

# Round & About

Mull & Iona

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MUILE AGUS EILEAN IDHE

Volume 27 No. 8 February 2021

## Silver Linings

News, Views and Reviews, Happenings, Events and Occasions.  
Providing a living snapshot of life on Mull, Iona  
and surrounding areas since 1991

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# Round & About

News, Views and Reviews, Events & Occasions for Mull and Surrounding Areas

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Janna Greenhalgh



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## Editor's Comments

Welcome to our February issue, with 'Silver Linings' as our theme. We have some news from the medical practice about the roll-out of Covid-19 vaccinations (p.5), and positive vibes from the Mull Highland Games Committee (p.6), plus many other contributions, including on p.12 the first in our new series of stories by Felicity Hansen of Dervaig. Mull Community Council has seen some changes, with a return to Billy McClymont as convenor, while Andrena Duffin has been co-opted back in and takes on the role of secretary again.

A decision looks imminent on the way forward with Craignure pier - Argyll & Bute Council is currently running an online consultation (see page 5) regarding both medium and long term solutions. There is a clear preferred option for medium term, which is to 'do the minimum' as opposed to adding an extension. There is still time until 7th February to make your voice heard if you have a different view! Now read on, Janna

- .....
- The theme for our March issue will be 'RESILIENCE'
- Send us your thoughts/ stories/ photos on that or any other subject!
- .....

*Front cover: This photo was taken by Derek Feast of Gruline while walking his dogs along the Ba river on 14th January 2021*

**EDITORIAL POLICY:** I do my best to ensure that all articles and reports are accurate, non-libellous, and not of a personal or offensive nature. However, from time to time, errors do occur and for this I apologise. R&A exercises the right to edit articles submitted for publication and wishes to confirm that views expressed in Round & About are not necessarily those of the editor.

### Subscriptions:

Royal Mail continues to increase postal rates with alarming vigour, forcing us to increase our overseas subscription prices as of this month. For UK subscribers, we have taken the decision to retain the price of £35 annually for the time being, however please be aware that copies will from now on always be sent by second class mail, so may take a few days longer to arrive.

### THE RED BOOK telephone directory:

We have decided in light of Covid-19 to delay the next edition of the Red Book until 2022. This means that classified entries and ads will remain the same - effectively giving those businesses with an ad an extra year of advertising free of charge. However, there will be an update of **domestic phone numbers only** in March 2021 in time for Easter - if you have an entry to add or change please let us know by **6th February 2021**:  
redbook@roundandaboutmull.co.uk

**Data Protection legislation** - to comply with the new GDPR, please make sure that you have the permission of everyone pictured in any photo you submit to R&A.

**Early Deadline** for next issue: 16th February

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## Covid-19 Vaccine for Mull & Iona

We are all looking forward to the Covid vaccination campaign starting on Mull. Hopefully by the time you read this we will have started on the first priority group of the over 80's. We have already vaccinated some of the most vulnerable as well as health and social care staff. This will be one of the biggest public health programmes ever undertaken on the Island and we plan to deliver this at speed as soon vaccines become available. In total we have over 5000 vaccinations to complete including first and second doses. In the last week in January we will take delivery of our first 200 Astra Zeneca Covid-19 vaccines (enough for all the over 80s on Mull & Iona). This is a bit later than other areas and has been a little frustrating for all of us. We really can not complain as all the efforts we all have taken on Mull and Iona have paid dividends in the absence of cases on the Island.

Though the Mull and Iona Medical Group will be taking the lead on this vaccination programme, it will be a team effort of all the health care professionals on Mull. The Community Nurses will be doing the housebound in the first cohort and all the staff who are trained as vaccinators will have a role. Our staff in the surgeries will be exceptionally busy telephoning our patients to arrange their appointments. We have also had lots of offers from volunteers to help with the programme which is much appreciated.

There have been some concerns raised about the change to a 12 week spacing of the vaccine. This was introduced to allow a larger population coverage in the early stages of the campaign. There is evidence from the Astra Zeneca trials that this delay actually increases protection to over 90% in comparison to the 60% protection from the 3 week second injection. The Astra Zeneca vaccine is much easier to store and deliver than the Pfizer vaccine. We fully support this decision by the Chief Medical Officers and would encourage all of you that are invited to take advantage of the Covid vaccination programme.

*Dr Erik Jespersen*

## COVID Vaccination in Argyll and Bute

NHS Highland is continuing with its vaccination programme across Argyll and Bute. We have now started to vaccinate people in our community aged 80 and above, and this element of the programme is being led by GPs and their local teams. Many of our GPs already have vaccination clinics scheduled, with more to be added, and we would remind patients that there is no need for them to contact their Practice as they will contact you when it's your time to get the vaccine.

Joanna Macdonald, Chief Officer for Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership, said: "I am really pleased that we are continuing with the vaccination programme in Argyll and Bute and I would like to thank all of our staff, including GPs and their teams, for their hard work and commitment in ensuring that we are moving forward with the vaccinations as quickly as we can. We are currently working our way through the priority groups as per the national guidance and I am delighted to say that our vaccination teams have already visited all care homes in Argyll and Bute, which is really good news. We are now also starting to vaccinate people aged 80 and over and your GP will be in touch when it's your turn to be seen."

## Future plans for Craignure Pier: Consultation

Argyll and Bute Council is considering options to secure the future of Craignure ferry terminal and anyone interested, whether a Mull resident, business or visitor, is being encouraged to give their thoughts through a consultation.

Plans being developed will cover not just the long-term future of the pier, but also what needs to be done now to make sure it can continue to operate in the medium term.

The pier was built in the mid 60s and is now coming to the end of its useful operating life. Over time, passenger and vehicle numbers using the terminal have increased. This means the landside arrangements, for example passenger access, vehicle and bus marshalling, need to be re-assessed.

Ways to improve reliable seven-day overnight berthing at the pier also need to be considered, as does the likelihood that larger ferries will be deployed onto the route in the future.

Policy Lead for Roads and Infrastructure Services, Councillor Rory Colville, said: "We are already working on long-term plans for Craignure terminal and have four options to consider. There are also options for how we can keep the pier operating in the medium term. There are a couple of presentations on our website which set out both the long and medium-term options. We would then like you to answer a few questions that will allow us to gauge feedback on both."

The consultation can be found on our website:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/consultations/craignure-pier-consultation>  
*Argyll & Bute Council*

## R&A Comment on Craignure Pier

We would like to encourage as many folk as possible to take part in the consultation mentioned above - there is not much time, it closes on Sunday 7th February, however this is extremely important for the future of the whole of Mull & Iona. A decision must be taken imminently on an 'interim solution' for Craignure pier, but perhaps more importantly, options are being put forward for a brand-new pier with terminal building and marshalling area.

Many of you will recall that in 2019 the council held consultation 'drop-ins' around the island at which the findings of the STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) for Craignure pier were presented. As I recall it, all of the options were widely criticised by islanders, mainly on the grounds that the proposed developments were unnecessarily large and intrusive in Craignure village. Mull & Iona Ferry Committee and Mull Community Council both favoured an extension to the existing pier. This option is only considered as an interim solution in the presentations which form a basis for the online consultation - and is then discarded in favour of "doing the minimum" and having a new pier in place by 2027. This seems unrealistic to me, especially as a funding source has yet to be identified for a new pier, and I fear we will be stuck with the status quo for many years if a pier extension is not undertaken. The cost of an extension, by the way, is estimated at around a quarter of that for a new pier. The reasoning is that it's a waste of money to invest in this for a period of time which is estimated at maximum 15 years. However, this option could last a lot longer.

What do you think? I urge you to take a good look at the 4 options for a new pier - 3 of which by the way are based on those proposed by the STAG, and all of which seem pretty huge to me! Do we really need such a development? *JCG*

# Dave Turner

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## Mull Highland Games 2021

2020 will be a year to remember – and forget. The vaccination is on its way and will enable a way out. Concurrently I do believe that we need to exert a degree of control over events. We don't need to wait to be completely released from restrictions; we can plan (safely) now for the future.

While it is unlikely that the Mull Highland Games will take place as part of the Scottish Games circuit - many Games have already cancelled - we as a Games committee intend to hold an event on 22nd July this year; come what may. **A very much local event in the tradition of Highland Games.**

Inspiration for this has actually come from the past. During lockdown one of the Games Association members passed some of his time researching different Games. He has passed on results relating to Mull for our further research. Perhaps the most striking fact is that the first 'recorded' Games took place in Tobermory in 1873. This is a massive 50 years earlier than we believed.

We had been planning to celebrate 100 years in 2023; we will then be actually celebrating 150 years. It is perhaps likely that some form of Games predated 1873. (*Perhaps the ancient remains in Oban were those of prehistoric overseas competitors heading for Mull - Who knows?*)

Anyway more of the research and history later. The inspiration mentioned comes from the programme of the second Games in 1874; see summary opposite. In those days the Games were 'local' with competitors and spectators from all parts of Mull, Ardnamurchan and Morven. There would have been few if any visitors from other than near-by islands at that time. Islanders were then isolated by geography and lack of communications. It is also striking – or perhaps not considering our location and likely fishing dependence then - that the Games included Boat Racing.

This year we intend an event that will comply with likely social distancing and other restrictions. It will be a 'local event'. Initial thoughts look to provide, as far as is possible, elements of Highland Games. We are, for example, looking at demonstration / instructional events and in this we will be supported by Brian Robin, a regular former competitor and current judge. This is an opportunity for locals to gain some expertise in the techniques of Games. We may also include a junior event? Track events will also be a part of the day and coaching may also be available. Even in the event of restrictions similar to today we could do a compilation of videoed events that complied with restrictions. It could then be put together as an 'online day'. We will need some people conversant with media, film and production. As well, and importantly, we would like ideas as to what could be included? Ideas from across the island and from every part. Local Highland crafts - displays and/or demonstrations? It may be that we could also incorporate boat racing of some kind? **Your ideas please.**

To bring this off in an inclusive and effective way we need input and volunteers. As well as ideas we are also looking for volunteers from all age groups who are perhaps interested in taking part.

I would like to have a firmer idea as to what the day could comprise by the end of February so please contact me as soon as possible:

*Andrew Kain*

**[aakain55@gmail.com](mailto:aakain55@gmail.com) 07850 201601**

North British Daily Mail - Friday 21st August 1874 p4.

## HIGHLAND GAMES AT TOBERMORY.

The second annual competition in Highland games came off at Tobermory on Wednesday, in a field about a mile from the village. A large crowd of people collected from all parts of Mull, Ardnamurchan and Morven, and took great interest in the proceedings.

Amongst those on the ground we observed Col. Gardyne of Glenforsa ; H. Lang and the misses Lang, Glengorm ; A. Allan, Esq., of Aros ; J. M. M'Kenzie, Esq., of Calgary ; J. MacLachlan, Esq., and D. Campbell, Esq., banker's ; W. Sprott, Esq., solicitor ; Sheriff Ross, &c.

The weather, though threatening in the forenoon, turned out very favourable, which, added to the excellent arrangements of the committee, aided by the active secretary, J. Murray, added much to the success of the meeting.

Putting Heavy Stone - 1st, Duncan M'Pherson ; 2d, J.C. Beaton.

Throwing Heavy Hammer - 1st, J. M'Mast, 2d, John Smith.

Short Race - 1st, Charles M'Lean ; 2nd Charles M'Phail ; 3d, Alexander M'Donald.

Running Long Leap - 1st, Thomas Miller ; 2d, John M'Innes.

Running High Leap - 1st, Hugh Lang ; 2d, H. Ferguson.

Putting Light Stone - 1st, Duncan M'Pherson ; 2d, Thomas Miller.

Throwing Light Hammer - 1st, John Smith ; 2d, Thomas Miller.

Long Race - 1st, J. C. Beaton ; 2d, C. M'Lean ; 3d ; A. M'Kinnon.

Dancing Highland Reels - R. Morrison, Glasgow.

Sword Dance - R. Morrison.

Tossing the Caber - 1st, Duncan M'Pherson ; 2d, Thomas Miller.

