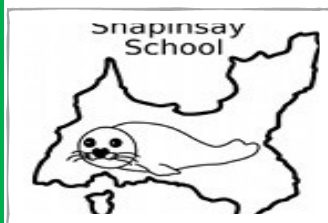


LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.
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We had a traditional end of term, with the P7 soaking where once again the P7s were soaked when they least expected it by their friends, families and all the school staff.... They took it in great spirit though and we wish **Kaidence, Rhiannon, Einar** and **Guy** all the best as they move on to Kirkwall Grammar School.

This year our school improvement plan focused on French, Formative Assessment and Outdoor Learning.

In French we now have a clearer progression, with children from Nursery upwards learning the language. All teaching staff have been involved in the "Tapestry project" which has enabled us to improve our ongoing assessment, in turn improving learning for the children. Our outdoor learning target has not made as much progress as we would have liked, although we have worked with children, families and people from the community to explore what we would like in our outdoor space.

As we move into the new school year we will have 4 main targets, some a continuation from last session. Our French target continues, but we will also be starting to look at the second foreign language (all schools in Scotland must teach 2 languages other than the mother tongue by 2020).

Our outdoor learning target is also ongoing, and I am hopeful that by the time this is published we will have our fence to allow us to start planning our new area at the front of the school. We will also be looking at other areas in conjunction with other community users.

In Health and Wellbeing we will be looking at creating skills progressions for areas other than PE, and how we can moderate this. We will also have a maths focus, tying in with current work being done by the Numeracy Hub in Orkney.

We look forward to the start of the new term in August – the school opens to children on Tuesday 23rd.

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SHAPINSAY
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The Shapinsay Sound

From the Chair

by Sheila Garson

August 2016

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We've had two groups of visitors during July. Our first visitors were a group of staff and board members from development trusts in the Western Isles on a fact finding tour organised by Community Energy Scotland. The second group was Highlands and Islands Enterprise staff from Caithness and Sutherland. Both groups were keen to explore the impact of the turbine as well as our response to curtailment and the BIG HIT project. They were also interested in and impressed by the transport service we provide and the innovative island sewing project.

While such visits are quite a bit of work, it is really good to see that there is so much interest in what we have achieved here in Shapinsay. For me it was also an opportunity to look at our achievements with fresh eyes and to see that for an island with a population of around 300 we really have made a difference. While there are always things that could be better and it is very easy to find fault, folk looking from outside our island are hugely impressed with what we have here and we should feel proud of this too.

We should also be proud that our peedie island still has an Agricultural and a Horticultural show. These two events now happen on the same day, which this year falls on Tuesday August 9th. The Cattle Show, run by the Shapinsay Agricultural



Association, showcases the best of the islands cattle, sheep, horses, poultry, dogs and pets. While it may be a small show the level of competition and quality of stock is very high. The Shapinsay Horticultural Association Annual Show includes classes for house plants, cut flowers, fruit and veg, industrial work, arts and crafts, baking, dairy produce and preserves, photographs and a children's class.

On Show day, August 9th, the Boathouse will be open from 12noon to 3pm. Not only is it a chance for you to see this new facility, but the island sewing project will also be on display. There will be an opportunity for you to be part of this project, by adding your own stitch or two to the big island picture.

It seems particularly fitting that the decorated squares, which make up this huge aerial image of the island should be part of Show day. Both the squared landscape it depicts and the Agricultural Association date from the mid 19th century when the then laird, David Balfour, introduced a programme of Agricultural Improvement throughout the island. This resulted in the land being laid off in the grid pattern we know today and to the formation to the Agricultural Association, which encouraged excellence. Both continue to be important parts of the islands identity today

From mud hut to all mod cons at Millbank!

