

ARGYLL ISLANDS STUDY TOUR: SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2004

1. PURPOSE OF THE TOUR

This study tour of the Argyll Islands was organised by Argyll & the Islands Enterprise in partnership with the Nadair Trust and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The purpose of the tour was to mark the end of the Nadair 1 project, Heritage Tourism Training, led by Argyll & the islands Enterprise and to visit the Nadair 1 completed projects for Tour members to bring back knowledge and lessons learned to their respective islands. Some visits were also arranged to the location of potential Nadair 2 projects, some of which are being developed as a result of attending the heritage training programme events.

As the Isle of Coll representative and associate member of Nadair, Jim Hill attended the tour representing the island's archaeology interests having contributed to the recently completed Nadair Project 8: Coastal Archaeology. The lead partner of this project was the Centre for Environmental History and Policy, at St Andrew's University, under the auspices of THE SCAPE TRUST. The Trust and ongoing coastal site monitoring of Coll, Tiree and Islay is under the direction of Tom Dawson at St Andrew's.



Members of the Study Group from: Lismore, Coll, the Ross of Mull, Tobermory, Luing, Jura, Islay, Seil and the Islay Finlaggan Trust. *Photograph by courtesy of the Finlaggan Trust, 2/10/2004.*

It was a requirement by the AIE of those attending the tour that each participant was requested to write a brief report of impressions gained for the AIE and to share this information with the community being represented.

2. ISLANDS VISITED

The order of islands visited between 29th September and 3rd October, 2004 was: Lismore, Mull, Tiree, Jura and Islay, - (Colonsay and Oronsay could not be visited out of Islay due to a severe gale on the day).

3. PROJECTS VISITED

3.1 NADAIR 1 PROJECTS – COMPLETED

- Project 5: Marine Education and Interpretation, Lead Partner: Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust.
- Project 20: Woollen Mill Renovation and Workshop, Lead Partner: Islay Development Company.
- Project 24: Finlaggan, Lead Partner: Finlaggan Trust.
- Project 27: Tigh Iseabail Dhaidh (former croft house reconstructed to portray life in a crofting community in the last Century), Lead Partner: Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mor (Lismore).
- Project 30: Discover the Ross, Lead Partner: Ross of Mull Historical Centre.
- Project 35: Loch Bhasapol Improvement, Lead Partner: AIE Working Group.
- Project 37: An Iodhlann Archive, Lead Partner: Co-Roinn Ghaidlig Thiriodh's Cholla. (Tiree).

3.2 NADAIR 2 – Nadair Programme for the Argyll Islands 2004-2007

Potential projects discussed during visits to their locations

- Project 72: Seanchas Ile, Islay – Organising ‘seanchas’ events in Gaelic to preserve traditional Islay life in text and sound with tradition-bearers also sharing their heritage with the other islanders and to make copies available to the public in the Columba Centre.
- Project 74: Islay Woollen Mill – rebuild of an original waterwheel.
- Project 75: Jura Heritage Access, & Interpretation – brochures and improved access from pier.
- Project 76: Isle of Lismore Heritage Museum – purpose built museum, archives, library and coffee shop.
- Project 78: Operation Easter – Mull Eagle watch – prevention of nest robberies.
- Project 79: Community Gaelic, Mull & Iona – Provide workshops to promote Gaelic culture.

4. ISLE OF COLL, NADAIR 2 PROGRAMME - 2004-2007

The following list of potential projects is for community information only and did not form part of discussions during the tour.

- Project 59: Ferret Control on Coll and Assessment of Predation on Breeding Waders on east and west Coll.
- Project 60: The Flowers of Coll & Tiree and an Index to the Coll Magazine. A simple booklet on flowers and a record of common flowers to be found at the

beginning of this century. Also a digital version of all previous issues of the Coll Magazine for availability on-line.

- Project 61: Totronald Reserve – Land and Countryside Management. Conservation work to dunes and wetlands. Also, to provide opportunities for school, university and adult education courses.

5. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS VISITED

5.1 ISLE OF LISMORE

The group arrived in the morning of 29th September on Lismore and were greeted by Tony Perkins, Project Manager and other members of Comann Eachdraidh (Lismore Historical Society). We were taken on a well thought out tour of the island to provide us with a profile of the island and to capture the essence of its heritage and culture. The tour included visiting Port Ramsay on the west coast and a short walk to give us a feel of the island. During the walk it was explained to us that prior to the 20th Century the economy of the island mainly depended upon the quarrying and burning of limestone. We saw some of the old kilns for this activity that are still intact. In common with other islands of the period crofting and fishing was their other source of income. Tourism and agriculture are today's main contributors to the economy, together with the arrival of retired people and commuters to the mainland.

We then continued to the ancient Tirfuir Broch on the east coast and were impressed by its completeness and setting in the landscape and noted the enthusiasm of the local Society to have it excavated to assist in further explaining its history. This was followed by a visit to the Cathedral Church of Saint Moluag with its 13th Century grave markers held within for safe keeping. The Croft House heritage site was visited next and its method of reconstruction in the traditional manner was explained by members of the Society. The house is 'frozen in time' around the period of 1950 and contains: photographs, furnishings and relics of this period. Some of the items had been inherited by previous occupants from the century before. The atmosphere of the period had been well captured and there was a feeling of stepping back in time.

We were next treated to lunch at the Old School House Heritage Centre at Achnacriosh and used the occasion to examine the artefacts and exhibitions on display. The quality of presentation of the exhibits was to a very high standard as was the home baking and sandwiches for our lunch. A lot of hard work had been put into both and we made our appreciation known to our hosts.

There followed a mini-bus tour of the island until our early afternoon departure on the ferry to Oban with our grateful thanks being conveyed to our hosts.

5.2 ISLE OF MULL

5.2.1 We arrived at Craignure on Mull out of Oban where our member from Colonsay joined us for the sailing on the evening of 29th September. We stayed at the large Isle of Mull Hotel which is designed to cater for bus parties of tourists visiting Mull and Iona. During the evening our group were given a talk by Sergeant Ian Erskine of the local Constabulary, concerning his work in protecting the nests of the white tailed sea eagle. Reference was made to the Nadair 2 project – Operation Easter – Mull Eagle

Watch, and the involvement of the local community in this activity. This was followed by an informal discussion that ranged far and wide on the problems of island policing.

5.2.2 The tour of Mull continued in the morning of Thursday, 30th September, with a visit to the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWTD) in Tobermory. The group were shown a new educational video of the work of the Trust which illustrated the wide range of their activities from general monitoring of whales, dolphins and porpoises to the recent completion of the first dedicated acoustic and visual cetacean survey in Hebridean waters. Current data from this is being analysed in conjunction with the Sea Mammal Research Unit and Marine Biological Association. This project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with assistance from Scottish National Heritage and Argyll and the Islands Enterprise, all support obtained under the Nadair programme. Other projects include the continuing study of the elusive bottlenose dolphin which this year will concentrate on Mull and the Sound of Mull in particular. Whale watching from the Ardnamurchan Lighthouse will also continue during the coming year due to its increasing popularity with the public.

Other bodies that the Trust works in conjunction with include: the National Sightings Database co-ordinated by the Sea Watch Foundation and the WWF. A watch for basking sharks and leatherback turtles run by the Marine Conservation Society is contributed to by the Trust and the literature of these bodies is carried in the Trust's well stocked shop. The shop is also equipped 'with hands on' small aquarium activities for young people and adults.

The Trust's Education team has been engaged in visiting over 75 schools on the Argyll islands and the mainland coastline delivering a programme concerning the creation of greater awareness of our marine environment and the importance of conserving it. The Trust's floating schoolroom, the Solurian, is a favourite with youngsters (and adults) in the islands and along the mainland coastline.

The HWDT Mission Statement is: -

The Trust is dedicated to the conservation of Scotland's whales, dolphins and porpoises and the Hebridean environment through education, research and working within Hebridean communities.

We were impressed with the dedication of the staff and expressing our gratitude as we left loaded down with literature and the feeling of having witnessed a very worth while and highly successful organisation.