Hurdle Race - 1st, Charles M'Lean ; 2d, J. Constable ; 3d, A. Constable.

Bagpipe Playing - 1st, John Cameron ; 2d, I. Morrison.

Sack Race - 1st Wm. Riddell ; 2d, A. M'Phee and N. Donald - equal.

## BOAT RACING

Lugwall Boats of not more than 22 feet keel - 1st Arch. Stewart ; 2d, Donald M'Phee.

Four-oared Boats of not more than 20 feet - 1st, Charles M'Lean ; 2d, Arch. Master.

Two-oared Boats of not more than 16 feet - C. Thomson, and Arch. M'Master, divided.

## Progress at Bendoran

Our Bendoran site, purchased in October 2019, has been given a fantastic boost with our successful application to the Scottish Government's Islands Green Recovery Fund (ISGF) for the first stage of Bendoran developments.

We have been awarded just short of £100,000 for extensive groundworks, the demolition of a derelict building and the construction of a storage shed. Groundworks include 19 parking spaces at the entrance to the site with 3 accessible parking spaces at the bottom of the track, resurfacing of the track, hard standing for boats, re-concreting of the slipway and the creation of three terraces for future developments.

We started survey and design work in November including submissions for planning and building warrants for the developments but have been on tenterhooks for several weeks waiting to hear about the IGRF Award. It's a brilliant start to the New Year giving impetus to both the water-sports social enterprise and our own seaweed project.

Both projects will provide great opportunities for economic and social recovery as we move forward out of Covid. Potential benefits include employment, training, activities for local people and a broadening of the area's tourism offer.

To view the SWMID application for the seaweed farm marine licence please go to <https://bit.ly/2Y0LL2u>



*Celia Compton*

## Grant for Community Garden

After many hours of hard labour the Ross of Mull Community Garden site is ready to prepare for the growing season.

**Thanks to an award of nearly £4000 from the Scottish Government's Community Climate Asset Fund (CCAF) | Keep Scotland Beautiful we are able to purchase timber for raised beds and compost bins, sheds, a seating area, tools and a pallet of compost.** The award is given to projects that aim to reduce local carbon emissions:- by providing a space to grow vegetables and fruit the garden will be a source of fresh produce for local people and thus reduce food miles. It will also create learning opportunities to enable people to grow more in their own gardens.

**We are also fundraising for a polytunnel. Please check out our crowdfunder if you would like to make a donation!**

<https://www.mypark.scot/projects/ross-of-mull-community-garden-the-next-steps/>

Volunteer sessions at the garden continue in a limited way as we seek to create a vibrant community space. If you are interested in helping out at the garden please contact Philip at [pyielder@swmid.co.uk](mailto:pyielder@swmid.co.uk) or on 0756 4342610.

The CCAF is Scottish Government fund, administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful, and 279 community-based organisations from across Scotland have been awarded more than £3.2 million of funding to tackle climate change. Further details from [www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccaf](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccaf)

## Community Climate Asset Fund



## John's Fundraiser Helps Hospital

Lorn & Islands Hospital has received a generous donation of eight televisions including Wi-Fi boosters, a tablet, electrical kitchen equipment, £500.00 worth of toiletries and board games. The fundraiser set up by Isle of Mull resident John McGee was supported by Oban, Mull and Iona community members and local businesses.

Caroline Henderson, Rural General Hospital Manager, Lorn & Islands Hospital said: "During this challenging time the hospital has continued to receive welcomed support from our local communities, businesses, volunteers and organisations to support staff members, patients and their families. Every donation is invaluable to boosting morale particularly when visiting in person has been restricted.



*SNR Charge Nurse Kirsteen Campbell ward B (left) & John McGee, Isle of Mull Resident (Right)*

"I want to send a heartfelt 'thank you' to John McGee for setting up the fundraiser and every community member and local business that has made donations to the hospital. The kindness and generosity demonstrated by our local communities and businesses has been felt and appreciated in wards, units, departments, and teams in every part of our hospital. Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) have received an unprecedented number of donations since the start of the Covid19 pandemic demonstrating how charitable, kind, and thoughtful our local communities and businesses are across Argyll and Bute."

## Shopfront Improvement Grants

Argyll and Bute Council has awarded an art gallery, delicatessen, museum and fabric shop with Shopfront Improvement Grants in the latest round of funding. Using Scottish Government Town Centre Funding, the Grant aims to support the local economy by providing employment for tradespeople and help towns become more attractive places to live, work, visit and invest. The fund is still open for applications and details on how to apply can be found on the council's website. The closing date is 12 February, and applications are welcomed from several towns including Tobermory. Councillor Alastair Redman, Policy Lead for Business, Regenerations and Commercial Development: "Although many of our shops are unable to open just now, we have to look at how we support the local economy in the present and as part of our longer recovery."

## Seed Propagation

Following on from last month on Hardwood cuttings I thought I would continue the theme and write about the seed sowing season which is just about upon us. If you have a glasshouse or a polythene tunnel then you can start sowing much earlier with really tough plants such as sweet peas and broad beans. As the season goes on and gets warmer you can increase the amount of plants you can raise from seed.

**Compost.** I have to admit that I am old fashioned about using seed compost for seeds and potting compost for growing on plants as the nutrient value required is very different. However it is not always easy to get seed compost as local stockists only tend to sell multi-purpose compost, and if that is what you can get then so be it.

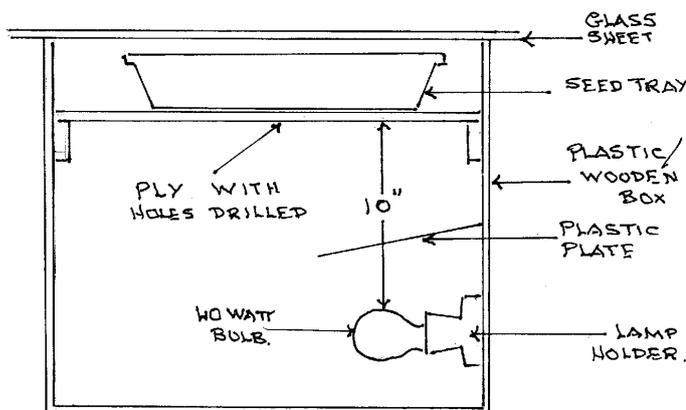
Remember that the nutrient value of any compost you buy is going to be limited to five to six weeks after which time you will need to supplementary feed with either liquid feed for seedlings, or additional fertilizer when you pot up plants. Fertilizer such as blood fish and bone which is organic is what I use but you can choose yourself which you prefer.

As a rule of thumb seed should be sown to its own depth ie. If a pea is one centimetre in diameter then sow one centimetre depth, if you are sowing begonia seed mix it with dry sand to bulk it up and sow on the surface of the compost as it looks for all the world like brown dust.

For alpines and herbaceous plants put a shallow layer of sharp grit above the compost once the seed has been sown, this grit acts as a mulch and stops drying out - it works very well for Primulas and other moisture loving plants.

Do not compress the compost when filling the tray or the pot as plants love to have air at their roots as well as moisture, a lack of air causes poor germination and is one of the causes of damping off (a fungal disease). I tap the pot or seed tray on the potting bench to settle the compost and leave it at that.

**Propagators.** Small propagators can be bought easily or you can make your own (see diagram below but be aware water and electricity is not the safest combination).



The plastic plate in the propagator is to protect the light bulb, the bulb itself should not be bigger than 40 watt as it will create too much heat, and the electric supply needs a 3amp fuse in the plug. If and when you water the seed tray take it out of the propagator do it. Stand the tray in water and let it soak it up then remove and allow surplus water to drain before replacing.

Germination temperature varies for different seeds, plants from sub tropical climes enjoy 65-70 degrees of heat (plants such as Tomato, Cucumber, and Aubergine), plants from temperate climes germinate best at 50-60 degrees such as Lettuce, Carrot, and Onion. The purpose of a propagator is that plants germinate better with bottom heat.

If you tend to be out during the day try a single sheet of newspaper laid over the top of the propagator to act as shade, try to maintain an even temperature and even moisture in your compost for best results.

Happy sowing!

*Mike Swift*

## Gardening Tips of the Month

*Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.*

*May Sarton*

- Weed suppression by a thick layer of Mulch also adds organic material and plant nutrients. Use compost and leaf mould.
- Prepare for seed sowing with suitable compost, clean pots and seed trays.
- Cut back old leaves of Hellebores to control leaf spot disease and allow the flowers to look their best
- Check fencing and fences for damage. On a dry day (!) treat wood furniture etc.
- Try not to over water house plants and limit feeding until brighter and warmer days.
- On mild days there is still time to lift and divide large clumps of perennials.
- Take care with tempting plant offers in newspapers and magazines. Check delivery restrictions, many will not deliver to PA postcodes, and some have expensive extra delivery costs. Ensure what you buy is suitable to the soil type and climate on Mull

Whatever you do enjoy the freedom of the outside.

*Clifford Moisey*

## Torosay Isle of Mull Gardening Club

A Zoom meeting of the Gardening Club was held by Zoom on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January. This was the first time that members of the Club had been able to get together as a group since the last meeting in February 2020.

Cliff welcomed 8 members and gave a very brief report of the year's activities and this was followed by a brief discussion about future plans. The meeting ended with a quiz – identifying pictures of flowers and working out the flowers featured in a variety of songs.

It is planned that the next meeting will be on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February 7 30pm by Zoom. This would be the usual Gardeners' Forum with a chance to discuss gardening on Mull, the highs and lows of gardening during lockdown and anything else related to gardening!

Everyone is welcome to join this discussion – contact me on [cmmayo@btinternet.com](mailto:cmmayo@btinternet.com) for the Zoom link nearer the time.

*Cath Mayo*



## Ranger Service

### News from the north end

Morning all, and for once I am not waking to the rain pouring down the window or scraping down the car window in order to go off and do a site visit. Think I prefer the cold to the wet.

After a bit of a garden tidy at the weekend it was reassuring to see some fresh growth and even some daffodil shoots popping through the cold ground. I was followed around the garden by a robin singing its little heart out, with a background chorus from the blackbirds, chaffinches and bluetits, plus a cooo or two from my collard doves. Spring is coming!!

Some news from our Forestry and Land Scotland colleagues, is that harvesting operations are going to start shortly at Ardmore. The area being harvested is the mature timber on the right hand side of the road heading to the Lighthouse. There is still permitted access along the road to the Lighthouse but not into the woodland on the right-hand side. Please pay attention to all signage.

The Ranger Service had good news before Christmas in that Nature Scot, previously Scottish Natural Heritage, who help fund the Ranger Service have agreed funding until March 2022. We still need to find the other half plus a bit, to ensure the North Mull Ranger service survives.

The National Trust has committed to continue to largely support Emily's post on Staffa, Iona and the Ross, for another year but we will also need to top her pot up too, but at least there is a bit of light at the end of the tunnel.

Hopefully in the next couple of months we will be able to start planning our events programme, so fingers crossed for COVID getting under control and the ranger service getting out and about and spending some time with you all.

*Jan Dunlop; Countryside Ranger Manager  
jdunlop@mict.co.uk; Mob: 07765898600*

### News from the Ross, Iona, Staffa and Burg

I don't know about you, but this year I'll be looking forward to signs of spring more than ever. I took part in the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's 'New Year Plant Hunt' and was delighted to find a cheery yellow primrose bravely flowering amongst the frost on the 2nd January. There are always birds to listen out for – herons and curlews in the bay, geese and ravens flying over the house, owls in the woods nearby – and it won't be long before many others bring their spring songs to the chorus.

During the past year of intermittent lockdowns I've found a lot more time for reading, curling up with a good book on days when the weather's too extreme for meeting up with neighbours outside! Nature writing is now a vast and diverse genre, so I thought I would share some of the nature books that have inspired, amused and comforted me recently.