By Lynne Collinson



New Shapinsay resident Kate Fereday Eshete has swapped her mud hut home in Ethiopia for the luxuries of running water and an indoor shower as she settles down at Millbank to write a book about her long-running love affair with Africa's oldest independent country. But she will still be commuting about every six months between here and northern Ethiopia where she and her husband Asenake run Empress Mentewab School, providing a high-quality education for children from poor families. Kate, who was brought up in Orkney, has been involved with the poor and needy in Ethiopia for 22 years. She made her first visit to the country in 1994 to help the street children and in

1998 she set up The Kindu Trust (www.kindustrust.org) for needy Ethiopian youngsters. She went on to start the school - a non-profit social enterprise - which has 48 pupils. Kate and Asenake have two adopted children who were unrelated abandoned babies. Menen (a girl) and Tom will be 11 this year and Kate is sure they will love visiting Shapinsay in due course - she can't wait to show them the island. If the Fereday name sounds familiar, that's because Kate's father Dr Ray Fereday taught at the old Kirkwall Grammar School from 1967 to 1984. He was principal teacher of History and began a Local Studies Project for 2nd year History pupils in the 1970s. When the Broch of Lingro at Scapa was destroyed by farming in 1981, Dr Fereday developed and extended the Local Studies Project. After Dr Fereday's retirement, the Project later became the renowned Fereday Prize run by the Orkney Heritage Society, encouraging pupils to investigate and record Orkney's rich local history and culture before it is lost. Today, Dr Fereday is 84 years old and living in Devon, but the annual competition is as popular as ever, with at least one pupil on Shapinsay about to enter the latest round.



As well as being closer to Devon than Ethiopia is for visits to her elderly parents, Kate can easily reach Kirkwall where her identical twin sister Mary Eunson lives. "Mary suffers from MS, so it's good to be near her to help in any way I can," Kate says. At school they were known as 'The Fereday Twins'. Kate loves walking round the island. "In Ethiopia I'd do a 20-mile round trip on foot to go shopping in the nearest town. Rural Ethiopians are great long-distance walkers, and I've become one. At the Millennium I trekked over 500 miles with a donkey across the northern Ethiopian Highlands, passing through areas where no white person had ever been before. Next year I hope to enter the Hoy Half Marathon, so, to prepare, I'll be making full use of Shapinsay's excellent gym, and



jogging along the lanes."

When it comes to writing, it's a skill which runs in the family. Kate's father researched and wrote *The Orkney Balfours 1747-99*, which was published in 1990, and Kate is about to begin her own writing project: a memoir of her adventures in Ethiopia. "It's a very beautiful and little-known country," she says, "I hope the book will entertain and educate readers as well as raise money for The Kindu Trust and Empress Mentewab School."

Kate first came on a trip to Shapinsay as a 5th year KGS pupil to be shown round Balfour Castle in May 1978, and she's surprised that she's ended up living here exactly 38 years later: "I got a place here by chance - I put my name down for a house in the North Isles and I'm really pleased it turned out to be Shapinsay - it's a very special island that folk often overlook".



With no leopards, hyenas or venomous spiders and snakes to look out for when putting pen to paper (she prefers pen and ink to a keyboard for her first draft), Kate hopes to get on well with her book in such a peaceful spot. Being passionate about literature and writing, she's also interested in having a writing group on the island where people can encourage one another and develop their skills. 'Last winter I was in Finstown and a member of the Stromness Writing Group, but it's just too far to go to SWG meetings now that I live on Shapinsay.'

Anyone who's interested in forming a writing group should contact her at catherineferedayeshete@hotmail.com For more information about Kate's school, which relies entirely on donations, see her website <http://kateferedayeshete.net/>



Visit to Palestine

Part 2

On Thursday afternoon and evening we had the main celebrations with every member of the Nassar family speaking, lots of speakers from different countries, Brass for Peace and Grenzenlos (which means Without Borders) from Germany playing, traditional Palestinian Dabke dance groups performing - one made up of volunteers who came to the celebrations and the other one a professional group from Beit Sahour. A reception followed while Grenzenlos kept on playing.

On Friday we went on a trip to Nablus, the fourth oldest city in the world (it used to be the fifth but since Damascus is no longer counted, it's become the fourth). We visited Joseph's well church, Balata Refugee Camp, Nablus city centre, Human Supporters Association and the Samaritans village on the mount of Gerizim. We travelled to the airport that evening and travelled overnight (and the following day to get to Orkney!!).