5.2.3 The group then journeyed in the afternoon of Thursday, 30th September, to the Ross of Mull Historical Centre at Bunessan. On the way we stopped briefly for a tour of Duart Castle and collected more literature at its well stocked gift shop. The Castle had some well laid out exhibitions of MacLean family heirlooms and deserved a whole day to fully appreciate its fascinating contents. It was unusual to regard a passing Cal Mac ferry from the top of the Castle's ramparts, rather than the other way round.

We then continued to Bunessan where we saw the recently acquired ruined flour Mill and the start of ground works. The footbridge over the fast flowing burn and attendant path for access by future visitors to the Mill was well under way with the work being undertaken by contractors and volunteers. The Mill cottage adjacent will become the new Historical centre when sensitively refurbished and converted for its new purpose. For the time being the Centre is operating out of a portable cabin run by Centre staff volunteers whose enthusiasm is infectious. Their current projects include: the production of a series of 7 guidebooks describing and illustrating local walks with their gratitude for the help and expertise received from Nadair. These walks are also guided by members of the Centre. The production of further literature by the Centre is under way which is of the highest quality judging from the samples we were shown.

We very much enjoyed this visit and appreciated the gift to each of us from the Centre of an information pack and a 2005 calendar containing black and white photographs of activities in the area from earlier times. The group then journeyed to Fionnphort and visited the shops and information points as we prepared for the next leg of our tour.

5.3 ISLE OF TIREE

5.3.1 After an interesting wild sea crossing in a small craft starting at 2.30pm out of Fionnphort, we arrived at Tiree just after 4pm and made our way to Loch Bhasapol to view work carried out to enable wind surfers, rod fishermen and bird watchers to co-exist in harmony on and around the loch. The open air information point with explanatory boards defining the areas for each activity has been surprisingly well received by all parties and has solved the problem of overlapping activities.

5.3.2 The group then visited the new Tiree Rural Development Centre and were impressed at the quality and space of the premises. The well appointed cafeteria was tried out and judged by all to be excellent and literature was picked up from the well maintained information point.

5.3.3 We then travelled to An Iodhlann, Tiree's historical centre where we met staff members: Dr John Holliday and Alasdair Sinclair who showed us some of the Centres collections from their archives of old photographs, books, local stories on tape, Gaelic music, maps, videos, newspaper cuttings and some island artefacts used in everyday life during the previous 200 years. The Centre also offers help for a small charge, by an expert genealogist in tracing family connections with Tiree from their own extensive records.

Saying our farewells, we noted the same enthusiasm and unselfish dedication from the staff of the Centre that was becoming a recurring theme as we progressed with our tour. We had a feeling of pride and honour to have met these fine people as we dashed to catch the 6.45pm Cal Mac ferry from Barra on its way to Oban (without stopping at Coll!).

5.4 ISLE OF JURA

5.4.1 We departed from Oban at 12.30pm on Friday 1st October and our party of 13 was split into 2 groups to journey by separate small craft to Jura from Craobh Haven

and Ardfern. Landing at Ardlussa on Jura, we had enjoyed another interesting crossing, and against the tide with a growing gale, this was added to by a moment's serious contemplation as we passed near the Corryvreckan whirlpool. George Orwell's comment about Jura was that "it's an extremely un-get-atable place". The romantics among us hope that it stays that way.

5.4.2 The groups reunited at Ardlussa and journeyed by bus to the hotel in Craighouse and visited the new reception and sales area at the Distillery where we were given an interesting talk about the 3 types of whisky produced and of the benefit of the distillery to the economy of the island. Some members of the group were cajoled into sampling the product.

5.4.3 We were then invited to visit the 'Antlers' Interpretation Centre nearby run by local volunteers and saw a well laid out exhibition of island artefacts, books and photographs. We enjoyed hearing some of the islands history from the staff members which was influenced by the large number of deer on the island. Plans of the proposed new Centre were shown to us by Elaine Campbell, representing the Isle of Jura Trust. We were also informed that the hunting of deer on the six island estates makes a major contribution to the island's economy, with hunters coming from abroad for the sport. Three first time Norwegian hunters returning to the mainland on one of the boats that we had arrived on were proudly carrying the heads and branches of 3 deer as trophies. They declared to us that the hunting had been wonderful.