Simon Barnes writes with a humorous and light-hearted style and his book 'Bird Watching with Your Eyes Closed' is a great place to start for anyone wanting to tune into the birdsongs around us. He recommends beginning at this time of year, recognising the sounds you can hear in winter so that new songs will stand out to your ears as they



build up throughout the spring. You'll also find out why birds sing, and their connections with humanity over time: "Birdsong is not just about natural history. It is also about our history. We got melody from the birds as we got rhythm from the womb. Birds are our music: they teach us to express emotion and beauty in sound. The first instruments ever made were bird-flutes." A free podcast accompanies the book and can be found here: <https://shortbooks.co.uk/book/birdwatching-with-your-eyes-closed>

*Emily Wilkins, Ranger for the Ross of Mull, Iona, Burg and Staffa*

01681 700659, 07717581405, [ewilkins@nts.org.uk](mailto:ewilkins@nts.org.uk)

### News to share?

**Early deadline for next issue - 16th February**  
**editor@roundandaboutmull.co.uk**

### WILDLIFE CONTACT LIST

RSPB Tel 01680 300 387

If you find a dead or injured otter - Mull Otter Group

North Mull: Sue Morley 07968438525 /  
01680 300502

South Mull: Nigel Burch 07900918857

Otter Sightings [www.mullottergroup.co.uk](http://www.mullottergroup.co.uk)

Whale and Dolphin strandings: Alive 01825 765546

Dead 07979 245893 or 01463 243030

Whale Sightings [www.hwdt.org](http://www.hwdt.org) or 01688 302620

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E: [imyaman2303@gmail.com](mailto:imyaman2303@gmail.com)

## Science and Nature Notes

According to my Moon app., at the time of writing this (Jan. 17th) the Moon is almost a quarter of full. The moon may appear to be fairly static, but it 'falls' around the Earth (approximately) once every 29.5 days. It is in fact moving about the speed of a bullet at just over 1000m/second. Seen from Earth, it moves by about its own diameter every hour. The moon orbits above us from west to east, the same direction as the Earth rotates. If this seems counterintuitive, trust me - that's why the sun appears in the east in the mornings! The most likely origin of the Moon has been the termed the 'big splat' theory, when a proto-Earth collided with a smaller planet called Theia. This gargantuan event melted the two planets as they crashed together and ejected molten rock into space. Most of that rock fell back to the new Earth, but some remained in orbit. At first this was a ring of rocks around the Earth, but within a few decades these had mostly coalesced into what is now our Moon. At first and for a few tens of thousands of years, the Moon would have been incandescent and mostly molten, as indeed was the Earth. The Moon would also have been much closer and appeared much larger from Earth, an awesome sight had there been anyone to see it some 4.5 billion years ago.

The Earth in those distant times was rotating faster, with days lasting perhaps no more than five hours. The first ocean on Earth would have been subjected to much stronger tidal forces, with tides rising and falling many tens of metres twice every short day. The very ground would have risen and fallen appreciably under such conditions. However, the enormous energy transferred by these giant tidal forces served to slow both the Earth's rotational speed and caused the Moon to retreat, ultimately to what we are familiar with. Even now, the Moon is pulling away from us at the rate of around 4cm a year. And days grow longer as the Earth's rotation continues to slow, albeit by tiny fractions of a second per year.

The Moon has played an enormously important role in the evolution of life on Earth, particularly with the twice daily tides. Marine algae evolved the ability to survive in dry air and be washed by fresh water rain. This may have been an important factor in the evolution of land plants and land animals too.

The idea that the Moon has a significant effect on vegetables and crops has a great deal of appeal for many, though as yet there is no scientific evidence to confirm or deny these claims. Nonetheless, the Moon is a source of enduring fascination for amateurs and scientists alike. Despite the Apollo missions of the 1960s and '70s and many international efforts before and since, there remains an awful lot we don't know about our nearest neighbour in space.

*Peter Upton*

## Business Support from Council

Argyll and Bute Council continues to support businesses in dealing with the impact of Covid-19. The council has a dedicated webpage with information and support for businesses including access to a range of grants. Please visit the website for details and to check you are eligible to apply. You can also keep up date to date with new funds as they launch, by signing up to email alerts from <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/>

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# The Bear Stories

by Felicity Hansen

## Episode 1



Once upon a time .... That's how all the best stories begin, and those four words tell you that there is something magical about the story being told, that it both is, and is not, really real.

So – once upon a time I was living in a small flat with a community of bears. No, no, not the wild sort! Not brown bears or polar bears or Kodiak bears or grizzly bears (although some of them did a lot of grizzling at times) but what people usually call teddy bears.

Some years before I had been given my first ever bear, at a time when my life was particularly grey, damp, cold and lumpy. Without doing anything at all, he made me realise that he deserved a better life, and it was up to me to find it, for him and for myself. His full name is Edmond Halley Plushbear, but he likes to be called Plush.

This is the story of how Plush and I became a community of bears.

We found a much nicer place to live, and I worked from home, but I did not have much money and there were things we needed to make our little flat into a proper home. Plush has an invisibility cloak – I've no idea where he got it and it's best not to ask – but it does mean that he can come outside with me and no one will laugh at an adult person going around with a bear. So on Saturdays I used to go round the charity shops looking for things for the flat. Plush had to squeeze my hand if he wanted to say something so that we could go to a place where no one could hear us whispering.

We were walking through one of the larger charity shops one Saturday when Plush suddenly squeezed my hand. We hadn't reached the furnishings area, so I was rather surprised. I crouched down behind a clothes rack and whispered "What is it?" I asked. "We aren't in the furniture room yet."

"I know, I know" he said. "But look – over there!"

"Where?" I asked, looking around.

"On that shelf. See? I heard him crying. Look!"

I looked. All on his own, on a shelf, between some wine glasses and a basket of loose cutlery, sat a small bear wearing a red and white striped scarf.

"Please," Plush said, "Can we buy him? He's so miserable."

So I did and the little bear came home with us.

He sat beside Plush on the couch and for a long time he hardly moved and didn't say anything, but at least he stopped crying. Then he hiccupped a bit and started to look around.

"Shall we give him a name?" I asked Plush.

"He's already got a name," Plush said. "Bears are given their names when they are made. We'll just have to wait until he tells us what it is."

"Has he said anything about what happened and how he came to be in the charity shop?"

"Not yet," said Plush. "He's too scared to speak."

In fact it was more than a week before the bear said anything at all. Then piece by piece Plush was able to put the story together. The little bear had been sitting on a dressing table belonging to a girl called Cassie. He had been given to her when she was young. But Cassie had grown up and was going away to a place called France so that she could learn to speak French better. Before she went, she turned out her room so that her younger sister could use it. There had been a big box of things to go in the loft, a black bag of things to be thrown away, and another black bag for the charity shop.

"It was a mistake," the little bear explained. "I was supposed to go into the box for the attic, but I'm only small and I got caught up in a chunky cardigan that was going into the charity shop bag. Cassie didn't notice and she was excited with packing for France so she didn't check. When the bag was unpacked at the charity shop, I nearly got thrown away because the shop manager said that they don't take toys."

"Imagine thinking a bear was just a toy!" Plush said indignantly.

"I know," said the little bear. "But they wouldn't let me explain. It was only because one of the other workers said I was in very good condition and might bring in a bit that I was allowed to stay."

"You were very lucky," Plush agreed.

"Wasn't I? And I did bring in a bit for them, didn't I?"

"You did," said Plush, and tactfully didn't mention that I had bought him for 50p.

"Ask what his name is," I whispered to Plush.

"You can't ask a bear his name, you have to wait for him to tell you!" Plush whispered back.

"Sorry," I muttered. And so we waited. Another day passed, and the little bear regained his appetite and ate honey sandwiches and ginger biscuits at a great rate. He sat beside Plush during the day while I was working. But he still didn't tell us his name.

One evening as the three of us were sitting in the armchair together to watch television, the little bear suddenly asked a question:

"When do I have to leave?"

"Leave?" Plush said, in a surprised tone. "You don't have to leave. You can live here with us now – if you want to, that is. It's all right for him to stay here with us, isn't it, Persey?"

"Of course, if he'd like to," I replied. After all, he was quite a small bear.

"Is this my new home then? Oh that's wonderful! Thank you so much. My name is Gus."

So there we were - one Person (Plush calls me Persey for short) and two bears, and our community had started to grow

Next time I'll tell you how more bears came to join us.



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## VENUS IN EXILE Practical Traditional Astrology

by Ailidh Lennon

### February Astro-weather

February brings us something rather quite unusual the skies, for the first time since 1962, six of the visible traditional planets will be in the one place with a super stellium in Aquarius on the new moon on the 11th. If you are curious about what the Aquarius part of your chart signifies for you, pay attention to what themes come up as, with so much going on here, it will be hard to miss. Collectively this is significant too, the traditional wording for this phenomenon is an 'assembly', the planets symbolising the king and his court coming together. As the Sun travels through Aquarius it will pass over each planet, obscuring them from human view, symbolically pointing to lots going on behind the scenes, much to plan and consider from the individual up to the macro level, and the beginning of new cycles, so this will feel more like that start of a new year than the start of January did. Perhaps in the middle of February it will feel like we are able to begin to plan for the year, it is indeed the case that, collectively, we have a lot to sort out and plan for.

February also sees the tense relationship of Saturn and Uranus come into focus around the middle of the month. This relationship is really the beginning of a longer cycle, the themes of which we had a taste of in the preview period last spring; demonstration, unrest and revolt, set to become a consistent part of the next two years. Hot, angry Mars sprinkled a bit of gunpowder on this burgeoning relationship on 19th/20th of January, around the time of the Presidential inauguration in the US and is set to do so again another couple of times throughout the year. Disruptive Uranus is in the sign of Taurus, which symbolises food, shelter, money or stores of value - things that don't generally benefit from volatility, so it is not surprising that tensions around these parts of life would run so high.

Another signature of February is the Mercury retrograde. The planet of the mind, intellect, communication, travel and commerce travels backwards in apparent retrograde motion through Aquarius all month, classically causing misunderstandings, mistakes, delays and snags in these areas. This transit gets a bad press and it is very often nowhere near as bad as it sounds! It will only generally affect you if it ties into your chart, so if you are feeling the retro vibe it would be prudent to double check any important admin, adjust your expectations and build in a bit of extra time for delays. Any delays or disruptions normally come to a head or resolve around the direct station on the 21st. Mercury joins with combusive Mars on the 10th of February; the heat of Mars can stimulate outbursts in Mercury, causing sharp words in the heat of the moment, an urgent need to speak out. Be mindful of what you say, how you say it and who you say it to around this time.

There is a bit of sweetness to the end of the month with the benefic Venus, planet of connection, beauty and love moving into Pisces, the sign of her exaltation, on 25th. She is the goddess of wine so you might want to raise a glass to the first green shoots breaking the ground. Spring is not a million miles away now!

# Are you finding it hard to pay your bills? Or to put food on the table? Here's how to get help:

## Waterfall Fund Winter Hardship Fund

### *Open to all residents of Mull & Iona*

Help is available from the Waterfall Fund to cover essential living costs such as heating, food and transport - in the form of small grants (up to £250).

#### **How to apply**

Complete a simple form available on our website [www.thewaterfallfund.co.uk](http://www.thewaterfallfund.co.uk) or by emailing: [admin@thewaterfallfund.co.uk](mailto:admin@thewaterfallfund.co.uk)

Or you can discuss it confidentially with one of the Trustees:

Vic Linnemann 01688 302957 [viclinnemann@gmail.com](mailto:viclinnemann@gmail.com)  
Sue Hawkes 01681 704320 [hawkessusan1@gmail.com](mailto:hawkessusan1@gmail.com)  
Becki Marsland 07919080005 [becki.marsland@cybg.com](mailto:becki.marsland@cybg.com)  
Joanne MacInnes 01681 700005 [jmacinnes@btinternet.com](mailto:jmacinnes@btinternet.com)  
Jim Corbett 01680 814214 [jim@lochbuie.com](mailto:jim@lochbuie.com)  
The Waterfall Fund is a SCIO, Scottish Charity No. SCO45361

## NEW: South West Mull & Iona CRISIS FUND

A partnership Crisis fund has been established between Ross of Mull & Iona Gala, South West Mull & Iona Development, Bunessan Hall and Round & About.

