

# SEPTEMBER 2022

# Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust Newsletter

## John McNeill

We are very sad to share the news that Gigha resident John McNeill has passed away. John was a very popular member of the community, who loved creel fishing and always kept himself active as shown in the photograph below. He will be sadly missed.



This is John McNeill in his 82nd year with Clydesdale horses Tommy and Poacher. They are guided by Michael Mayberry, towing a plough restored by Neil MacPhail of Glenbarr, owner of the Clydesdales. This photograph was taken on the site of the Dancing Ladies in 2013.

## Gigha and Cara Parish Church

The meeting held in the Church on September 11th resulted in an unanimous vote for the union of the parishes of Gigha and Cara with Kilcalmonell (Clachan), Killean and Kilchenzie (A'Chleit) and Skipness. The new parish is to be called Mid Kintyre and Gigha. A unanimous vote to link Mid Kintyre and Gigha with Tarbert Loch Fyne and Kilberry with the Rev. Lyn Peden as our Minister. We are working to get this accomplished by the end of this year so that we start 2023 as the new parish.

Holy Communion will be celebrated at the next service in the Church at 11am on Sunday 9th October with the Rev Anne McIvor. The Harvest Thanksgiving will be on Sunday 16th October. All gifts will be donated to the Campbeltown Food Bank and there will be a collection for Christian Aid.

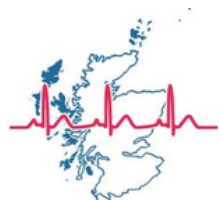
## Tea in the Hall

After a long break, the IGHT Directors are bringing back Tea in the Hall! All are welcome to come along on Wednesday 26th October between 2 and 4pm at Gigha Village Hall.

Donations will be gratefully received to be passed on to a chosen charity.

We plan to hold another Tea in the Hall on Wednesday November 23rd.

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VIKING Genes



MRC Human  
Genetics  
Unit



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH



## Viking Genes study looking for Gigha volunteers

A University of Edinburgh study is seeking people with at least two grandparents from Gigha, or any other Hebridean isle, to join a genetics and health study. Viking Genes aims to better understand the causes of conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer, while also revealing the genetic history of the Southern Hebrides for the first time. 8000 people with grandparents from Orkney and Shetland have volunteered so far, and there are clear signs that they are genetically distinct from the rest of the British Isles. Preliminary work on the Hebrides shows this is also the case for Skye, Lewis and Harris. The Edinburgh team have therefore extended their work so people with Hebridean ancestry can contribute to medical research and learn more about how genes might be implicated in their health. It's very easy to join up online, complete a questionnaire and then a saliva kit is sent through the post for DNA. Those living in the UK who volunteer to be part of the study can choose to have information on particular genetic results returned to them through the NHS. This information could be useful for the future healthcare, including taking preventative actions to reduce the impact of any genetic findings. It doesn't matter where in the world you live, from Gigha to Canada, if you have or had two, three or four grandparents from Gigha or any of the other isles, you are eligible. Prof Jim Flett Wilson from Orkney, who leads the study, said: "I am very excited to learn more about the origins of the population of Gigha and the southern Hebrides more broadly, as this interesting historical crossroads between Ireland and Pictland has not been well studied. At the same time we hope to perform the first survey of genetic variants which might be important for healthcare. For example, we found a breast cancer variant to be 500 times more common in Orkney and it would be valuable to know if anything like that is also true in the southern Hebrides."

To read more and sign up for the study, go to [www.ed.ac.uk/viking](http://www.ed.ac.uk/viking)

## Community Hub

The Community Hub is open to membership, offering exercise equipment including cross trainer, rower and weight bench. There is also a kitchen / lounge area including Wi-Fi and television (with Disney+ sign in required). Membership can be paid annually or monthly. If you would like to enquire about membership, please contact [shona@gigha.org.uk](mailto:shona@gigha.org.uk) or telephone 01583 505390.



Membership Type	Annual Fee	Monthly Fee
Adult	£100	£10
<u>12-16 year old</u>	£40	£3.50
Family*	£180	£15

\*Family Membership: 2x adults and up to 2x 12-16 year olds

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## Gigha Ranger Service

September has already gone and autumn is now here. We are already seeing some of the leaves turning, but now the reduced sunlight hours means the leaves will start to reduce their chlorophyll (the bit that makes them green) more readily, making way for the oranges and browns of the season. We are also still seeing the last of the migratory birds such as the swallows! Take them in while you can as the reduced sunlight hours and colder weather will cause them to head on their journeys to warmer climates very soon!