The building is in need of replacement and is to be demolished and developed as a community centre. This will be in the ownership of the community through the Jura Development Trust. It is likely to include an exhibition area, tearoom and some office space for community and commercial use. In an attempt to reduce costs, a cordwood construction method is being examined for the external walls. This innovative method of wall construction consists of logs of wood being laid transversely on a bed of mortar. Hoped for approval from the planners and building control is awaited.

5.4.4 The next activity of the evening was to visit the Feolin Study Centre for the opening of the 'Jura 365' Photographic Exhibition by speakers: Donald MacLennan of the Islay Columba Centre which promotes the Gaelic language and Dr Gary McKay of the Feolin Study Centre. The exhibition was staged to raise funds for the Columba Centre and which will also take place on Islay shortly. Dr McKay has been carrying out a photographic ground level survey of Jura for over 3 years in an intensive campaign which has captured some 46,000 raw images in every season. The special focus of the campaign was to interpret Gaelic place names within the landscape and to photograph the area observed from them according to their implied translation.

Each location of place name either current or past is located by its national grid reference obtained by a GPS instrument. A 360 degree panorama of overlapping shots is also taken from the centre of the location. In addition, Dr McKay uses satellite photographs of the island for the visual recording of locations on computerised photographs. Dr McKay previously worked for NASA on developing equipment and systems for space photography. He has also become known for his use of satellite imaging technology in support of archaeological exploration and geographic research.

Dr McKay's exhibition showing several views in colour of Jura were of perfect quality and his enthusiasm for the project and love of the island shone out during his talk. His contribution to the history of the island by recording all of the place names of Jura from oral and written sources will become increasingly valuable with the passing of time. Many of the place names he has discovered have no visible structures, fences, walls or other evidence to identify the reason for their name. Such places, whose locations are generally unknown to the present generation, have thankfully not been lost due to Dr McKay's dedicated work.

5.4.5 On the morning of Saturday 2nd October we learned that gales in the area were too severe to risk a crossing to Oronsay and Colonsay by small craft and it was decided therefore to spend more time on Jura and on the Islay visit. We set off for the Feolin ferry to Port Askaig and called in at the Jura Service Point on the way, where we were greeted by Elaine Campbell representing the Isle of Jura Trust. Up to this point Elaine had been a member of our group and she was pleased to show us her activities on behalf of Jura in her place of work. The service point is maintained by Argyll and Bute Council and other funding partners and was created in what had been the schoolmaster's house after conversion. The spacious, well lit interior is fitted with every form of office and conference equipment.

We saw the artist's impression of the proposed Care Centre which is largely an NHS project although the community has been heavily involved in getting it off the ground. The planning process is almost completed and should, hopefully, start in the near future. The proposed centre is to include: sheltered accommodation for six couples or single people and we were asked to contribute our comments.

The Jura Service point leaflet describes their purpose as a source of information for everyone on Jura and the local link into communication networks. Computer and video conferencing links and office facilities are available for use by the islanders and anyone visiting. Making our farewells and thanks for the kind attentiveness of the Jura people we proceeded to the ferry.

5.5 ISLE OF ISLAY

5.5.1 Arriving at Port Askaig we observed the major road works being carried out to reduce the previous steeply inclined approach and exit from the port. A major amount of earth and rock has been moved during this project along with redesign of the surrounding landscape. The new road width and incline is a great improvement on the previous arrangement.

We then continued to the Islay Pottery where the potters that we had met the previous evening at the Feolin Study Centre, described and demonstrated the process of producing slipware and showed us a range of pottery advertising Islay and Jura. The distillery on Jura had commissioned a water jug from the pottery to accompany their other bar promotions whose shape was taken from the distinctive profile of the island. The group took the opportunity to replace their own chipped mugs at home with appropriate replacements at the potteries shop. Having thanked the owners for giving us so much of their time we then continued.