The fund is open to all residents of the South West Mull & Iona area who are experiencing financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

So if you are struggling or anyone you know is having trouble, do contact Morven, email: [m.gibson@swmid.co.uk](mailto:m.gibson@swmid.co.uk) for an application form, or call 01681 700403

All enquiries completely confidential.

Any group, association or individual wishing to donate to the crisis fund please contact SWMID, email as above.

## NEW: Argyll and Bute Flexible Food Fund

Argyll and Bute Council has launched a new fund aimed at tackling financial insecurity for adults and families across Argyll and Bute.

The Argyll and Bute Flexible Food Fund offers financial support and wider confidential professional help to anyone suffering hardship. Households with low incomes and no access to cash savings can apply for immediate financial support. The Fund will help support daily living expenses.

Applications to the Fund can be made via an online claim form available on the council's website, <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/flexible-food-fund>.

If you need help or support to complete the form please call us on 01700 502784 and ask about the Argyll and Bute Flexible Food Fund.

#### **Additional help**

When claiming for the Flexible Food Fund, you will also be considered for a Crisis Grant to meet any immediate needs for help with daily living expenses.

All cases are handled sensitively and in complete confidence.

## Food Bank

Food parcels are also available for those in need from **Mull & Iona Pantry** - phone Ruth Fleming on 07549 018157.

All calls completely confidential.

Alternatively email:

[mullandionapantry@gmail.com](mailto:mullandionapantry@gmail.com)

Please don't be shy about asking - there is no shame in being in financial difficulty through the coronavirus measures.

## OTHER CONTACTS

### **Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice**

01546 605550 9am-5pm (Mon-Fri)

### **Scottish Welfare Fund: Crisis Grants**

01546 605512 9am-5pm (Mon-Fri) or email

[scottishwelfarefund@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:scottishwelfarefund@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

### **Argyll Community Housing Association**

Advice for ACHA tenants 0800 028 2755

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**RoMICTS** is continuing its commitment to delivering pre-ordered shopping and prescriptions on request to anybody in SW Mull or to the Iona Ferry. They are also providing passenger journeys with risk management measures in place, but just one outpatient or household at a time, for health and medical or other essential travel purposes. Phone Terry Hegarty 01681 700 600

## VOLUNTEER GROUP

Craignure, Lochdon, Lochbuie, Scallastle, Fishnish communities



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### SOURCE INFO ON YOUR BEHALF RELEVANT TO YOUR SITUATION

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FOR HELP OR MORE INFO CALL:  
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HELEN DEWAR: 07488 333585  
KATE GRIERSON: 07801 070279

All of our volunteer work is operated within the latest government guidelines ensuring the safety of our volunteers & of those we assist.

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## SHOPPING

**Ferry Shop, Fionnphort**, 10.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday; 2 people in the shop at a time. **Ring 700470 for pre-ordering and delivery.**

**Spar Shop, Bunessan**, 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00 to 4.30pm Monday to Saturday; 11.00am to 1.30pm Sunday 2 people in the shop at a time.

**Please ring 700395 for pre-ordering and delivery.**

**Pennyghael Stores**, 9.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday **Please ring 704229 for pre-ordering, to arrange collection or delivery by RoMICTS.**

**Craignure Stores**, 8am-5.30pm Monday-Saturday, 10.30am-5pm Sunday. **Phone 01680 812301 for pre-ordering or delivery.** Payment by card over phone.

**Or for delivery in the Craignure area contact:**

Sue Royle, 07811083227, Helen Dewar, 0748833585 or Kate Grierson 07801 070279

**For delivery Lochbuie contact:** Flora Corbett 01680814153

**Dervaig Stores**, 9am-6pm Monday-Saturday, 12noon-2pm Sunday. Please email orders: [dugs564@btinternet.com](mailto:dugs564@btinternet.com) for collection/delivery North Mull.

Payment by card over the phone.

**Salen Spar Shop**, 8am-8pm, Monday-Saturday, 10am-5pm Sunday. 4 customers at a time.

**For deliveries in the Salen area contact** Kerry Mitchell, 07825577419, Helen McWalter, 07967094775 or Eilidh Allen 07810747431.

**Deliveries to Ulva Ferry contact** Community Transport 07775531301

**Tobermory Stores** open 7am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sunday. **Deliveries now to the whole of Mull** phone 01688 302808, email [tobermorystores@gmail.com](mailto:tobermorystores@gmail.com)

**Tobermory Co-op**, 7am-10pm Monday-Saturday, 10am-10pm Sunday. Please try to keep the first 2 hours of the day for the vulnerable and essential workers.

**Meat: Ardalanish Farm, by Bunessan** open 10am-5pm Monday-Saturday - Beef, Lamb & Venison available in welcome room freezers. 01681 700265 (see ad)

**Meat: Glengorm Beef** - 01688 302321

**Meat deliveries** contact Fiona Boa (pork boxes) 07765966239 or Torloisk Farm 01688500130

**Ardmore Fish** - Bill Langford. Based in Salen phone 07774 214552. Mobile van Ross of Mull Wednesdays.

**Tobermory Fish Co.** - Open Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, 01688 302 120

**Tobermory Bakery** - Open Mon-Sat 9am-3pm 01688 302 225 / 07592630655

**The Crofters' Kitchen, Kintra** - Mondays & Fridays: 9am-9pm - veg, preserves, meat etc., see ad opposite

**Tobermory Pharmacy** - prescriptions and pharmaceutical needs delivered 01688 302431

**Nappies, formula and wipes** - we can arrange for them to be collected from Aldi and delivered to your door once a month. Contact Kirsty Renton 01680 300400

**Foodbank** - Ruth Fleming 07549 018157

# An Tobar & Mull Theatre

FEB2021

*Other than gallery visits by appointment only, the An Tobar and Mull Theatre buildings are still closed to the public and will probably remain that way for some time to come. Our plans at the moment are to work with artists and document their work with new theatre, music and visual art commissions in progress. Some of this work will be shown online over the coming months.*

## PANDEMONIUM: AN TOBAR'S WINTER OPEN EXHIBITION



Pandemonium

An Tobar's Winter Open  
Exhibition

New work by artists from Mull,  
Iona and Argyll

Open on Saturdays  
11am – 4pm by appointment

The plan is to reopen the  
exhibition on 31st January if  
we're permitted to do so. The  
exhibition will run to March 2021.

Please check the website for up  
to date info on opening dates.

There doesn't seem to be a  
consensus on the exact meaning  
or spelling of the modern usage  
of the term Pandemonium. One  
definition is: Wild confusion, a  
place of uproar and chaos.  
The mass media has spent much  
of the time reflecting on the  
darker side of the events of the  
year. In reality, people from all  
walks of life have accomplished  
amazing things in 2020, despite  
the continuing and  
increasing pressure.  
For an artist there is much to  
consider in these  
"interesting times."

Gallery visits are available at  
other times by arrangement.

To arrange an appointment to  
see the exhibition  
please email:  
exhibitions@comar.co.uk  
or text 07934 386136

## MULL THEATRE



As I'm sure we're all aware, the  
continued restrictions as a result  
of the pandemic have meant  
we've all had to adapt once again  
to the changes in place. Mull  
Theatre have been no exception  
and the filming we'd planned  
for our co-production with  
**Sonder Circus** in January had to  
unfortunately be postponed.

We were however delighted to  
bring back the **Emergence** plays  
for a second run on our digital  
stage at the end of January and  
hope that those who missed it  
the first time around managed  
to catch it this time. We're also  
delighted to say that we're taking  
the **Emergence** plays on a mini  
digital tour in February – 2021  
style! – and really excited to be  
partnering with **The Byre Theatre**  
and **Macrobert Arts Centre**.

**Emergence** will be available to  
watch on the digital stages at  
**The Byre** from 2nd to 5th  
February, and at **Macrobert** from  
6th to 12th February.

Although it's been a tricky start  
to the year and consequently the  
theatre activity at the moment  
seems quiet, we are working  
away in the background to ensure  
there's lots of exciting work for  
you to look forward to and enjoy  
in the near future from home, as  
well as developing productions  
that we know you'll love when we  
can once again all be together  
for live performances.

## MUSIC FOR WINTER SOLITUDE



4 Songs (Without Words)  
by PETE HARVEY  
Performed by  
THE PUMPKINSEEDS  
Thu 4 Feb, 8pm

Shortly before the new lockdown happened we were lucky to welcome composer *Pete Harvey* to the studio in An Tobar. We had asked Pete to compose something to reflect the times we're in and he came up with **4 Songs (Without Words)**. Most people know Pete from his arrangements featured as part of other people's work but this is an incredible new work from a musician who has been hiding his composing talent under an arranger's bushel....

Pete brought along three musicians and we recorded the music as a string quartet but, one of the four movements has an extra part written for a shielding violinist, in the spirit of 2020. *Kate Miguda* recorded her part alone in her flat which means she will be in a separate box to *Pete Harvey* on cello, *Mary Keating* on violin, *Feargus Hetherington* and *Liam Lynch* on viola. Many of you will know Feargus from his visits to the island as part of **Mendelssohn on Mull**.

The 4 Songs are called *Grub*, *Grace*, *Bubbles* and *Skit*. After spending a few days recording the music for future release as an album, we took a day to film it and this will be going out on February 4th at 8pm.



## RODDY WOOMBLE

In November 2020 we were lucky to have *Roddy Woombles* and *Andrew Mitchell* in the studio, partly to record some vocals from Roddy's next solo album but also to film a short concert. Roddy is best known for his work with **Idlewild** but has kept up a parallel solo career which began with *My Secret Is My Silence* back in 2006. He also made 3 records in An Tobar - *The Impossible Song & Other Songs*, *Listen To Keep* and *Live in the Hebrides*. This film features songs from his most recent EP *Everyday Sun*, one from his last album *The Deluder*, two new ones, a favourite from *My Secret* and ends with an **Idlewild** hit. Doesn't get much better than that! Come and watch it with us all at **8pm on February 18th**.

January was very quiet in An Tobar with the country locked down again but we did manage to film a song by *Alasdair Whyte* for **Celtic Connections**. Outdoors of course, to comply with the rules! Alasdair wore a big coat with brass buttons that looked like it might have been worn on the bridge of the old **Lochinvar** in the 1950s.

Thanks to all of you who have watched our films, and those who donated money which we are paying as an extra fee to the artists. It feels like our audience has grown over the past few months with around **25,000** people watching. Might be safe to assume that many of that number would be watching alongside friends and family so the total audience could easily be nearly 40,000. We'd have a difficult time squeezing everyone into An Tobar, especially with the two metre rule! Special thanks to *Gary Ebdy* and *Tom Spink* of **Lunas Live** who are the team behind our remote filming production unit.

## AN TOBAR CAFE & SHOP



While our Café remains closed you can still visit An Tobar Shop online - the perfect way to bring a little bit of An Tobar to you! Our popular café cookbooks, unique sketchbooks, inspiring music, and creative gifts are all available to browse and buy from the 'safe-haven' of home. With secure payment through Paypal, **FREE shipping** for all music within the UK, and eco-friendly packaging, what's not to love?

Our **New Year deals** continue through February, with 20% off Kitchen and Gifts, 10% off Sketchbooks, and more great discounts!

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Mull Theatre  
01688 302459



**Diary Dates ~ Notice Board ~ Diary Dates ~ Notice Board ~ Diary Dates**

**Comann Mhuile is Idhe /  
The Mull and Iona Association:  
Virtual Gathering 2021  
Friday 19 February**  
see opposite page for details  
[www.facebook.com/MullAndIona](http://www.facebook.com/MullAndIona)  
Mull and Iona Association YouTube Channel

Notice is hereby given that the AGM  
of the Mull and Morvern Agricultural Society will be  
held by Zoom on Monday 15th February at 7.30pm.  
All those wishing to participate should contact  
Sue Morley, email: [sue.mullmorvernas@gmail.com](mailto:sue.mullmorvernas@gmail.com)

**THE RED BOOK telephone directory:**  
Last date for accepting entries or changes/de-  
letions for the next update  
(domestic phone numbers only)  
**6th February 2021:**  
[redbook@roundandaboutmull.co.uk](mailto:redbook@roundandaboutmull.co.uk)

**Isle of Mull Bird Club**

Due to coronavirus, all Bird Club activities are  
suspended at present, but spring is on its way!  
Listen for birdsong and watch for courtship  
behaviour.

