



## THE HEBRIDEAN TRUST

### Newsletter - July 2000

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**Issue 01**

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### Treshnish Isles - survey reveals at least 3000 visitors per year to Lunga

Members of a Hebridean Trust team visited the [Treshnish Isles](#) over a 4 day period from 28th to 31st May 2000. Landing parties visited Lunga, Fladda, Cairn na Burgh Mór, Cairn na Burgh Beg, Dutchman's Cap (Bac Mór) and Bac Beag as well as some of the offlying skerries. The group was impressed by the outstanding natural value the islands represent, making them one of the most important acquisitions The Hebridean Trust has made.

The visit presented an opportunity to speak to the local boatmen who service the islands and land on Lunga, bringing over 3000 members of the public a year to view the marvellous puffin and guillemot colonies and enjoy the dramatic island scenery. A number of visiting yachts were also observed and it is not known how many such casual visitors Lunga has.

The [Treshnish Isles](#) have been the subject of a long standing seabird survey and an opportunity arose to liaise with workers from the survey group.

Future survey work and collation of scientific data will be an important part of a management plan for the islands.

The Hebridean Trust intends to manage the islands in co-operation with The National Trust for Scotland which has properties nearby including the world famous heritage sites at Staffa and Iona. Andrew Bachell, Director of Countryside and Robin Turner, Senior Archaeologist at NTS were also able to join the Hebridean Trust team and contribute their assessment of the natural history and archaeology of the islands.

Further visits to the islands will be made later this year and work has already begun on a management plan for the islands. Priority will be given to raising visitor awareness of the islands' natural history and the status of the castles on the Cairn na Burgh islands as ancient monuments.

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### Samba percussion group set for a week of Latin rhythms

## at Hynish, Isle of Tiree

The [Hynish Centre](#), including Alan Stevenson House and Morton Boyd House, the award winning conversion of the Old Stables at Hynish has increased letting to visiting groups by over 50% on the previous year. Among guests taking advantage of the new multifunction hall facilities this year are 'One Voice Music' from Manchester. 'One Voice Music' is an arts organisation established in 1996 to promote the teaching and performance of Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban music. The possibility of a course on Scotland's "sunshine island" has caught the imagination of budding percussionists and the highly acclaimed guest tutor, Dudu Tucci, has filled accommodation capacity at Hynish during the second week in September and other guest houses are being sought to accommodate further students.

Our resident warden, Monica Smith is also looking forward to welcoming Lochore Windsurfing group in late Autumn and special needs education groups who will be enjoying pony trekking during their stay.

See our web page for more information on the [Hynish Centre](#) and to find out if accommodation is available. Use our online booking form or contact our office (see end of newsletter for address).

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## Isle of Tiree - Trust takes a long term approach to investment and tourism

Taken from a letter printed in Oban Times - 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2000

I was very pleased to see a whole page of the Oban Times dedicated to Tiree last Thursday (8th June). Like many other Hebridean islands, Tiree has all too often been forgotten by commerce and other mainstream interests and the community has been forced to confront the very real problems of unemployment, under investment and depopulation.

The focus of the article on the problems faced by agriculture was important because these are felt acutely throughout the west Highlands. Frankly it seems amazing that sufficient grant-in-aid is not available to construct a new livestock market. Perhaps, based upon purely economic criteria, the vision of a new market on Tiree may not be entirely justified but, when combined with its social place within the community and the style of agriculture, which it supports, the market is essential. The economic and social consequences of having a modern livestock market stretch far beyond the trade in the market itself.

I was a little disappointed, however, that your article did not mention some of the other important activities on the island. Over the past 10 years I have been working with the Hebridean Trust to raise funding for investment in the infrastructure of Tiree and other islands.

Since 1982 the Trust has been working to regenerate the historical village of Hynish at the southwest tip of Tiree and this has brought employment and income to the island as well as accommodation for island residents. Amongst the steps the Trust has taken to encourage the economy of the island through tourism has been the establishment of the Skerryvore and Sandaig museums and also through the provision of accommodation for visitors.

We have achieved this by taking a long-term approach to raising funds from a variety of statutory agencies and we intend to continue this into the future. But we are also acutely aware that we are only able to scratch the surface of what is needed and also what could be achieved.

The community itself is working hard to raise the funds for essential infrastructure including both a new community hall and the livestock market. The projects run by the Hebridean Trust on Tiree should not be seen in isolation from these other activities because the growth of a sustainable island economy requires the parallel development of several mutually supportive initiatives.

Professor Ian L. Boyd 13/6/00

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## St. Edward's Centre on schedule for August fit out

The progress of conversion work at St. Edward's Chapel on the island of Sanday (joined to Canna at low water) has received excellent reports from representatives of [The National Trust for Scotland](#) and the Canna Advisory Group who visited the island on the m/v Hebridean Princess during May. The Hebridean Trust has raised over £800,000 in collaboration with [The Heritage Lottery Fund](#) and [Historic Scotland](#) and is managing the project with architects ARP Lorimer Associates of Ayr.

