

# ISLE OF GIGHA HERITAGE TRUST NewsLetter June 2025

The IGHTR Board meet the third Monday of every month; therefore, for any correspondence to be considered at these meetings, we ask for it to be submitted at least 1 week prior to give the Board time to review. Correspondence sent within 1 week of the Board meeting will be delayed for review until the following month meeting. Anonymous correspondence will not be considered by the Board.

Contact us by emailing [directors@gigha.org.uk](mailto:directors@gigha.org.uk)

## Gigha Hotel Bar

The bar in the Gigha Hotel is now open 12pm till 10pm Sunday through Thursday; and 12pm till 12am on Friday and Saturday. Please be aware that there is no food service or accommodation available currently. Details of a Hotel Management Team will be announced soon.

## Save the Date!

- Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July – Family Fun Day at Achamore Gardens
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July - Raft Race at the Boathouse
- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August – Root and Industrial Show

## Gigha Church in the Parish of Mid Kintyre and Gigha

Due to ongoing maintenance works the Church is currently closed to the public.



## Sound of Gigha

What a fantastic weekend! It was great to see so many of you joining in the fun and getting involved at The Sound of Gigha 2025 - the number of folk who turned out was fantastic and we couldn't have been happier with how it all went. We just wanted to say a really big thank you to everyone who helped to make it happen - to the committee and volunteers for all their hard work, to the local businesses who supported all our activities and donated prizes to our games stall, to the crafts-people, artists and producers that had stalls at the market or displays at the art gallery. And of course to every single person that attend any of our fundraising events and activities through the winter and the weekend itself. THANK YOU! We'll be gathering feedback soon and would love to hear about your experience of the weekend.



## Achamore Gardens

The gardens were once again delighted to host the Sound of Gigha Festival's Sunday Wellbeing Day, funded by the National Lottery Communities Fund, and what a lovely day it was! The day started with the delicious offerings at Fika, generously hosted by Per and Monica at Achamore House, before the focus moved to the walled garden for the fun, if somewhat messy, activities of natural tie-dyeing and making Japanese inspired kokedamas. Young and old alike loved learning about the natural dyes, made from things like onion skins, blueberries and beetroot, and some gorgeous creations emerged. Over on the kokedama stall, everyone enjoyed making mud pies, before miraculously turning them into beautiful garden decorations using nothing more than moss and twine. Finally (and for those who liked their activities just a little less messy) we also ran a very well attended gardens tour, where visitors learnt a bit more about the history of the garden, and its current restoration. The gardens team would like to give a massive thank you to the Sound of Gigha committee and all the volunteers who did a brilliant job helping us set up and run our activities.



If you've visited the garden recently, have you noticed that some areas of the lawns are looking a bit shaggier than normal, and wondered why we haven't cut them? Well, a few areas didn't get cut for several weeks due to the heat wave and the immediate downpours that followed, but as soon as conditions allowed, we went back to mowing only to discover, to our tremendous delight, that small colonies of native purple orchids had popped up all over the place! They've probably been growing there for several years, with the bottom rosette of leaves escaping the mowers thereby allowing the plants to survive, but the taller, flowering stems getting mowed off long before we realised they were there. The unintentional break in our normal mowing schedule allowed the flowers to emerge and the more we looked, the more we found. We're still trying to pin down the exact species of orchid we have, but their name doesn't really matter, what's important is that we can now manage these areas to bolster the populations and hopefully grow their numbers so that in future years we'll have an orchid spectacle to look forward to every spring. We'll be leaving these areas uncut until the orchids have had a chance to set and distribute their seeds, then we'll be cutting them short for the rest of the year to maintain the conditions these plants obviously like.



## Achamore Gardens continued

Hot off the press, we've just received some brilliant news about our most recent apprentice, and now proud Achamore gardener, Kacper, who's just been named as UHI Argyll's Modern Apprentice of the Year 2025!! Kacper was nominated by his assessor, Andrew Garven, for his positive, can-do attitude, his passion for the job, and his work ethic. Andrew described Kacper as "an employee that any employer would be extremely lucky to have on the team" and we agree with this – we are indeed lucky to have him on our team and are delighted that his hard work throughout his apprenticeship has been recognised in this way. Be sure to give Kacper a pat on the back if you see him!



Congratulations to the four IGHT staff members, including two of the gardens team, on successfully passing their basic chainsaw course recently. Proper training for chainsaw use is really important, and is required by law for those of us who use chainsaws in public areas or as part of our work. The training the team have received will allow them to continue to help clear up from Storm Eowyn, as well as carry out more maintenance of our woodlands and shelter belts.



And Finally... Watch out for low flying swallows if you are in the walled garden! A pair of swallows have taken up residence in the stone bothy, and their chicks have recently hatched so both parents are hard at work hoovering up midges and other insects and flying in and out the door delivering their catch to the hungry mouths in the nest. They haven't hit anyone yet, but there's been a few close calls!