Please check our website for updates:

[www.mullbirdclub.org.uk](http://www.mullbirdclub.org.uk)

and [www.mullbirds.com](http://www.mullbirds.com) for recent sightings.



**Mull Community Council meeting  
Wednesday 3rd February 2021 at 7pm via Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88491744640?pwd=WUJTBjJP  
K3h5UXlaUzdXSGJGWHRpUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88491744640?pwd=WUJTBjJPK3h5UXlaUzdXSGJGWHRpUT09)  
Meeting ID: 884 9174 4640 Password: 483747  
Dial 0131 460 1196 United Kingdom  
Meeting ID: 884 9174 4640 Password: 483747

**Screen Machine Mobile Cinema  
will NOT now be visiting Mull during February**

**Mull Museum** is currently closed - however  
we will still be able to answer email enquiries:  
[mullmuseum@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mullmuseum@hotmail.co.uk)

**The Ross of Mull Historical Centre** is closed.  
For details of access see [www.romhc.org.uk](http://www.romhc.org.uk)  
If you have a genealogical search request  
email: [enquiries@romhc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@romhc.org.uk)

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

This will be held on Friday 4th March 2021  
on Zoom at 2-30pm.

This year's service has been written by  
the Christian women of Vanuatu and the theme is  
'Build on a strong foundation'.

For further information please contact Cathie Maclean  
on [archibald.maclean147@btinternet.com](mailto:archibald.maclean147@btinternet.com)  
or phone number 01680 812325.



**MULL NATIVE WOODLANDS GROUP  
Annual General Meeting Via Zoom  
Thursday 18th March 2021 at 7.30pm**  
For information and registration details  
please contact  
[contact@mullnativewoodlandsgroup.co.uk](mailto:contact@mullnativewoodlandsgroup.co.uk)

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the  
Annual General Meeting of  
Mull Car Club Limited will take place on  
Wednesday, 10th March 2021 at 8.00pm.  
This meeting will be held via Zoom;  
joining details are available from Mull  
Car Club's website.

Fred MacLean, Chairman, Mull Car Club Ltd.

**Ross of Mull & Iona Community Transport Service**

Contact Terry Hegarty 01681 700 600

**Ulva Ferry Community Transport**

07775 531 301 or [info@ufcb.org.uk](mailto:info@ufcb.org.uk)

**Mull Home Delivery Service**

Contact Karen Taylor Tel: 07785 792618  
or email: [mulldelivery@gmail.com](mailto:mulldelivery@gmail.com)

**cats protection**

Ardnamurchan and Mull

New phone contacts: Janine Allen - 01680 300146  
or Jo Austin - 01688 400433

Email: [enquiries@ardnamurchan.cats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ardnamurchan.cats.org.uk)

**Helplines**

**Alcoholics Anonymous** 01505 871889

(24 hours) a local member will call you back

**Argyll Couple Counselling** 0300 111 0031

**Childline** 0800 1111

**Mull Safe and Sound** call Lorna 07743 413255

**North Argyll Carers** Jon Lloyd 07796715744





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## Comann Mhuile is Idhe / The Mull and Iona Association: Virtual Gathering 2021

Since the first annual Mull and Iona Association 'soirée, concert and ball' held in the Merchants' Hall on Hutcheson Street in Glasgow on Tuesday 19 February 1867, natives and friends of Mull and Iona have been gathering annually around this time of year to celebrate the arts, literature and music of these islands. The ongoing Covid-19 restrictions mean that we can't safely gather in person for our annual gathering in Glasgow this year as we usually do. However, we are delighted to announce that we will come together online for a virtual gathering on Friday 19 February 2021 to celebrate our cultural heritage and raise money for local causes and groups. Our 2021 virtual gathering will feature some of our islands' most talented singers, musicians and performers, as well as some well-known Mull and Iona faces in conversation. The event will be free to view online but there will also be a platform for you to donate to support local causes and groups.

### Competition: a call for your videos!

As part of the virtual gathering, we are running a competition for young people (under the age of 18). First prize will go to the best video performance with a Mull and/or Iona theme or backdrop. This could be a song, a story, a piece of poetry, a piece of music or whatever takes you fancy! The prize is £30 and the winning video will also feature in the virtual gathering. We will also aim to share as many of

your videos as we can on our online platforms following the gathering (with your permission). You can submit your entries by contacting us at: [themullandiona@gmail.com](mailto:themullandiona@gmail.com) Keep an eye on our Facebook page (The Mull and Iona Association) over the next few weeks for more details about the virtual gathering and for details on how to join the association. We look forward to seeing you virtually on the 19th!

*Dr Alasdair C. Whyte (Ceann-suidhe / President)*

## Gaelic Language Survey goes Live

A survey is being carried out by Argyll and Bute Council to establish the needs of the Gaelic language in the area. The survey went live on 14th January and its findings will enable the council to make the best use of its resources, and identify which actions from the Argyll Gaelic Gathering are a priority for local communities. This information will then be fed directly into the council's Gaelic Language Plan.

Council Leader, Councillor Robin Currie, said: "Gaelic is considered to be the founding language of Scotland, and we recognise the importance of the language in our communities where it continues to be used, yet it is at risk of dying out if people do not continue to use it. We need more people to learn Gaelic and help us to preserve the future of this special part of our heritage. I would urge you to let us know what things you feel are important by completing this survey, so that your views can be incorporated into our Gaelic Language Plan. Thank you."

To give your views in the survey, visit: [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/consultations/community-gaelic-research-survey](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/consultations/community-gaelic-research-survey)  
The survey will close on 14th February 2021.

## Mull Community Council Report

Meeting held at 6pm, 11th January 2021, via zoom

**Present:** Billy McClymont, John Maughan, Pam MacColl, Tom Nelson, Adrian Stephens, Tracy Mayo, Iain Campbell, Duncan Swinbanks, Jo Prior, Alasdair MacCrone, Norman Hickson, Vic Linneman, Mandy MacKerl, Angus Williams, Andrena Duffin

**In Attendance:** Seonaidh MacKenzie, Joe Reade, Mary-Jean Devon, Local Councillor, Ailsa Henderson, Colin Wilson, Moray Finch, John Clayton, Robert Chalmers, Dot Stewart, Terry Hegarty, Dave Hopwood, Fred MacLean, Morar Honeyman, Finlay MacDonald, Morven Gibson, Cameron MacLean, Kirsty Renton

**Guests:** Colin Wilson and Ailsa Henderson, Boundary Commissioners

**Apologies:** Jim Lynch, Dominic Grierson, Colin Morrison, Josh Liddle, Marie Robertson

### MCC BUSINESS

#### Minutes of last meeting

Proposed PM Second AS

#### Notification of resignations

Graham Alexander resigned [from the Community Council] and Mandy MacKerl resigned as secretary but remains member.

#### Appointment of new convenor and secretary

New convenor: Billy McClymont Proposed AS Seconded TM

New Secretary: Andrena Duffin (co-opted for 2 years) Proposed BM Seconded PM

Meetings now held 1st Wednesday of each month. Constitution updated.

### ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL BOUNDARY CHANGES – Colin Wilson & Ailsa Henderson

Local Government Scotland is main legal framework governing reviews. Within framework parity main factor. Reviews can move away from parity where special geographical circumstances apply. Recent review not implemented by ministers in 2016 and councillor numbers have remained same since 1999 and ward boundaries not changed since 2007. Island Act requires review to take place. Public consultation closes 26th January. Aim to submit final recommendations May 2021. Drew up recommendations with consideration of A&B 4 administrative areas, community council and historic boundaries. Proposing 34 councillor solution, four 2-member wards, six 3-member wards and two 4-member wards. This includes 3 island-only wards. Mainland wards boundaries have been adapted due to population changes. M-JD stated that Mull, Coll and Tiree would prefer councillor resident on island. AH There is a capacity to merge smaller islands into larger island ward. There would have to be enough members on islands to make umbrella ward. AH It is essential A&BC follow legislative framework when making changes. M-JD stated that there is currently a requirement for candidate to live in administrative council area but not necessarily live in the ward. Appropriate member of community should be encouraged to put themselves forward to ensure strong representation.

#### POLICE REPORT – Dominic Grierson

Total Calls – 40 North Mull – 14 calls, 2 crimes recorded

Craignure and Surrounding – 5 calls, no crimes recorded  
Salen and surrounding – 10 calls, 2 crimes recorded  
Ross of Mull and Iona – 11 calls, 1 crime recorded. Increased calls relating to allegations of Covid-19 noncompliance.

### MULL CRISIS MANAGEMENT – Vic Linneman & Duncan Swinbanks

Immunisation program has begun in Craignure hospital. Most frontline staff have been vaccinated already and a few highly vulnerable individuals. Waiting for Oxford vaccine to arrive, after which numbers of people being immunised will increase.

DS stated that as Mull tier 3, we are missing out on tier 4 financial support. Mark Strivens has suggested setting up credit union on island for those financially impacted. Mike Russell has contacted DS to say that work is being done to fix the issue. The Mull Health website has had 125K visits from 110 countries. Problems with keeping stock levels high in Coop, and there are problems with the freezers. MCM have written letters to appropriate people.

### COUNCILLORS REPORT – Mary-Jean Devon

Working on welfare and hardship cases. Beginning to see financial impact of first lockdown. Budget meetings taking up considerable time. SSE subcontracted to OVO energy to install electricity meters in new build properties. But OVO not able to distribute to islands. Robin Currie (Solicitor) has since sorted this. On Coll, residents of 100+ houses have to queue at standing pipe to access water. Only 80 houses on islands with mains water. Meeting planned on Wednesday 13th to discuss matter. MJD stated that the foodbank is signposted and that the waterfall 'Hardship' fund has also been very supportive. MF stated that he had no response from Jim Lynch about public toilet costs. M-JD asked that MF send her an e-mail on matter. IC has been contacted by family who had family member admitted to hospital in Paisley prior to Christmas. When patient released from hospital, she was told by staff that she was responsible for booking ambulance on ferry. This is not the case. IC contacted ambulance service and Calmac who are both aware of correct procedure. M-JD asked IC to copy Joanna MacDonald (Chief Officer for NHS) into e-mail. BM suggested contacting Wendy Quinn (Operational Director Scottish Ambulance Service). M-JD stated that they are always looking for new recruits to join Locality Planning Group.

### PLANNING – Jo Prior

2 new properties in Craignure. 3 resubmissions in Aros. Pennygowan campsite asked for permission for camping pods.

### BUDGET CUT MEETING

12 individuals attended and wrote response to A&BC budget cut proposals. M-JD concerned that fishing industry is suffering. BM suggested asking Fisherman's Association representative to attend next meeting.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Letter received from organisers of Three Peaks race, looking for guidance on safety if race goes ahead.

### AOB

#### MICT and Waterfall Fund Representatives.

MCC representative on MICT board resigned. MF invited members to take up role. MCC representative needed on Waterfall Fund. BM volunteered.

**Notices**

NWMCWC AGM 24/01/21 4pm SWMID AGM 25/01/21 7pm

**Calmac Sailings**

JM received suggestion from member of public that Calmac re-enter restricted sailings similar to last lock down and that MCC write to Paul Wheelhouse. Calmac lockdown sailing numbers down by 83% of normal years. M-JD stated leader of council has been speaking to TS. M-JD has asked that they compare passenger numbers to last lockdown. Findings will be reported back to M-JD.

**Deer**

Concern raised about number of deer on roads and in built-up areas. BM suggested writing to SNH and Jim Corbett to come up solution. All in agreement.

**B&B**

Morar Honeyman raised concern that new legislation surrounding B&B's are very costly for business owners. Owners are urged to write to MP on matter and enquired as to whether MCC would be happy to support. JP to draft letter on behalf of MCC in support of B&B owners.