5.5.2 Our next stop was at the Islay Woollen Mill at Bridgend, where we were shown the renovations and reconstruction of the Mill house and were treated to a talk on the production of woollen cloth among a labyrinth of ancient but still working weaving looms. Some of the looms are the last examples of their kind such as the ‘slubbing billy’, and two spinning jennies, and the Mill is visited by researchers from all over the world. We learned for example that the material for 2,500 men’s cloth caps could be provided from one length of their cloth. Also, that there has been a weaver in the Old Mill from as early as 1550 and that the present main building was built in 1883. Other facts gained included that all of the tweeds and Tartans for the films Braveheart and Rob Roy were woven at the Mill.

The Mill shop was an Aladdin’s cave of wool and cashmere cloth lengths, hunting jackets and every conceivable form of woven and knitted garment to tempt the visitor. We thanked the staff for their kind welcome of us and left having witnessed yet another fascinating and valuable source of interest for visitors to the island. We then continued to the west side of the island to visit the Museum there.

5.5.3 The Museum of Islay life is situated in the conservation village of Port Charlotte overlooking Lochindaal. This award winning Museum is housed in the former Free Church which was built by local people in 1843. The building ceased to be used as a place of worship in 1929 and was disused until 1976 when the work for converting it began. The Museum has over 1600 items in the collection dating from 8,000BC to the 1950’s and houses a library of over 1,000 books about Islay and related areas, together with several thousand photographs, many dating from the late 1890’s.

The displays include items illustrating the renowned whisky produced on the island, and one of the illicit still’s found in the hills of Islay from days gone by. Another display showed specialist tools used by coopers who made the barrels. There are also exhibitions depicting life in a simple cottage and in a farmhouse bedroom from during the Victorian and Edwardian age. The Museum’s helpful staff made us most welcome which we greatly appreciated. Having said our thanks and farewells we returned to Bowmore to prepare for an evening visit to the Columba Centre nearby and visited a memorial on the way commemorating a Clan battle between the MacLean’s and the MacDonald’s which ended the MacLean’s aspirations to the island.

5.5.4 We were met at the Columba Centre by Donald MacLennan who was a speaker at the Fealin Study Centre that we had met the previous evening. We were given a tour of the Centre by Mr MacLennan who explained its purpose, how it came into being and some of its unique construction features.

The £1.8m centre was opened in the summer of 2002, for the purpose of maintaining and developing Scottish culture, heritage and education, and the teaching of the Gaelic language and its own unique culture. The centre whose name in Gaelic is: Ionaid Chaluim Chille Ile, is modelled on Sabhal Mor Ostaig, the Gaelic college on Skye. The centre employs one full time staff member and three part-time who can cater for 15 full time students and two post graduate research students as well as offering a range of short courses and is linked to the University of the Highlands and Islands.

The centre was created on the site of the old cottage hospital at Gartnatra, east of Bowmore and funding came from: the AIE, HIE and the Department of Trade and Industry's Renewable Energy Programme. The former hospital building and land were donated by Argyll and Bute Council and Islay Estates. One of the main cost items was the installation of photovoltaic cells on the roof, designed to resemble slates, which convert light into electrical energy to power the building. Each 'slate' is capable of generating 12 volts of electricity and in total can produce 20 kW. This makes the centre one of the first buildings in Scotland to have a photovoltaic roof which cost in the region of £240,000. A computerised read-out on an interior wall showed that energy was still being created in the fading evening twilight as we watched. The system is also connected to the National Grid and surplus energy is sold to the energy companies. At night the centre draws power from the grid by arrangement with these companies.

We were treated to a buffet produced by the staff and enjoyed hearing how pleased they were with the centre's facilities of a music room, crèche, library, meeting and study rooms and a well appointed kitchen serving the large common entrance and reception area. We told them how impressed we were with their achievements. Such a space age facility was the last thing that we expected to see on our study tour and we were filled with Gaelic pride also at the realisation of such a worthwhile concept.

