

IN BRIEF

Interconnector progress

Progress is being made towards the construction of an interconnector across the Minch. The plan has been on the table for several years now but it is believed developers have made inroads and construction work could start by the end of this year. The £400 million project would allow the Western Isles to export renewable energy through the connection. The plan is subject to approval from Orkney.

Exam Results Helpline

Young people from Eilean Siar's schools and colleges will be among 160,000 students in Scotland who will get their exam results on Tuesday, August 7th. Whether they are thinking about university or college, training, getting a job or need another option, help is at hand with a free call to the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Exam Results Helpline on 0808 100 8000. SDS Chief Executive Damien Yeates said: "The Exam Results Helpline will be live from 8am on August 7th as people begin to receive their SQA qualifications. It's there to give advice and support to students and their parents whether they are thinking about going to college or university, getting a job or a Modern Apprenticeship."

Steps to improve care of terminally ill patients

The local health service has taken key steps to enhance the care provided to terminally ill patients in the Western Isles, to improve the emotional care of patients and ensure the highest possible quality of life for patients and their families.

The organisation has signed up to 'Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief', which is a Scottish initiative to encourage people to speak more openly about dying and bereavement.

The initiative is based on the belief that unnecessary harm is caused because people in Scotland are not open about death, dying and bereavement. By joining this alliance, NHS Western Isles and other partners can share strengths, challenges, problems and priorities, and improve systems and cultures in local areas. Macmillan Lead Cancer Nurse Gill Chadwick said: "The alliance will act as a support, a sounding board, and a network of like-minded people, to help individuals and organisations, such as NHS Western Isles, undertake the change they think needs to happen."

Double nomination success story for MG ALBA

MG ALBA has warmly welcomed the news that FilmG, its Gaelic Short film competition and the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards have both been short-listed for awards at the Scottish Event Awards 2012.

FilmG has been nominated in the best Cultural Event category while the Trad Awards have been nominated in the Best Traditional category.

This follows on from the Trad nomination in the Arts and Business Scotland Awards which was announced recently. FilmG, which has been nominated in the Best Cultural Event category.

The Scottish Event Awards in association with EventScotland, are now in their fourth year and are judged by an independent panel of individuals with extensive experience within the events industry.

The 2012 Awards will be presented in Glasgow on Thursday 6th September. Donald Campbell, Chief Executive of MG ALBA said "This has been a great week for MG ALBA and our partners."

Watch the new Island ferry being built online

CONTINUED FROM P1

Mr Patten replied: "The proof of the pudding will be in the eating but MV Lewis will stay here on stand by and there will be times when the ship will have to go for dry docking."

He admitted that the ship was likely to have teething problems but that they had put a huge amount of time and effort into making the vessel as reliable as possible.

WEBCAMS AND WIFI

The rest of the detailed design work is due to be carried out between now and August 2013. The ship will be built in just six months and will launch in March 2014 and be delivered at 11am on June 30th 2014.

The public will be able to watch the ship being built live on the internet as webcams are installed at the FSC's shipyard.

David Cannon from Calmac was also at the meeting and was asked about the inclusion of WiFi internet connection on

Looking for Neolithic answers in South Uist

Archaeological dig turns up some interesting finds at An Doirlinn site

by Jenny Kane

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A four week dig in South Uist is coming to an end this Saturday, but the significance of the finds could help archaeologists uncover the secrets of the Neolithic.

The Stepping Stones project, directed by Duncan Garrow from the University of Liverpool and Fraser Sturt from the University of Southampton, has uncovered remarkable pieces of pottery and relics on An Doirlinn, near Orsay - some of which date back to 3500BC.

It is hoped that these finds will help answer questions about the arrival of the Neolithic period - the time when hunting and gathering wild animals and plants gave way to farming.

The dry summer has been perfect for the dig, which is part of a bigger project being carried out over a three year period around the western seaway of the British Isles. Duncan and Fraser are now one and a half years in and have been surprised by the amount of success they have had on Uist.

"It's been brilliant," Duncan said. "Better than we hoped. The site had never been dug before. We thought it might be a settlement, but we didn't know."

He explained: "There are two phases of settlement here. The earlier one is early Neolithic. In that one it looks like there has been a big storm, and maybe a building had fallen down."

Complete, although broken, pottery has been found on this site, something very rare in the UK when looking at this time period. In all about 5,000 separate pieces have been uncovered, along with axe heads and hearths. "Fire was quite important," Duncan laughed.

"It enhances the record a lot," he continued. "Especially it helps us understand the places people were. It's nice to understand where people lived, not just where they buried their dead."

The project hopes to shed light on the hotly debated topic of when

the Neolithic arrived in Britain and Ireland. Some believe that colonists moved wholesale from the continent, bringing farming from France and Belgium, while others that it was a way of life gradually adopted of the British population.