**Mull Rally Response– Tracy Mayo**

MCC shared consultation link on Facebook. JP and TM collated e-mails received in response and composed interim report which was approved by MCC. Community not opposed to change but needed better understanding of process. Comments received from community were considered and well balanced.

**Ipad appeal**

MJD stated there is project to organise online coffee mornings and social gatherings for elderly through lockdown. MJD appealed to all present to donate any unwanted/unused iPads or tablets.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 3/02/2021 at 7pm via Zoom - see diary pages for details**

**Mull Community Council Contacts:**

**Billy McClymont** (Convenor):

*mullfuneralservices@yahoo.co.uk* 01680 812435

**Andrena Duffin** (Secretary): *nicholasduffin@gmail.com*  
01688 302903

**Adrian Stephens** (Treasurer): *adrian@adrianstephens.co.uk*  
01680 814220

**Iain Campbell:** *campbell@holidaysonmull.com*  
07554 073680

**Annie Hall** *holidaysmull@gmail.com* 07377 337812

**Josh Liddle:** *justinliddle31@gmail.com* 07470 445 166

**Pam MacColl:** *maccoll184@btinternet.com* 01688 302184

**Alasdair McCrone** *alasdair.mccrone@btopenworld.com*  
07719 639187

**Mandy McKerl:** *emmckerl57@gmail.com*

**John Maughan** *jрмаughan@btinternet.com* 07810 093426

**Tracy Mayo** *tracy.mayo@rocketmail.com* 01688 400 480

**Tom Nelson** *tom@gलगormcastle.co.uk* 07801 364356

**Jo Prior** *hello@cillmhoire.com* 01688 400445

**Marie Robertson:** *marie.robertson12@aol.com*

**Moir Westland:** *moira@mull.com*

**Angus Williams** *angus@tobermory-campsite.co.uk*  
01688 302615

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## | Dùthchas | A sense of place by Alasdair Whyte

### A' Bheitheach (Beach)

#### 'The birch-wood' or 'the birch-land'.

This month's name is the name of a place which lies on the south side of Loch Sgriodain/Loch Scridain at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference NM462237. Most of you reading this article will no doubt have crossed the bridge over Beach River (as it is recorded on the current Ordnance Survey Explorer Series map) many times. The lands of A' Bheitheach lie on the west side of this river above the modern road.

The earliest known written form of our place-name dates to 1509 and it comes in the Exchequer Rolls. This source doesn't provide us with many written forms of local place-names but the forms it does record are early and therefore very important. The 1509 form of the name is 'tua beauchis' and this requires a wee bit of unpacking. The first part 'tua' is a Scots form of the number 'two' (usually 'twa' in modern Scots). This tells us two things: that the scribe recording this form was a Scots-speaker and that the place-name describes a settlement or a landholding of two parts. It also explains the '-is' in 'beauchis' which is the equivalent of the plural 's' in modern English. So: the form 'tua beauchis' is literally 'two Beauchs' and, once we take the Scots elements out from this written form, we are left 'Beauch' which is of course very similar to the form 'Beach' which is recorded on the current OS Explorer map.

The trouble with the form 'Beach' is that anyone looking at it and not aware of local pronunciation would probably pronounce it like the English word 'beach'. However, locally, as many of you will know, the name (in an English-speaking context) is in fact pronounced something like an English-speaker would pronounce 'bayuch' with emphasis on the 'bay'.

This local pronunciation and the early forms of the place-name tell us that this is a Gaelic name which comes from the word 'beitheach'. In Old Gaelic, the 'th' in this word was pronounced like the 'th' in the personal name Beth but in the modern Gaelic dialects of our area the 'th' is either silent (marking a break between the two vowels) or pronounced as an 'h' is in English. The lack of a 'th' in all of the early written forms of our place-name that I have come across tell us that this development had already happened in local Gaelic before our place-name is first recorded in 1509.

The word 'beitheach' comes from the Old Gaelic word 'beith' (or 'beithe') meaning 'a birch tree' and 'beitheach' originally meant 'place of birch trees', 'a birch-wood' or 'a birch-land'. You will have noticed that I have translated the place-name as 'the birch-wood' / 'the birch-land' using the definite article (the word 'the' in English). This is because all the evidence suggests that the local Gaelic form of this name contains the definite article. Among this evidence is the local Gaelic form recorded by Charles Maclean in his 1997 book 'The Isle of Mull: placenames, meanings and stories' ('A' Bheathach'). This is similar to what we would expect, given that the word 'beitheach' is a feminine noun, but A' Bheitheach is the more correct Gaelic written form, given that the word comes from 'beith'.

As well as the name 'Beach River', there are another couple of place-names related to A' Bheitheach on the current OS map and both seem to refer to the two parts of the settlement that are recorded in 1509. The shingle beach at the mouth of Beach River on the shore of Loch Sgriodain is Tràigh nam Beach which is probably best translated as something like 'beach of the Beitheachs'. Along the shore to the west is Port nam Beach meaning 'port or landing-place of the Beitheachs'. If my interpretation of these place-names is correct, I am not sure how appropriate the written forms of these names are on the current OS map. I would prefer to see Tràigh nam Beitheach and Port nam Beitheach. These would better reflect the underlying Gaelic place-name and avoid potential confusion with the English word 'beach'.

I'll leave you with one other thing that I came across recently in my research. It is a document in 'Argyll Estate Instructions' (edited by Eric R. Cregeen). These are written instructions which John, 5th Duke of Argyll, gave to his Chamberlain of Mull and Morvern (and his Chamberlain of Tiree) between 1771 and 1805. Among these is a particularly interesting document relating to A' Bheitheach: a description of the march (boundary) between An Ros Muileach/Ross of Mull (which belonged to the Duke of Argyll) and the old district of Bròlas/Brolass to the east (which belonged to Maclean of Ceann Loch Àlainn/Kinlochaline). It is dated 24 June 1786. Our place-name is recorded five times in this document (in a couple of different forms), as you can see here:

'William McGilvra in Sheaba and Malcom MacGilvra in Beach declares that the march betwixt Sheaba and Beich runs by a stap N. of the road leading from Sheaba to Beich by the ridge of flat rocks to the N. end of the Cove of Moldonie. John McLean tacksman of Beach and Hugh MacLean tacksman of Ormaig and Hugh McLean tacksman of Torrinerarach declares that the march betwixt Beach and Sheaba runs in a direct line from the 11th cairn as wind and water divides the hill to Cronanussaig and by a ridge of rocks from thence to the cove of Moldonie from the said cove of Moldonie to the top of Dunanamarach where the 13th kairn is erected and from that to an old dyke going into a burn which forms the march betwixt Beinanienee and Sheaba which terminates the march betwixt Ross and Broloss.'

Some of the place-names in this description are immediately recognisable—for example, 'Sheaba' is the ruined settlement of Siaba/Shiaba (Grid Reference NM437192)—but other names are less straightforward. I'll be investigating this document and many others from 'Argyll Estate Instructions' over the next few weeks and I hope to share some of the things I find with you.

You can hear pronunciation of A' Bheitheach by searching for A' Bheitheach or Beach on the Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba website: <https://www.ainmean-aite.scot/>

Dr Alasdair C. Whyte belongs to Muile/Mull and is a Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow. He is currently working on two local place-name projects: one on the place-names of Muile/Mull and Ulbha/Ulva and the other on the place-names of Ì/Iona.

You can contribute to these projects. I would love to hear from you if you have local place-names or stories about local places to share. You can get in touch with me directly at: [Alasdair.Whyte@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Alasdair.Whyte@glasgow.ac.uk)

## The Aros Hall - Past and Future

As Chairman of the Aros Hall Committee I wanted to give everyone a brief history to remind us of good times past and better times yet to come. This time last year, we were rehearsing for the Drama Festival. This event sadly did not take place due to COVID Lockdown #1. The Aros Hall was effectively closed in early March when Mull herself closed due to concerns of the pandemic. At the time, there was little clarity as to when the Hall might open again so it seemed to be the perfect opportunity to redecorate and cosmetically improve the “face” of the Hall.

We sadly had to say farewell to our Chairman Ryan Lowe, who has moved to pastures new on the Isle of Bute in order to further his teaching career. He has given sterling service to the Hall over many years and we were fortunate to have a farewell drink with him, socially distanced, in the wonderfully constructed beer garden at the Park Lodge Hotel. In keeping with Ryan’s selfless service, many projects have been accomplished over the course of the time the Hall has had to be closed.

The company “Tree Works” in Oban have removed most of the trees at the back of the hall that were sliding down the embankment and leaning precariously toward the roof endangering the Hall herself. Ground to Gutters in Dervaig have completely cleared the gutters of the debris shed by those same trees. The back pathways to the hall are a public right of way and the fire escape route for the Hall. This path has been deweeded, swept, and cleaned of moss and other slippery substances to ensure safe ingress and egress.

The deep cleaning and decoration of the Hall should be completed by the end of January, just in case the Hall is needed as a vaccination centre. The Hall now sports new curtains to match the new color scheme and paint that has given the Hall a much needed refreshing and mild upcycling. Over the past months, while no interaction between households was a rule, I worked diligently and now know every nook and cranny of this grand Hall. As such, our committee is now actively applying for as many grants as possible to give this grand lady as much structural assistance as we can given funding limitations. A building warrant has been applied for to refurbish the toilets and is now “in process” in government hands. This project will be completed as soon as we get the official document allowing us to hire the needed skilled craftsman.

So what of the future? Well, looking to the future, we need, perhaps, to look back to the august past of this iconic building of downtown Tobermory. The Hall was gifted to the town by the Allan Family as a “temperance” Hall in 1882. It was destroyed by fire in 1894, then finally reopening in 1898 after extensive repairs. It has, since that time, been a focal point for all manner of social activities. Interestingly, there was a cinema in the building for over 30 years, a reading room, a billiards room, and meeting place for the then town council. The Hall hosted the Ensa shows during the war years and has resounded to the music of Jimmy Shand, the Scottish Opera, Runrig, Bobby MacLeod, and many, many other renowned performers and locals alike. The Mull Drama Festival, pantomimes, ceilidhs, Gaelic Choir, Highland Games dances, and so many other activities too numerous to mention have called the Aros Hall a home of sorts.

I am putting together a montage of old photographs that

place into context the history and importance of this building as the heart of our community. These will be on display in the foyer once permission is given to once again return this grand Hall to community use. I can only imagine the fun, games and no doubt, serious hangovers, that must have occurred in the past. My dear neighbour, the late and lovely John Docherty, used to tell me that people went home from the Hall by “rail.” What he really meant, was that folks would be hanging onto the railings as they departed up Western and Erray Roads to get home safely! These joyous days will return and how we will party as soon as circumstances permit. A big vote of thanks to the dedicated and hard working committee who do so much behind the scenes even during the trying times of COVID restrictions. Also thanks to Lee MacCrone and her volunteers for organizing the Producer’s Markets “all be it outdoors” within the guidelines of COVID restrictions. It was great to see our wonderful producers being able to sell their products come rain or shine. This weekly event was very well attended and this is a great tribute to the volunteers, producers, and the attendees from the island and incoming visitors.

The only way forward is upward and it has been a great privilege and pleasure to serve such a magnificent and iconic building. When restrictions are eased and the Hall can once again open, This Grand Lady will hold an “open house” for all to come and see her in her new glory.. we look forward to seeing each and every community member and outlying area islanders as well as any visitors to the island to celebrate this new era of the Aros Hall.

*Graham Alexander, Chairman Aros Hall Committee*

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The Nonhebel Park development was made possible with support from :

Scottish Land Fund, S J Noble Trust, The Scottish Government (Regeneration Capital Grant Fund), Argyll and Bute Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Shanks Argyll and Bute through the Scottish Community Landfill Fund.

## Sudoku

This month's 'Sudoku puzzle with a difference' from Martyn Gibson. Instead of numbers 1-9, find 'COMMUNITY' 'Usual rules', says Martyn "medium level, and two Ms to think about." The solution for last month's puzzle 'NEWYEAR21' is below right.