This month our Community Heritage Project has continued, with an amazing weekend with Jim MacDonald, member of Geological Society of Glasgow, who kindly gave an evening talk in Gigha Hotel – a big thank you to all the staff who helped us with the catering for the evening, it was a huge success! Jim also took us for a ramble across the north end of the island in the glorious sunshine to see some Gigha geology in action (albeit very very very slow action).



Additionally, experts from Glasgow University joined us this month to carry out 3D imaging of the Ogham Stone, examined two other potential Ogham examples on island, and ran a community drop in



session to give participants a shot at capturing the inscription to be used in the 3D imaging software.

We hope to share the end product of these images soon, but here's what they have produced so far!



These images and models will give us a better idea of the age of the stone, the inscriptions, the peoples that would have used them and what weight our stone has among others in the UK (not physically, but culturally!)

Please keep an eye out on the noticeboard for our upcoming events, or get in touch:

- Forest School session on harvesting tree seeds to start our own Gigha seed bank for future planting schemes.
- The conservation volunteers will be tackling the rhododendron ponticum in our woodlands.
- Kilmartin Museum will be joining Gigha Primary through the Community Heritage Project to learn all about the Stone Age and Bronze Age in Argyll, with an evening drop in session at the Village Hall on 4th October for the community to see the children's mobile museum!



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## Gigha Primary School

September has been a very busy month for pupils at Gigha Primary School and Early Learning Centre (ELC). At the beginning of the month we took part in the Roots and Industry Show at the Village Hall and were delighted to come away with prizes for various baked entries and our wind chimes. We were especially pleased with our first prize award for the cheese scones and rosettes awarded for our lemon drizzle cake also. Pupils kindly shared their winning produce with members of the community.

Within the classroom pupils have been learning lots about life in the Stone Age across a variety of lessons. Pupils came up with questions about what life was like in this time period and have been working hard to find the answers to these. Pupils have especially enjoyed finding out about food which would have been available in the Stone Age period and how this is different to what we can source today. In the ELC, children have shown a great interest in minibeast and have been exploring the island in search of them. Our new starters in the ELC have settled in well and are enjoying making new friends.

We have also had several visitors to the school this month. Older pupils have also been working with Lindsay Ramsay from Active Sports, to help develop their skills as playground leaders. This is helping them to build the knowledge and skills needed to lead a selection of playground games to the rest of the school. The Primary School and ELC also had a visit from Catherine and Caroline from Child Smile and continued to learn about the importance of good dental hygiene. Catherine and Caroline were very impressed to see such sparkling smiles!

The school children have also made excellent developments within the Bee Wild area thanks to the weekly sessions with IGHT Community Ranger, Casey Jo. Pupils have stripped the area of dead plants and rubbish and have increased the diversity of plants and wild flowers. We are excited to see a new walkway installed next week which will allow the pupils (and flying insects) to move within the area. The School and ELC would like to thank the community for their generous donation of plants which we are endeavouring to care for.

## Gateway to Gigha

In the past few weeks, we have been planning and preparing for a busy couple of months ahead on the Gateway project. The remainder of the Phase 2 path works will be completed between October 26th (when the Arran Footpaths team return) and December. This will include the installation of fingerposts across the network and some additions and adjustments to the waymarking, so that any navigational issues should be addressed. More steppingstones are to be added near the start of the Fisherman's Cave path and stone pitching (like steps) will be installed on the Dun Chibhich and Ogham Stone routes. A big task will be the building of our boardwalk at the north end of the island, greatly improving access around muddy Port Mor towards Carn Ban.

Plans are also complete for the creation of the proposed route from the campsite to the road near Croft 3-4 and we now await the consent of Planning Permission and the appointment of a suitable contractor.

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## Gateway to Gigha

The rest of the interpretation stone 'plinths' meanwhile will be completed hopefully by the end of October, with the panels for fitting on top and lectern-style 'wayfinders' arriving around then too.



Our fleet of electric bikes for hire will be joined overwinter by a few adaptive additions – a mountain e-trike is on order, as is a power-assisted hand cycle, with a beach wheelchair to follow in the springtime.

It's a diverse project for sure, and every month sees new challenges and rewards. I look forward to reporting to you again in a few short weeks.

## Achamore Gardens

Susan Allan has donated £50 from the sale of her plum jam to Achamore Gardens. Susan's support and contribution to the Gardens is as ever very much appreciated.

## Macmillan Cancer Support lunch

### Soup & Sandwich Lunch - supporting Macmillan Cancer Support

Gigha Village Hall  
Saturday 1st October  
12.30pm - 2pm

All donations gratefully received!  
Raffle!

**No fixed price - happy to receive donations!**

**Maggie Wilkieson 505234**



Registered with  
FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

Fundraising for

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

Organised in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (104). Also operating in Northern Ireland.