The Holy Land was a different experience altogether. For those of you who might not be aware, the state of Israel was founded on May 15th, 1948 on much of the land that was known as Palestine. About 80% of Palestinians became refugees fleeing to West Bank, Gaza and surrounding countries. In 1967 Israel occupied West Bank and Gaza during the Six Day War. Palestinians living in Israel have Israeli passports but they complain of being treated like second-class citizens. Close to 5 million live in occupied West Bank or Gaza where they have no political representation.

I've never been to an occupied country before so security advice and soldiers with big guns everywhere were all new to me. The idea of checkpoints, people not having permission to build on their own land or be connected to the water or electricity supply, it being illegal to repair potholes in the roads is something I have never encountered before. It deeply angered and saddened me.

However I loved the people - admittedly I met mostly Palestinians. They were incredibly warm and hospitable. It was interesting to meet a great variety of opinions on the future of Palestine and its people among Palestinians themselves - from despondency and hoping to maybe keep the status quo but expecting to go down the same route as the First Nations in the States did through non-violent resistance to seeing one single Israeli-Palestinian state as the only way forward to finally not seeing any possibility of working with Muslims (the latter was from a Palestinian Christian taxi driver from Jerusalem taking us to the airport). It was refreshing to see people's great Christian faith keeping them going and sustaining them through the direst of circumstances. Many passages from the Bible, songs and poems suddenly gained a far deeper meaning than they did in my comfortable life.

The most touching moment of all was at the end of the main celebrations. Grenzenlos were singing all the well-known tunes in English so many joined in. Near the end they started singing 'We shall overcome'. As we went through all the verses together, that was the time when we started stacking chairs and clearing up after the event. It felt as if we were building this peaceful future together, walking and working hand in hand even though it was such a menial task. It was an incredibly powerful moment.

I don't know whether it was a life-changing trip but it certainly deeply touched me. Peace, human rights, healing of relationships between the victims and the oppressors are all very close to my heart and I found all of those issues there. This will certainly influence the way I pray for the area.



Visit to Palestine

by Julia Meason

In May I've been in Palestine and would like to share some of my experiences in the Holy Land with you. A disclaimer to start with: these are my personal experiences, what I've seen and heard and not an official view of any body, charity or church.

A good few months ago I read in one of Church of Scotland's newsletters about the possibility of going to the centenary celebrations of the Tent of Nations and thought it would be a fantastic opportunity. I always wanted to go to the Holy Land and going with the Church of Scotland seemed the safest option considering the volatile situation in the country – and an opportunity of a lifetime.

I had heard of the Tent of Nations through the World Mission Council of the Church and was interested in getting to know the place firsthand. At Tent of Nations, their mission is to build bridges between people, and between people and the land. They bring different cultures together to develop understanding and promote respect for each other and our shared environment. To realise this mission, they run educational projects at Daher's Vineyard, their organic farm, located in the hills southwest of Bethlehem, Palestine. They offer workcamps and volunteer opportunities; they run Children's Summer Camps and a Women's Empowerment Project, and they welcome groups of visitors of all shapes and sizes.

Their situation is very hard. In 1991 the whole area was ear marked for annexation by the Israeli authorities and therefore land declared state land. Nassar family were lucky – they actually have the original documents from the Ottoman period proving they own the land – many don't have this luxury and are expelled from their land. The court however didn't accept their claim and 25 years on they're still in courts fighting for their land. Since they don't have permission to build, they have tents and caves. All of those structures are currently under demolition orders. The case is now with the Supreme Court which decided to refer it to the highest military court. They're due to hear this summer whether they won or lost the case.

I was selected as one of three representing the Church of Scotland. Sheila, an elder from Edinburgh, Alistair, a minister in Stirling, and I travelled together from Edinburgh.