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1	2	E	W	R	N	Y	E	A
Y	R	A	E	1	2	E	N	W
E	W	2	N	A	1	E	R	Y
A	Y	E	R	W	E	2	1	N
R	1	N	2	Y	E	A	W	E
2	N	Y	A	E	W	1	E	R
W	E	R	1	2	Y	N	A	E
E	A	1	E	N	R	W	Y	2

## Silver Linings

Always mindful that one person's silver lining may just make the darkness of the cloud more obvious to someone else, it's good to be careful about sharing one's own. That doesn't mean it's not worth doing – another person may be just the one who sees the potential to take the lining and make something useful and beautiful with it.

In the past year we have seen communities including our own, pull together and help each other, and those in other places, in all sorts of ways. There has been a surge of interest as well as much success in gardening, especially home grown food. Plenty of challenges too of course, from tensions over priorities, opinions and actions, to how to deal with deer and slugs. If there is a silver lining I think it will be found in the ability to embrace change even if we'd rather it didn't have to happen. The willingness to see the positives without denying the negatives. To really face up to the issues of any given time without giving in to despair. We know poverty is an issue locally as well as nationally and internationally. We know food can be grown locally – scaling up could provide long term jobs, less dependence on transport from near or far, a smaller carbon footprint. We know local affordable housing can be built. We know renewable energy works. We know mental health is important, and that many of us struggle with it. Sadly stigma still exists and support is underfunded, but at least it is recognised as real, and talked about more openly. The list could go on.

None of these issues is new. They are all clouds which may or may not have their own silver lining. That silver lining I am seeing faintly through the haar is that we now know we can make drastic changes which are not all bad. The lining could be thrown away or could become bright fluffy clouds in a clear blue sky.

*Liz Gibson*

## More Silver Linings

When I was very young my sister and I were taken with the idea of the Pearly Gates, the entrance to Paradise. We would see dark storm clouds with golden edges, sometimes with rays of sunlight beaming out. I remember how we endlessly painted such imaginary images usually in all kinds of vibrant colours, which Mum would proudly display on the kitchen wall. In early January this year I was out walking and saw just such clouds with bright shining edges, reminding me of those long ago days, but also helping me now, in these dark and troubled times for the world, to remember that light really is stronger than darkness and that clouds really do have silver linings.

Being an optimistic kind of person I could go on at length with other examples, but what I really want to share this month is an update on the "Iona Snowdrop Rescue." Some readers will remember that last winter a few volunteers joined me in digging out the invasive three cornered leek (or garlic) which has covered much of the area below the trees beside the Heritage Centre. Check it out on the internet if you are not familiar with it. It dies down in the summer and then reappears in late autumn. I am pleased to report that the area we worked on last winter is now almost clear. The plants emerging are small, new growth, and easily re-

moved, and the snowdrops are pushing through unimpeded by this alien thug. There is still work to be done, and an area in the centre which will never be cleared as the plants are well established and deeply embedded amongst tree roots and old rubble. They will continue to spread given half a chance, so we need to try and confine it to that area.

Surprisingly, I have developed a rather reluctant respect for this stubborn plant! All of it is edible, with pretty white flowers which bloom in winter, and make a great garnish for soups and salads.

Enjoy the snowdrops, wherever you live, they are surely silver linings in the depths of winter.

*Joyce Watson*

## Stars and Me

A few nights ago, I watched the Earth move. Let me describe the cloud and silver lining element. I awoke way too early and for no good reason, (cloud) but, nonetheless, I was wide awake and completely alert. The trouble with being alert at 2am in a winter's dark is that there are limits on what to do next. I decided that my 'next' was to pull on warm coating and to pad down the stairs for a smokey cup of tea, rooibos being my choice of pleasure. I like the thought of drinking tea from a tree and from Africa, my other most happy place. It also gifts me endless natural vitamins and la la and I like all of that.

Back to the point. The 'oh dear' of that early waking and that pad down the stairs led me to my conservatory. I took my tea and sat in the dark. Well, it wasn't dark at all. The stars were gasp-worthy. Orion stood proud as Punch directly to my right. I studied him and his stellar companions who left almost no blanks in the night sky. I wished I could identify all the constellations, even as I dismissed the thought. Does it matter if I can point and make my point through my knowledge? No, it does not. Sufficient just for me to be here, right now, and marvelling at the beauty, feeling suitably small and yet, at the same time, grounded and really rather big. I sipped some more, my thoughts taking me into space and out again, wondering about astronauts and dust and beginnings.

When I looked up again, to see the brave warrior in the sky, he wasn't there. For a moment I was confounded. He was there not 20 minutes ago. Then, and slowly, I knew a truth, one I had always known as a fact, but never actually experienced as an ancient truth. When I looked behind me, I found him. He had moved. Of course he had moved! Well, he hadn't moved, but we had, we all had, all of us grounded 'rather big' people, because our Earth is moving through space and the stars are just watching us go by, day after day, night after night.

I chuckled to myself. I thought, how odd it is that someone can know something she learned from a book written by those who point and then make their point; who accepts it as fact for many years; one who suddenly feels it, knows it at all levels of her body, mind and spirit.

I walked back to bed with that silver lining warm around me. Elevated.

*Judy Fairbairns*

**Early R&A deadline 16th February**  
**editor@roundandaboutmull.co.uk**

## Home birth on the Ross of Mull

Hurrah! Last November our second daughter Marie was born at home. Our first daughter Fiona two years earlier was born in a hospital. This time I wanted to do it differently. I knew for the biggest guarantee of a natural birth I had to be in a place where I'd feel completely safe and relaxed. Only then would my body produce plenty of oxytocin. That place meant home. No bright hospital lights, noisy ventilators, sanitisers, unfamiliar noises and smells, not even the best hospital in the world could replace that special feeling of being at home! Since I had already been through the experience before and this time had prepared myself even better by reading more books about it and listening to other women's stories, I was ready for it. What a blessing not having to pack our stuff to hang around in an unknown place with nothing else to do than wait... It felt right to be at home, knowing that getting a child is just an incredible part of life and after that it will continue. Sheila (midwife based on Mull) and another midwife from Oban would be present.

Coming nearer to my due date I noticed that the support from the community became stronger. Neighbours and friends were living towards the big moment together with us. It was very special, encouraging and heart-warming!

This is how it went. When I felt the first contractions one evening around my due date, I went to bed to get as much sleep as possible. I slept until the middle of the night, when things became uncomfortable and it was getting impossible to sleep. I got up and went into the living room. The house was silent. My partner and daughter were asleep. I covered the floor with old sheets, lit the fire and lit candles. For some hours I was hanging around there, from time to time tending the fire while contractions came and went. It was comforting to know that the midwives (in Craignure) would be with me within an hour after I rang them. But I felt no need for that, not yet. I felt perfectly calm and happy to be on my own. I rather felt like an animal hiding in a safe place to deliver her baby. I had read the little booklet by Ruth Ehrhardt "The Basic Needs of a Woman in Labour" and felt like putting it all into practice. Time passed and only towards the early morning did my contractions become more intense. I rang the midwives and soon after my partner woke up. It was just the right moment, because suddenly things went quickly. Contractions became regular and were very intense. Soon I had the feeling I needed to push. It felt like it wasn't me anymore who was doing the job, but something was working through me. There was no way I could resist the power which went through my body. My partner instinctively did what was needed and then he had our baby in his hands! He held her gently, talked to her and a moment later she started breathing peacefully. Then he passed her on to me.

The midwives arrived an hour after I'd rung them. But we were already settled and sitting on the sofa with our baby in my arms. A moment later our eldest daughter woke up to meet her little sister.

Marie is nearly three months old now. Born in peace, without any stress or anxiety, she started smiling within the first days of her life. She is a peaceful and contented

baby. The whole experience was as straightforward as a birth can be. (I have to say, this has been my very personal experience. I don't recommend ringing the midwives as late as I did. Most important is to discuss with the midwives in the weeks before the due date how you imagine the birth to be.) It has been wonderful and incredibly precious to be supported by one midwife all the way through from pre-natal care through birth till post-natal care. Mull is lucky to have Sheila based on the Island and that Lorn and Island Hospital in Oban are providing such good maternity care. With huge gratitude, *Charlot Buschgens* PS: Do you want to share your birth-story too? I'm working on a book about childbirth and I'm happy to receive more stories from women. Please get in touch with me. Each birth story is a unique and unforgettable experience worth sharing! [charlot.buschgens@posteo.de](mailto:charlot.buschgens@posteo.de)

## Toddlers on the Beach

Ross of Mull Toddler group decided that until it was possible to meet again in Creich Village Hall, they would meet on the beach.



*Photo by Martin Putsey*

Inspired by the activities of Dervaig Playgroup who ran "Wee Forest Folk" in autumn 2020, who helpfully pointed us in the direction of the appropriate Covid guidance we decided to take the plunge in December. First session was on Fionnphort Beach on 15th December, and buoyed by the success, the second session was planned for early January. Home Start provided a suitable risk assessment and relevant Covid guidelines were followed, which allowed the toddlers to run around in the sand and puddles after a short storytelling and rhyme session. We hope to continue once a month as long as guidelines allow.

*Jane Putsey Home Start Volunteer and Rebekah Palmer Ross of Mull Toddlers.*

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## Message from the Minister

For every circumstance in life, good or bad, there seems to be a relevant proverb that springs to mind; but as you're about to trot it out, it might be best to consider the old three-line test: is it true? is it kind? is it necessary? These might be summed up in the one question: does it help in the situation that confronts you?

'Every cloud has a silver lining' is one such. I am certain it is true. Whether it is always kind, or necessary to say it, I wonder. At the point where someone is suffering from a terminal illness that has just been diagnosed, or grieving deeply the loss of a family member, it is better to sit with them in empathetic silence, offering the solace of friendship and concern, than to give voice to cliches of any kind.

Silver linings are best recognised in retrospect, sometimes long after the event they relate to. As we plough our way through these days of coronavirus, we often feel there are few positives to be found. And yet, it has somehow created a better world, less polluted, more vibrant, quieter, with people paying more attention to their neighbours, even growing their own food, far more than previously.

Of course, we wish covid 19 had never hit us. The appalling number of those infected and those who have died from the virus stops us short. Can anything at all counterbalance the pain and sorrow that lie behind those statistics?

People of my grandparents', and maybe even my parents', generation would have quoted a familiar chorus in these circumstances: Count your blessings, name them one by one. We shall possibly do that more easily when we look back on these years in the future. But it's a really good exercise to stop and reflect at the end of every day on the good things the day has brought: the smile of greeting from someone who hardly spoke to us previously, the home baking dropped into our porch, the commitment to taking a little daily walk that helped lift our spirits. There is no day that is without its blessings, sometimes as basic as a warm bed to rise from, heathy food to eat, and enough of it, a sheltering home – we are by far the minority in the world enjoying these benefits.

The old chorus ends with the line 'and it will surprise you what the Lord has done'. Sometimes we find that we have only survived from day to day, but that in itself is a blessing. There is surely no situation so grim that it does not have a silver lining. We are alive - and that is God's primary gift, which we should never take for granted.

Nor should we take for granted the many little blessings that attend our every moment. If this coronavirus has helped us to pay more attention as we live our lives, that in itself will be a silver lining worth the title.

*Rev. Jenny Earl*

### THE THAW

The snow has almost gone  
from Dun da Ghaoithe.  
The sun did its best to seek out  
dark, shadowed crevices  
but it was rain, falling all day,  
that cleansed the last of it,  
clearing the land  
for the new growth of spring.