They are trying to establish when farming practices arrived in the site, what are the earliest signs of this and if there is the presence of 'foreign' artefacts to help answer the Neolithic question.

After the dig is completed on Saturday the finds will be sent to research facilities where scientific analysis will be carried out before Duncan and Fraser write a full report.

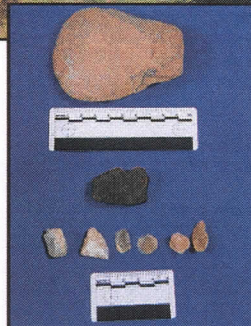
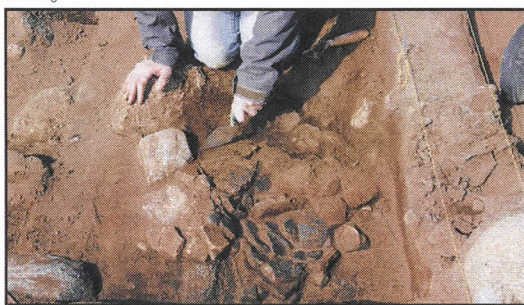
They are keen to keep the community involved in the work after they leave the island and will update their website with the findings.

"We had an open day last Saturday," Duncan said. "It was really positive. There were lots of people. They have been really interested and there have been coming out to see what we do."

For more information on the project and for updates on the finds visit the Neolithic Stepping Stones website at: www.neolithicsteppingstones.org



Top - The site at An Doirlinn, South Uist. Below - A hearth uncovered at the site



An axe head and some of the Neolithic pottery recovered from the site - the earliest thought to be from 3,500BC

Stornoway Primary, Back and West side students are top of the class at school prizegivings

Feature P17

Hebridean seaweed makes waves in the country's food industry

HEBRIDEAN Seaweed Company, based at Arinish Point in Stornoway, is taking advantage of the booming health food market, writes Leola Pears.

Hebridean Seaweed currently has a joint venture with Seagreens, a company whose founding aim is to "get a gram of the best seaweed into the daily diet". Together, they produce a product called 'The Mineral Salt', which is half Hebridean seaweed and half Cornish sea salt.

The Mineral salt, which claims to have "twice the flavour, half the salt", has already won three awards, including best organic product by Healthy Living magazine.

"So far we're doing very well, we have a full order book and are diversifying into many markets from human food ingredients to animal feeds and we also supply for health and beauty products," says Martin Macleod, the managing director of the Hebridean Seaweed Company.

"We believe our seaweed is of high quality due to the unpolluted waters that surround our coastline and we have a unique harvesting and processing method that preserves the nutrients in the seaweed."

The seaweed is harvested from various places on Lewis. It can either be cut manually using a sickle or mechanically using a seaweed harvester, which is a special boat that cuts the seaweed from the tops of the stalks that float above the seabed.

The process is very environmentally friendly, with the factory having won several awards for its sustainability.

Previously the seaweed harvested would be used mainly for animal food supplements, pharmaceutical and alginate industries. But in the last few years the Hebridean Seaweed has branched out into the food industry. The market for it has grown rapidly in recent years as it contains all the nutrients and minerals required for a healthy diet.

"The important thing about seaweed is the breath of nutrients. When you look at the vitamins and minerals, absolutely nothing is missing," says Simon Ranger, the founder of Seagreens.

Chefs are also beginning to jump on the sea-



Some of the products using Hebridean seaweed.

weed bandwagon, finding inventive ways to include it everyday foods. Researchers at the University of Glasgow have created a nutritionally balanced pizza with seaweed added into the base. Other uses include adding it to pastas and salads and mixing it into smoothies and juices. Some even add it to yoghurt.

"The only way supermarkets will only take it on as a food is if people understand it," Mr Ranger adds.

"We want to encourage people to use it as an everyday ingredient. Don't try and think up

exotic dishes. Try sprinkling the mineral salt on something like bacon and eggs"

Mr Macleod adds, "I believe this is an important industry for the Hebrides, we have an abundance of this natural resource and as long as it continues to be managed in a sustainable manner we should see growth."

"We are continuing to invest in the factory and infrastructure of the business and hope to continue to grow over the coming years."

The Mineral Salt can be purchased at the Woodlands Centre in Stornoway.

Paint a Pot Studio!
Paint a Pot and The Bear Mill
 Summer Holiday Opening Hours
 Mon - Sat 10am - 5pm
 Please see website for more details.
 www.paintapotstudiolewis.co.uk

OLYMPICS PROJECT:
 The Lifeskills Group at the Learning Shop have been studying the Olympic Games while developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. As part of their project they designed and painted this display board.

SOFT PLAY
 Entry: £3.50 under 5's • £4.50 6 and over
 Cafe serving teas, coffees, light snacks and meals
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