We went first to Jerusalem where we stayed the night and attended the Church of Scotland service at St Andrew's church. In the afternoon we had some time to go and explore by ourselves so the three of us set off for the Old City – first by ourselves, then with a tour guide. In the evening we were taken by taxi to Bethlehem Hotel where we stayed until the end of our stay. We met a few other members of the various groups staying at the hotel and commuting daily to the Tent of Nations 7.5km away.



From Monday to Thursday we travelled daily by bus at 8 am to the farm – or more accurately to the first roadblock on the road leading to the farm. From there we walked for about 10 minutes to the Tent of Nations. At 9am we had morning celebrations full of inspirational poems, quotes, passages from the Bible, singing both in Arabic and English, prayers etc. After that we all set off for various fields where we watered vines, weeded around the plants etc. I went to two vineyards but not to the olive tree field – the last day, when I wanted to go there, we were asked to stay in the compound helping prepare for the main celebrations. Lunch was had at the farm, after which small group meetings and workshops followed. I

tried to take part in a variety of workshops: Monday – non-violent communication, Tuesday - Bible study of Naboth's vineyard and Wednesday - silent walk. Before the evening meal there were optional activities. On Monday we attended a concert by Brass for Peace, a German-based registered non-profit organization promoting peace in the Holy Land through brass music.

Every year two volunteers from Germany come to Bethlehem to work with youngsters teaching them music. After the evening meal we heard the story of the Tent of Nations from Daoud Nassar, its charismatic leader. On Tuesday evening I attended a foot massage session which was great fun and very relaxing (even though it hurt at one point!). After the evening meal we were invited to the first wine tasting session since 1936 when most of the vine bushes were uprooted by attackers and never replaced until 2013.

Kirk News



Shapinsay Show is upon us! We're all looking forward to it. All the more so as this year the kirk is going to have a Hospitality Tent at the show! We're going to be giving out bread and wine – in communion quantities (!) so a morsel of bread and a tiny glass of either wine or juice (during communions we serve both). We're also going to have a display to show you how communion paraphernalia have changed over the years.

There's going to be a few mystery objects for you to guess the potential use of and a myth busters quiz. In addition to that you'll have a chance of seeing a few pictures from events either happening at the kirk or in which the kirk takes part.

There's going to be kirk volunteers there you can ask questions of. We're so looking forward to welcoming you at the Shapinsay Kirk Hospitality Tent! If you would like to join us for communion in the kirk, the next opportunity is a couple of days before the show – on Sunday the 7th August. You'd be more than welcome to come along then or indeed any Sunday!

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

Poem

by Helen Davis

Where My Cat Sits

Where my cat sits, there sit I,
Reading emails,
Drinking tea,
Mopping spills,
Paying bills,
And fretting daily over every
Line that fails to scan or rhyme.

Where I sit, my cat sits too,
Licking bottom,
Grooming fur,
Meditating,
Elevating
Every chore into a purr-fect
Solo feline pantomime.



Garden Notes from Old School

by Karen Evans



Looking at some of my seedlings recently I came across a young birch tree. I was remembering back to when it was sown and amazed at how much it had grown. Looking at some photos taken in August 2013 I realised just how much the garden here has changed.

The following extracts are adapted from an article I wrote for The Cottage Garden Society newsletter some time ago. Every year, I order seeds from The Cottage Garden Society. When the seeds arrived last year there was a note on the bottom of my order form which said "I don't remember seeing a tree, apart from a couple of scrubby sycamores, anywhere in Orkney, so good luck with the birch (seeds)!!" This got me thinking, when is a shrub a tree or more to the point in Orkney, when is a tree a shrub?

We moved to our island home in November 2011; a pretty bleak time of year, wet with easterly winds that make the front door whistle and sing. The garden was asleep and many shrubs were leafless but I recognised hebes, escallonia, fuchsia, olearia, elders and the ubiquitous willow. There were some however that I couldn't put a name to so resigned myself to await spring and new leaf growth that I hoped I would recognise.

In the meantime, much to my husband's horror, I set about savaging the very top-heavy willow in order to promote fresh growth from the base and severely cutting back the elder. The bare framework of a mature elder is actually very appealing in winter; there's something about the gnarled branches that tell a story from times gone by.

