

## De Tha Dol -8

### EILEAN GLAS LIGHTHOUSE PATH OPENING

Last year, Scalpay Community Council completed a new footpath to Eilean Glas Lighthouse which now provides a firm, dry route to this iconic and beautiful area. The new path makes it more accessible for walkers as they no longer have to pick their way across a muddy and uneven moor.

The path was a joint initiative with Landscape Partnership Scheme, Harris Development Ltd and Scalpay Community Council. Much praise is due to the project officer, Joan Cumming for all the effort and hard work she put in to ensuring the successful completion of the path and the provision of new signage and also to the contractor Duncan MacKay and his workers who did an amazing job in some of the wettest weather we have had for a while.



If you haven't already been on the new path it is a well worthwhile walk, not too difficult, with spectacular views on the way as well as when you get to the lighthouse. There are leaflets available un Buth Scalpaigh giving directions and information on this and other walks on the Island.

The official opening ceremony was conducted by Alastair MacIntosh while he was here for the Mountain Festival and below is a transcript of his words. We were very grateful to Mr MacIntosh for making time in his busy schedule to do this and for his thoughtful words.

Alasdair MacIntosh, Saturday 13th September 2014.  
Scalpay Community Council.

*"Thank you for the honour of inviting me to your Island today to open this new footpath. I can see that much care, thought and hard work has gone into its construction. On behalf of all those who will walk it in years to come, thank you for sharing part of the history and beauty of Scalpay with the world this way.*

*"Thank you especially, to the office bearers and members of the Scalpay Community Council whose vision and hope for their island is in part expressed here. Thank you also to the Landscape Partnership Scheme administered by Harris Development Ltd that provided much of the funding, and the project officer. Thank you to the contractors, and to all who helped in unseen ways.*

*"My thoughts turn now to the walkers whose pleasure it will be to tread upon this path. Who will they be? Some of them will be local residents, others will be visitors from afar. Who knows who might walk here in a strangers guise? One thing is for sure, all of them, no matter how near or how far they might have come from, will share a common experience as they set foot. That common experience is that they will be walking towards a light. Then walking back again. Back into the world from which they came.*

*"I ask you this question. Will they be so doing only for exercise? Or to enjoy the stunning views and take the fresh air? Or is it possible that something more will happen in the minds and hearts of these people? For to walk out towards a light, and carry something of it back to where one came from - why? - that is not a neutral thing to do.*

*"I ask you at a deeper level. What does "light" symbolise in this community? On this island? Is it possible that some of those walkers will carry out along this track their questions, concerns and hopes about their lives? Their spiritual journeys?*

*"Whether they are aware of the text or not, is it not possible that some might ask within themselves? Might ask: "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come" (Is 21.11-12) Our mornings. Our nights. Our calling out. Our coming to return.*

*"In short, our pilgrimage of life. And thus that old Scottish Paraphrase: "O God of Bethel, by those hand/thy people are still fed,/ who through this weary pilgrimage/hast all our fathers led." Amongst the carvings in St. Clements Church behind Roineabhal over there is a scallop shell, the ancient Christian symbol of pilgrimage, associated with the apostle James. This is what a walk out to the lighthouse can mean. A mini pilgrimage.*

*"Like rays upon a scallop shell, the pilgrim converges in towards the hinge and then goes out along divergent paths back to the world from whence they came. We know that Luther preached against pilgrimages. In his time they had become the root of "countless causes of sin" because they had been corrupted to enrich self-serving local clergy.*

*"Well I don't think that the Reverend Coghill standing here with us today is likely to get rich from the Scalpay Lighthouse Path! But I do not think that the honest simplicity of this lovely walking way will stir in those who step upon it, deeper thoughts and feelings about their lives.*

*"Like where the Psalmist says: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps 119:105). If I had to choose a text to mark this pathway, something that would reflect the values of this ancient spiritual community on Scalpay, that would be my suggestion.*

*"Let me repeat. To walk towards a light. To carry something of it back with one. These are not neutral things to do. We all know, even those who might understandably wrestle with its theological framing, what light symbolises in this community.*

*"It is "the light of the world" that guides the storm-stricken vessels of our lives past jagged rocks and deceptive shallows. It is "the light of the world" that we are invited to be bearers of. To give light to all the house. To shine forth in ways that glorify, and enjoy forever.*

*"For me at least, as your invited guest today, those are the thoughts that have arisen as I contemplate a community like this builds a path like this that leads to a place like this. That is what I glimpse in Scalpay, just as "a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.*

*"Such, I am certain, would echo the prayers that past generations of this island's lighthouse keepers will have sent across the seas. Sent out as watchmen of the night. Echoing, evermore, within eternity; and listening for us to respond.*

*"People of Scalpay, I shall now hand over to the Reverend Andrew Coghill of the Free Church of Scotland. On behalf of us all, whatever of denomination if any, let us invite him to as a blessing on this endeavour. It shall then be my pleasure to cut this Harris Tweed Ribbon and formally to declare the Scalpay Lighthouse Pathway - open."*

#### CROSSROADS DONATION

Crossroads (Harris) would like to acknowledge with sincere thanks, the generous donation of £500 from John Brownie Morrison.

Crossroads exists to provide respite care in the home to carers of ill, elderly and people with disabilities. We also provide support for ill, elderly or people with disabilities who live alone.

The scheme has received funding from Change Fund to provide long-term night respite. If you wish for more information on any of our services, please contact Morag Munro

## DEATHS

*The sympathy of the community is extended to the bereaved relatives of Mrs Peggy Strachan, Harris House, formerly Kyles*

## WANTED

### HERRING NETS

### PLEASE CONTACT

**7764859**

## BUCKIE FISH VAN

Every Thursday

An Clachan, Leverburgh

11.30-12.00

Harris inn car park

2.30-3.00

Wide range of white fish ,  
smoked fish and shellfish

Contact Sean on :

**8251816**

( weather permitting and  
God willing)