

2011

Welcome to the second instalment of *Na Tasglannaichean*, the newsletter of Tasglann nan Eilean Siar.

Our new start and graduate trainee Donna has been settling in over the past few months, and has recently completed the archive collection of Scalpay bard D R Morrison, highlights of which can be found on the blog.

Donna has also been busy visiting working archives on the mainland as part of her training, including a few unintended extra visits thanks to the frozen fog Scotland suffered before Christmas! For more on this see 'Fog Bound' to the right.

Meanwhile the rest of the team has been kept busy

planning events and training for the coming year.

January has seen Donna and David travel down to Barra to repatriate School Log Books and work with the historical society there.

We will soon be holding an event in Stornoway Library based on Stornoway's streets (inspired by the brilliant BBC series 'Turn Back Time: The High Street'). The event will be co-hosted with Stornoway Historical Society and should be a very interesting evening!

In May we will be heading down to Benbecula to host a meeting of the An Caidreachas of Lewis and Harris and the historical societies of the Southern Isles, including representation from Hebridean Connections.

This event will help to build bridges between the groups and encourage the transfer of archive knowledge and skills across the Comainn Eachdraidh.

Another event that will be held in May has been inspired by the collection of the Lewis Society of Detroit. This collection shows the close bonds between those who emigrated and the bonds to those back home in Lewis. The collection is housed in Stornoway Library, and is available for research upon request.



Finally, we have been working on the Tasglann webpage, blog and twitter feed, links to which you will find overleaf.



Fog bound

Due to the extremely seasonal weather, Donna's initial visit to the Scottish Catholic Archives (above) and Scotland's People was extended to include the Mitchell Library Glasgow University Library Special Collections.

Highlights of her visit included a look at GUL's MacLagan manuscripts; a collection of Gaelic manuscripts collected by Rev James MacLagan between 1749 and 1805 and the Mitchell's vast collection of Dean of Guild's building plans.

For more on Donna's visit, log on to our blog!

From the archives: Lord Leverhulme's Christmas Card



<http://bit.ly/tasglann>

For those of you who are not (yet!) following our blog, here is the Christmas card from Lord Leverhulme which was used for our final Friday Photo of last year. This features shows a sharp contrast from Lord Leverhulme's earlier positive thoughts about the island, and features the following somewhat negative poem:

There's a sunny side to the darkest road,
On the difficult journey of life;
There are golden hours when we slip off
the load,
Of the blackest hours of strife.
Yet some queer folk seem to like the
gloom,
And the discord of strain and stress;
They look upon life as a step to the tomb,
And the world as a wilderness
Life's much what we make it; then let us
steep,
Our heart in the joys that last,
And if sorrow assails us we still may keep,
The gold of glad days that are past!

It's all in a name... The Baltic Bookshop



Sandy Matheson and Donna

Katie Anne and I were fortunate enough to sit down and speak with a well known face around Stornoway, Sandy Matheson who owns The Baltic Bookshop on Cromwell Street. He was kind enough to tell us the story of how the bookshop came to be named "Baltic." Sandy told us how his grand uncle, Roderick Smith had trained to become a chemist and

after some years working on the Isle of Man, he returned to his home town and bought premises in Stornoway.

However, this is only half the story, for the rest click onto our blog site to listen to the full interview with Sandy!

A big thank you goes to Sandy for taking time to speak to us and telling the fascinating story.

Preservation Assessment Survey

The week of the 7th March saw the Tasglann project visited by Linda Ramsay, Head of Conservation with the National Archives of Scotland.

She was visiting to assist David in undertaking a Preservation Assessment Survey (PAS) of the archive collections. Funded by the Scottish Council on Archives, the PAS uses a toolkit developed by the British Library based on Preservation Advisory Centre.

Working together, David and Linda assessed a sample of 400 items from the archives collection including volumes, files, papers, parchments, maps

and plans. Questions were answered relating to their storage environment, and levels of use and scorings were given on their physical condition and state of preservation.

The British Library, who will now assess the data gathered and generate a report giving an overview of the collections preservation in comparison with the national average and give recommendations on how we can improve on practices to ensure the future preservation of the collection.

We will report more on the outcomes of the survey in the next issue!



Linda with the 400 completed forms

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