## Gigha Primary School & ELC

As we come to the end of another academic year we have enjoyed reflecting about both individual and collective successes within school. In particular our ongoing work as a Rights Respecting School has allowed us to be awarded Silver status and we look forward to continuing our journey towards Gold next session. We have thoroughly enjoyed adding Forest School sessions to our curriculum with Island Ranger Casey-Jo and have observed the benefits of this on our pupil's self-confidence. We have enjoyed building school partnerships with Clachan, Achahoish Primary School as well as the Kilmartin Museum, GRAB Trust, Glencoe Ski Centre and Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre to enhance pupils learning and experiences.

At the end of term service, pupils were also recognised for their academic successes, commitments to learning and awards for behaviours reflected in our school values. It was wonderful to see so many people attend to recognise the unique talents, skills and abilities which our pupils share. As Headteacher, I am extremely proud of each and every child within our setting and feel extremely privileged to work in this role at Gigha Primary School and ELC. I would like to thank everyone who has supported our school over this academic year and wish you all a happy, healthy summer (with hopefully a little more sunshine than of late!). Kind regards, Mrs Vipurs Head Teacher

## Community Learning Volunteer of the Year Award

Congratulations to Gigha resident Keith Wilson for winning the Community Learning Volunteer of the Year Award (awarded by Argyll & Bute Third Sector Interface) for his voluntary work promoting astronomy in Kintyre and Gigha, in particular his bi-monthly 'Seeing Stars' column in the Campbeltown Courier and the 'Stargazing in Kintyre and Gigha' Facebook group. Keith's prompt and full explanations earned him the nickname 'Sky Wizard' by a young enthusiastic star gazer. Keith feels very honoured to receive the award as he has been involved in education most of his life and in receiving this award links learning with his passion for astronomy.



## Gigha Community Council

The Gigha Transport Users group met in May to discuss the issue of motorhomes on Gigha and problems with Gigha residents having difficulties getting on the ferry during busy periods. It was a good meeting with lots of ideas - Gigha Community Council was tasked with carrying out a subsequent consultation exercise with the community and then take the results of this process to a meeting with Calmac in the near future. Please use this as an opportunity to voice and concerns and direct how the conversations will proceed.



## Dark Skies Gigha's Annual Perseids Party August 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> 2025

### **Friday August 8<sup>th</sup> In the Night Garden**

Join us for tea and a fun and friendly afternoon session in the lounge of the Gigha Hotel on the theme of designing and planting gardens for nighttime stargazing and sky watching. We will be joined by well-known local garden designer and writer Rachel Bailey who will share some of her secrets for planning a garden for evening and nighttime enjoyment and wellbeing, not just for humans but for many pollinators and night creatures. Learn about planning outdoor spaces which are safe for stargazing and which keep light pollution to a minimum. All attendees booking into this session can pick up a free packet of Twilight wildflower seeds from The Wildlife Trust. Look out for session timings and booking details coming soon.

### **Friday August 8<sup>th</sup> Perseids Meteor Shower Stargazing Session**

Meet at 9.30pm on the grass by the information hut at the ferry slip. We will walk together up to the golf course where we will have our DSG ground mats ready to lie on and see how many shooting stars we can spot. Bring your own torch (red light if possible) camp chair or mat if you prefer as well as something warm to wrap up in. Please wear warm and waterproof clothing suitable for the conditions, as well as bug spray. This activity is weather dependent and subject to change or cancellation at short notice - please watch the Dark Skies Gigha Facebook page for up-to-date information.

### **Saturday August 9<sup>th</sup> Creatures of the Night 10am onwards**

Get ready for a day of natural exploration and adventure at Gigha Camp and Motorhome Site. We have two super pitches booked for our bell tents and will have workshops and hands-on activities led by enthusiasts in bats, moths and other nighttime creatures. Our workshop leaders include our Ranger, Cat and Archie Walker, RSPB, Buglife, Bat Conservation Trust and more. All sessions are free but must be booked in advance. Look out for session themes, timings and booking details coming soon.

### **Saturday August 9<sup>th</sup> Perseids Meteor Shower Stargazing Session**

Meet at 10.30pm up at our north end Dark Skies Theatre. We will use our lie back benches to relax and see how many shooting stars we can spot. Bring your own torch (red light if possible) camp chair or mat if you prefer as well as something warm to wrap up in. Please wear warm and waterproof clothing suitable for the conditions, as well as bug spray. This activity is weather dependent and subject to change or cancellation at short notice - please watch the Dark Skies Gigha Facebook page for up-to-date information.

If anyone would like to lend a hand with any of the above events, train to be a DSG volunteer or share their expertise and experience in our workshops and clubs, we would like to hear from you. Dark Skies Gigha can be reached by email at [dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com](mailto:dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com).