The centre will be run by [The National Trust For Scotland](#) and provide accommodation and work spaces for up to 12 visitors at a time including students of natural sciences and the Gaelic archive, NTS base camp groups and holiday visitors.

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## Canna Library - Project receives attention from national media

The Hebridean Trust will build a new home for the unique archive collection of Gaelic material held at Canna House. As a second phase to the accommodation provided at Sanday, advanced study students will be given access to the library collections of the late John Lorne Campbell and the sound archive which provides a unique record of Hebridean culture through song and folklore collected from the 1920s to the present day.

Visitors will also be able to view the pictorial records of Margaret Fay Shaw which document the lives of ordinary people in the Hebrides from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

See below for a full article.

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## One woman's mission to save Gaelic language - by Ian Rees

Adapted from an article by Andrew Buncombe courtesy of The Independent (13<sup>th</sup> June 2000).

The opening of a new Gaelic study centre in the Hebrides will mark the conclusion of a love story that encouraged one woman to help save a language at risk of extinction, on a headland overlooking a bay on the remote island of Canna.

From the windows of her large Victorian house, Margaret Campbell has watched as work has progressed to convert Canna's 19th-century St Edward's church. The work will be finished in weeks, and the first visitors will arrive. Their arrival will complete Mrs Campbell's lifetime's ambition.

The former Catholic church is being renovated to house scholars arriving to use the vast collection of Gaelic music and literature collected by Mrs Campbell and her late husband, the island's former laird John Lorne Campbell. The Hebridean Trust, which is funding the £860,000 restoration, is also building a library adjoining Mrs Campbell's home, which will house the collection. The 96-year-old is very positive about the project. "We achieved what we set out to do. And there are very few people who can say that," she said. Mrs Campbell came to the Hebrides in 1929 from New York, where she had studied music to become a professional pianist. Inspired by a folk singer she heard, she chose South Uist - a harsh granite outcrop south-west of Skye.

She spent six years on the island, living with two sisters and collecting traditional folk music, transcribing the songs, and taking photographs of the islanders who became her friends. Her work formed the basis of two well-regarded books on Gaelic culture.

There she met and fell in love with John Lorne Campbell, a Gaelic scholar, whom she married. Mr Campbell bought Canna in 1938. The pair devoted their lives to amassing a collection of rare Gaelic books, documents, wax records and music that had been recorded onto wire cylinders.

The Campbells' friends included the writer Sir Compton Mackenzie, the author of *Whisky Galore* (a comedy film from 1949), who gave them his now ageing black typewriter.

Mr Campbell died four years ago but his wife never considered leaving their home. Mrs Campbell, who misses her husband terribly, takes some comfort from the fact that work is about to begin on the library and study centre. The archive is now being organised by another friend of the couple, Magda Sagarzua, a Basque woman. It is hoped that the study will have online links to the Gaelic university Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye and Gaelic colleges in Nova Scotia, Canada.

The position of Gaelic in Scotland is fragile. Experts say there are no more than 70,000 speakers, despite an injection of funding in recent years to revive the language. Angus Peter Campbell, a poet who teaches at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, said: "The language is dying but at the same time it is being born. Every year on Skye four Gaelic speakers who are over the age of 65 will die and one will be born. The mathematics shows you the difficulty in sustaining the language."

The collection's value cannot be overemphasised. In the 1930s, the Campbells spoke to people whose grandparents knew the 18th century.

But the study centre will do more than help a threatened language; it will also help a threatened community. From a population of 436 in 1821, before the Highland clearances, Canna's community has dwindled to 14. The islanders - who received 24-hour electricity for the first time last month - hope the National Trust will appoint a hostel warden who is married with a family. Winefride MacKinnon, who represents Canna on the Small Isles community council, said: "The trend [in the highlands and islands] has been towards tourism. This will be something different to bring people to the island."

Meanwhile, Mrs Campbell spends every day using Sir Compton's typewriter to answer her post or playing one of her three pianos. "That was by Strauss," she said, after a faultless performance on her Steinway. "The next is a lament performed by a woman I met on South Uist whose sweetheart drowned in the Sound of Canna." And she returned to the keys, filling the huge house with the sad sounds of a music she had helped to save.

## Upper Square, Hynish – Funding gap nearly bridged for conversion and preservation of Lighthouse Keepers' Cottages

£700,000 is the estimated bill for putting the [Lighthouse Keepers' Cottages](#) back into use as homes and preserving them as an important historical landmark. We have received support from The Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council as well as a number of private grant making trusts.

Further support is needed to close the funding gap and the project, which has been planned since the mid 1990s will not go ahead until it is full funded.

If you can help in any way please see the section on how to join the Friends of the Hebrides.

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### Join the Friends of the Hebridean Trust



We need your support! We invite you to join the Friends of The Hebridean Trust where you will be helping us to conserve the unique Hebridean way of life and environment. Your [membership](#) or [donation](#) can help develop new projects, to ensure future generations will continue to enjoy a rich and varied experience of life in the Hebrides.

See our pages on [membership](#) and learn more about the other ways you can [help the Hebridean Trust](#).

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