In spring the following year it was time to tackle the hebe hedge. Hebe grows so well here; it provides a windbreak and due to the relatively mild (in terms of temperature) winters, it flowers virtually all year round. However, there is a difference between an effective windbreak and a mass of overgrown, twisted branches, and in any case, I want to see the sea from my kitchen window!

Now that the established planting was much reduced and tamed, I had some useable space to plant some of the hundreds of plants that I brought here from my previous home. I was not going to rush in to anything because gardening here is a big challenge and it's important to understand the seasons and weather patterns. The winters generally are not cold, no severe frosts, but there are very strong winds and days are short, in contrast to long summer days when at times it never really gets dark but the average temperature is a mere 15C. One big shock was the soil; this is a small island and I had assumed the soil would be sandy and free-draining: I couldn't have been more wrong! Clay sits on top of bedrock so during the wet winters there are areas of garden that lie under water for several weeks.

Over the last three years I have begun to understand the garden and learned how to use the different areas to best advantage: existing shrubs and walls provide shelter for my Hellebores, Erythroniums and various Trilliums; levels have been raised with grit to plant Pittosporum, Ceanothus, Broom and Ozothamnus rosmarinifolius and the wet areas have become a home for Iris sibirica, Trollius, Astilbe, Geums and Primulas. There is so much more still to do!

The mystery of the unidentified shrubs revealed itself in the spring of 2012 with new leaf growth. The 'shrubs' were in fact Whitebeams; they have been here many, many years, produce a lovely crop of berries for the blackbirds each year and have reached the heady height of between six and eight feet tall! So in conclusion, my Birch will never be more than a shrub but I look forward to enjoying its beauty for many years to come.



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake



hoto credit Ben Andrew – rspb-images.

The Orkney Stoat Invasion

Stoats were first seen in Orkney in 2010 and this small, feisty predator has since spread across Mainland and the linked islands of Burray and South Ronaldsay, becoming a major cause for concern for Orkney's native wildlife. Although stoats are commonly found on the Scottish mainland they are an unwelcome invader to the isles.

It is currently unknown how stoats first arrived in Orkney. It is possible that they were unintentionally transported as 'stowaways' in supplies of hay or straw, or perhaps deliberately as a method of controlling rabbits. Unfortunately, the stoat population has increased rapidly since 2010. Stoats are accomplished and versatile predators and have thrived on the abundance of prey available to them in Orkney. In the absence of their usual predators such as fox and badger, and with a wide variety of potential prey, stoats are likely to continue to rise dramatically in numbers, at the cost of the islands' fragile biodiversity.

This is very bad news for Orkney's wildlife, and the tourism industry which relies upon it. Their presence threatens the status of some of the Orkneys best loved native species, including the endemic Orkney vole, and the endangered hen harrier and short-eared owl which rely on voles as prey. Stoats also pose a threat to the many species of other ground nesting birds in Orkney including waders such as lapwing and curlew and seabirds such as arctic tern and puffin.



Lapwing and hen harrier are two of Orkneys species that may suffer as a result of stoat presence on the islands.

Both pictures: Andy Hay rspb-images.

As stoats are very good swimmers (they can swim up to 3km), or in years when there is a lot of movement of fodder around the islands, there is a chance that they may invade some of the other islands in the archipelago.

Shapinsay, as one of the closest islands to Mainland could easily be reached by stoats and we would encourage anyone that thinks they see a stoat to report it as soon as possible to Scottish Natural Heritage at north@snh.gov.uk or call the Kirkwall office on 01856 886163. Please also be vigilant if bringing fodder over to the island, in case you have a stoat as an unwanted stowaway within.

Scottish Natural Heritage, in partnership with other interested parties including ourselves are currently developing and seeking funding for a project which aims to address the threat posed by stoats to Orkney's wildlife. SNH will be drawing on the experience of independent stoat experts, and the Hebridean Mink Project to bring together a project that gives the best chance of protecting Orkneys native wildlife from the threat posed by stoats. In the meantime, continued vigilance to prevent spread to new islands is essential.