## Island Ranger Service

June has certainly been the month for wildflowers. There is something about this year that has made us focus a little more on our wildflower species, especially bog specialists such as butterwort and the amazing orchids. We have spotted much more of the insectivorous butterwort across the west this year, primarily near the lochens where they have their ideal habitat of wet heathland and plenty of insects to trap! We have also noticed this year some whopper orchids, with flower heads almost 20cm high. We are on a quest with the Gardens team to identify as many species as we can – please let us know if you are an orchid expert!



This month we had our first experience day. Tourism businesses have been organising meetings to see how we can better collaborate, and on the summer solstice we held a trial package including a guided walk, meet the baker and bread sampling from Sunshine Bread, and meet the brewer and beer tasting by Gigha Brewing! We had great fun and received really lovely feedback from the participants: “You are all clearly passionate about what you do which made it a memorable experience for us. The Ranger has a very wide ranging knowledge over a lot of topics, and has a very engaging attitude. Lisa's baking is delicious and her zero waste policy is commendable. It was fascinating to learn of the journey the Brewer has been on to date and we learned lots of things about beer we didn't know”. The Ranger Service would love to do more of these across the year, so please let us know if you have a package idea!



In May we received our Forest and Outdoor Learning Award certificate meaning we can run official Forest School sessions, and how better to put this knowledge into practice by running a summer term Forest School programme with Gigha Primary School. Survival techniques was the request of the students so throughout the programme we have used a woodland animal that we do not find on Gigha (namely badgers, deer, and pine marten) to demonstrate how these creatures are adapted to surviving. We have explored how to track animals like badgers using signs such as fur, smell, footprints, and dens, and played games to understand family groups (called clans) and territories. We then looked at how deer use camouflage as their survival strategy and the SAS five steps of camouflage: shine, shadow, sudden movement, shape and sound to deter predators, using games to fine tune these skills.

## Island Ranger Service continued

Finally, we looked at pine martens and how their food sources are so diverse and their ability to hoard and remember the location of their “caches” makes them excellent survivors. We went on a scavenger hunt to find treasures hidden in all the places we may find pine marten food like birds high in the tree, squirrels along branches, eggs in tree forks, bugs under the ground, berries in specific trees like rowan, and voles that live in holes. Aside from the learning opportunity we have also focused on building confidence, providing different climbing and balancing slack lines, different swings and encouraged tree climbing, swinging and muddy play. We have been so impressed by the level of progress in self-esteem, team work, and knowledge of natural history and want to thank Gigha Primary School for offering us the opportunity to run these sessions.



## Gigha Village Hall

To book the Gigha Village Hall please email [gighavillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:gighavillagehall@gmail.com) or telephone Joe on 01583 505251.

## Supporters on The Kintyre Way

We've got 50 'lucky' numbers and a special draw available! We have numbers 251-300 in our 300 club just waiting to be snapped up. It is £12 per number per year with monthly cash prizes.

Also, if you take one number of this batch of 251-300 there's a THANK YOU draw - a bottle of Glen Scotia malt and a bottle of Beinn an Tuirc Apple Brandy to be won.

To sign up, email [thekintyreway@gmail.com](mailto:thekintyreway@gmail.com)

## June Photos





**ENTRY**  
**£5 ADULTS**  
CHILDREN GO FREE

**FAMILY FUN DAY**

**SUNDAY**  
**20TH JULY**  
**11AM - 4PM**

# Achamore Gardens

## SCARECROW COMPETITION

- TREASURE HUNT - LAWN GAMES -
- TEA & HOME BAKING -
- BUILD A BOUQUET - POND DIPPING -
- GARDEN TOUR - SEED SALES -
- SPONGE THE GARDENER -
- AND MORE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE  
EVENT OR ENTERING A SCARECROW  
EMAIL GARDENS @GIGHA.ORG.UK

PLEASE NOTE ACTIVITIES ARE CASH ONLY

ALL PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT THE RESTORATION OF ACHAMORE GARDENS



## 11<sup>th</sup> Root & Industrial Show

16<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Village Hall, 2pm

A reminder of what is being judged this year:



### Root section

- 3 potatoes
- 3 parsnips
- 3 carrots
- 3 red onions
- 3 white onions
- 3 beetroots
- 3 leeks
- 3 tomatoes
- 1 pepper
- 1 ugly vegetable

### Agricultural

- 6 same colour duck eggs
- 6 same colour hen eggs

### Industrial Section

- 1 Artisan loaf
- 3 iced cup cakes (fancy icing)
- 1 small/slice quiche
- 3 custard creams
- 3 pieces rocky road
- Jam swiss roll
- Sml jar rasp jam
- Sml bowl/jar tomato salsa
- Arrangement of garden flowers
- Flower arrangement in child's welly
- Drawing of bumble bee
- Fill a matchbox with items starting with the letter **C**  
(please pick up a free matchbox from Joe)

There is no category specifically for children but any child can enter any category.

More information to follow about arrangements for entries on the day.

All entries £1; Teas/coffees/cakes £3; Raffle.

All proceeds to the Hall Funds.

Any queries please 'phone June Watson or Tracy Wilson