Nancy Somerville

## Letters Letters Letters Letters Letters

### Dear Editor

I have just completed a full cycle of chemotherapy following three operations at Oban Hospital during April to June of last year in the midst of the Covid emergency. The surgical team at Ward A headed by Ms Tolloczko was not only outstanding but deeply caring. My chemo nurses at Oban - Donna, Sandra, Gillian and Karen have been especially kind and skilled. Nearer to home I want to express huge gratitude to our medical team here in Mull. The hospital nurses Rosy, Cheryl Anne and their colleagues in Craignure Hospital were so supportive at the outset and our community nurse Jan was forever alert to my changing conditions over the months. The team of doctors at Bunessan Surgery were particularly attentive and their decisive action got me to hospital in time for critical interventions. The Bunessan receptionist team of Anne, Lisa and Emma always give me a great welcome. It is sometimes invidious to highlight individuals but I want particularly to thank Drs Erik Jespersen, Felicity Brand, Munro Stewart, Shasta Leban, Ruth McLean and Heather Munro. We are truly fortunate to have such a dedicated team caring for us at every level – all done with such professionalism in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

*Martin Caldwell*

### Island Retreat

Unable to go away? Fancy a change of scene or simply some time out from your normal routine?

Erraid is offering a special discount for a Retreat in our community for residents of Mull while the current government restrictions are in place. Why not come and join us for a week or more for just £200/person/week.

All our Retreat Guests have a cosy cottage to themselves for at least their first ten days; to keep everyone here safe from the virus. The view across to Mull from all the cottages is stunning and you can see the snow topped peak of Ben More most days. The cottages are heated with wood fired stoves that also run hot water to radiators. At this time of year we have plenty of water so we won't be asking you to use the outdoor compost loo!

Although you aren't able to eat with the rest of the community in our shared dining room, we'd provide food to your door on the days we cook communal lunches and dinners. On other days you are able to cook your own meal using organic vegetarian produce. We still have veg in the garden, with plenty stored from last season. And we buy in a wide range of other organic staples from rice to peanut butter!

During your stay there will be opportunities to learn about our community and plenty of time to explore this island, including visiting Balfour Bay and Hanging Rock. And nearby the Tireragan Nature Reserve is well worth exploring.

This special offer is open only to residents of Mull while all of mainland Scotland is in lockdown / level 4 and Mull is in Level 3, with hospitality cottages able to be open to local residents. Obviously we expect you to respect social distancing rules. See our website for general information:

[www.erraid.co.uk](http://www.erraid.co.uk) and email us at [erraid@live.co.uk](mailto:erraid@live.co.uk) if you wish to ask any questions / book. *The Erraid Community*

## Notices Notices Notices Notices

### Message to the Mull & Iona Community from PC Clare Chalmers

It's with mixed emotions that after a successful application and interview I have decided to take a new job posting on the mainland. I have been lucky and privileged to spend the last 8 years living in and policing the Isles of Mull and Iona and throughout that time I have made many fantastic memories and made some fabulous friends. You know who you all are. There are too many of you to mention. Mull & Iona has been one of the highlights of my life and career to date so this wasn't a decision taken lightly, but considering the last year and what we have all had to endure I feel the need to be nearer family and ease myself into retirement. It's been a pleasure serving, protecting and keeping you all safe. I will remember many of you for very different reasons. I want to wish my successor all the best and I hope they embrace and enjoy the posting as much as I did. Finally I wish all the people of Mull and Iona the very best of health and happiness, stay safe and remember "just be nice, be kind and do the right thing". *Clare*

LIP NA CLOICHE garden raised a total of £1,863.75 in donations in 2020, divided between Isle of Mull Riding for Disabled and Marie Curie Isle of Mull. No charity opening unfortunately, but hopefully it will happen again in 2021

### Dervaig Santa Present Drop;

Santa turned up just before Christmas to spread some much needed festive cheer to all the girls and boys! Due to amazing community generosity we were able to purchase just under 80 presents for all the Dervaig and Ulva kiddos age 0 - 6th year Dervaig premier started it off with a generous donation which NWMWCW matched, we then got some donations from Pete and Isabel, Dave and Sharon and Helen and Craig, Dervaig Premier then very kindly topped us up to the full amount! Thank you so much Dugie and Margaret! A massive thank you to my partner in crime Michelle who spent hours beautifully wrapping everything and her amazing organisation skills which made for a smooth distribution! Also a massive thank you to Santa an amazing job and not a single grumble about being bounced about a cold soggy pick up! The community spirit and joy and smiles from all your kids absolutely made our night and our Christmas what a lovely polite bunch of wee people. *Erin Turnbull*

### Ar cànan

**Gaelic:** Is luach mìle facal dealbh

Phonetically: Iss loo-uch meeluh fachkul jaluv (ch as in loch)

**English:** A picture is worth a thousand words

# CLASSIFIED INFORMATION & JOBS



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**I have moved to the Isle of Mull** and I'm looking for full or  
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## Invitation to Tender Grounds Maintenance - Mull 2021 - 2025



West Highland Housing Association Ltd will be inviting tenders  
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Tenders will be issued during March 2021.

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Contractors with the necessary skills, qualifications and  
experience are invited to register their interest by emailing  
the Association [mail@westhighlandha.co.uk](mailto:mail@westhighlandha.co.uk)  
by Monday 25th February 2021

Contractors expressing an interest will then be invited to  
complete a short pre-qualification questionnaire as well  
as providing copies of certificates, insurances along with  
references. Contractors that meet the requirements will be  
invited to submit a tender.

# CHURCH NOTICES

## THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Main Street, Tobermory

\*Information, phone:  
01680 300116 (Lorna)  
or 01688 302699 (Bill)

\*Bookings, email:  
catherinehenderson26@  
gmail.com

## OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH, Tobermory

Served from St Columba's  
RC Cathedral, Oban.

[www.catholicchurchmull.co.uk](http://www.catholicchurchmull.co.uk)  
(click on noticeboard)  
or phone Mgr James MacNeil,  
Cathedral administrator  
01631 562123

## Isle of Iona Catholic House of Prayer

For information  
telephone the  
Warden 01681 700369  
[www.catholic-iona.com](http://www.catholic-iona.com)

The Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Mull & Iona Quaker Meeting

### Meeting for Worship each Sunday from 10am by zoom.

All face to face activities are currently suspended.  
**Please contact Rob Claxton-Ingham**  
([claxtoninghamrob@gmail.com](mailto:claxtoninghamrob@gmail.com), 07961423216,  
01681 700465) for an invite.

You will be made welcome.

[www.quakerscotland.org/mullandiona](http://www.quakerscotland.org/mullandiona)

**February**

**February**

## ST COLUMBA'S

Scottish Episcopal Church Gruline

(in Communion with the Church of England)

(on the Salen/Gruline road just beyond the Ulva Ferry turn-off)

Sunday Worship has re commenced.

Due to the limited seating capacity a seat has to be booked.

Please see church notice board for details.

Gwynneth Pinchbeck (Bishop's Warden)

## IONA ABBEY SERVICES

Daily worship at Iona Abbey

at 9am-9.30am Monday - Saturday

Sunday Morning Service at 10.30am

*Covid restrictions apply, details at [iona.org.uk](http://iona.org.uk)*



## CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

### NORTH MULL

**Dervaig** Look out for local advertising

### Salen and Ulva

Sundays 7th and 21st February at 10.15

**Tobermory** Sunday 7th February at 11.00

**Torosay** Sundays 14th and 28th at 12 noon

Services will vary in content but include prayers,  
bible readings, a short reflection and music with  
hymn tunes to hum to.

Everyone welcome at any of the services ensuring  
Covid guidelines are adhered to.

### THE ROSS OF MULL AND IONA

#### The Ross:

Morning Prayers every Wednesday at 11.00,  
alternating between Bunessan and St. Ernan's, Creich:  
Bunessan 3rd and 17th February,  
Creich 10th and 24th February

#### Iona Parish Church:

Morning Prayers every Friday at 11.00

Similar content to North Mull (above)

**Iona:** Church of Scotland service once a month  
on the third Sunday (21st February) at 10.30,  
in Iona Abbey Church.

**A reflection and prayers** from the Minister are  
available every week from first thing on Sunday  
morning, on the dedicated 'phone line:  
01681 424034, especially thinking of those without  
internet access.

**Minister: Rev Jenny Earl**

**01681 700239** [Jearl@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Jearl@churchofscotland.org.uk)

### Bishop's House on Iona

Eucharist every Wednesday at 2.45 pm.

Numbers are limited. Book by Monday at the latest.

**01681 700525** e-mail [joyce@iona76.plus.com](mailto:joyce@iona76.plus.com)



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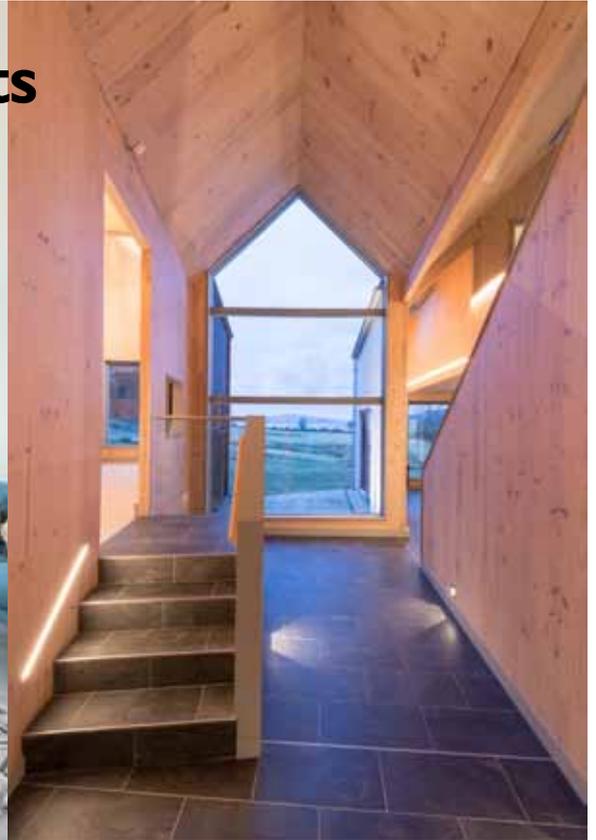
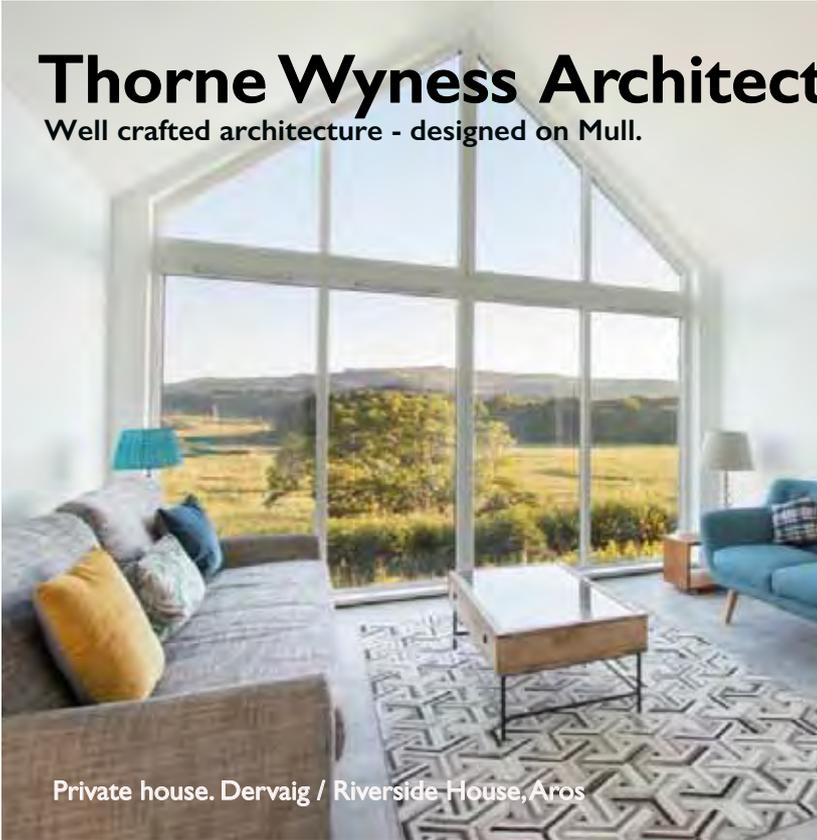
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**07880362007**

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