5.5.5 We departed from Bowmore on the morning of Sunday, 3rd October and headed for Finlaggan, where we were met by Donald Bell, our tour companion and Finlaggan Trust Committee Member. Donald also farms the land around Loch Finlaggan and has witnessed interest in the site increase since the Trust was formed in 1984.

Donald gave us a resume of the history of the islands on the Loch which were the home of the MacDonald chiefs who were descended from Somerled a prince in the 12th century who was half Norse and half Dalriadan (Scots-Irish). From Finlaggan the Lords of the Isles ruled the Atlantic seaboard from Kintyre to Lewis from the 12th to the 16th centuries having wrested control from their Norse overlords and whose maritime skills they had adopted and improved upon. The Lords of the Isles met the kings from Scotland, England and France on equal terms and their highly manoeuvrable birlinn galleys and superior fighting skills had no equal.

From archaeological evidence, we know that the islands in Loch Finlaggan have been used since they were made in crannog style by Bronze Age people, or possibly started in the period before, as an axe head dating from 5,000BP (before present) was found on the smaller island of Eilean na Comhairle in 1993. Standing stones and burial cairns in the surrounding area also indicate that this was an ancient ritual landscape and likely to have been first created during the Neolithic period. The significance of the site as a place of ancient power was probably not lost on the Lords of the Isles and an oral tradition supporting this would probably have been spoken about in the culture of their time.

We visited the larger island of Eilean Mor where we observed evidence of fortifications, a great hall, living quarters, a chapel and paved roads. The chapel was dedicated to St. Findluga, a contemporary of St Columba, who is believed to have saved the Saint's life from an assassin at the cost of his own life. Grave marker slabs depicting warriors in armour from the 16th century are placed on the gravel floor inside the roofless chapel under raised sheets of glass to help in preserving them.

These are the earliest grave markers of warriors to be found on the island and are believed to support the traditional belief that the Lords of the Isles and their warriors were buried on Iona and that their wives and children were buried on Eilean Mor, where female grave slabs and a child's tombstone from that period have been found.

We then adjourned to the Interpretative Centre at the cottage near the site where the staff had laid out a fine spread of home made baking and sandwiches for us. We also took the opportunity to top up our collection of leaflets and souvenirs from the displayed items and showed our appreciation to our hosts before resuming our journey.

5.5.6 We then headed for Port Ellen to catch the ferry to Kennacraig and had sufficient time to make a detour to view a recently discovered Bronze Age cluster of hut circles and then to Kildalton further on. Our group member, Eleanor McNab, representing the Islay Oral History Group and the AIE was pleased to show us what she described as her favourite location and view on Islay. The elevated position of the probable hutted farm enclosure held a commanding view over the surrounding countryside and in our mind's eye we could imagine the occupants stretching their arms in the early morning over 4,000 years ago and admiring the same view. We could only agree with Eleanor that it was a perfect spot.

The last site visited before departure was at Kildalton to view the famous Cross there. Eleanor conducted us around the chapel and then gave a fascinating description of the 9th century Great Cross of Kildalton of the Iona school. We were shown that the obverse side alone presents figure subjects. Taking them in order from the top downwards, there are first two angels side by side, and below them David rending the jaws of a lion, with a sheep (to indicate a flock) in the background. Underneath are two birds facing each other and feeding from the same bunch of grapes which is a common emblem of early Christian times, though rare in Britain and not seen on any other sculptured monument in Scotland. The subjects on the two panels at the extremities of the arms of the cross are obscure, but that on the right may be the threatened sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. There is an altar placed between the two figures. The group in the upper part of the shaft is of the Virgin and child with two angels hovering over the central figure. The bosses are formed from interlaced bodies of serpents, symbolic of life and renewal and serpents also are used in the loose interweaving designs on other areas of this obverse side.

On the reverse side, the two lower panels on the shaft are treated as one interlacing design and the upper panel is filled with a design composed of bosses formed by a series of escaping spirals emanating from the central boss. This central boss has a hollow in the middle with three smaller bosses, or 'eggs' contained within it. These three objects may be symbolic of the holy trinity and depict constant renewal in perpetuity by association with the encircling boss composed of an intertwined nest of young serpents. Around the circle enclosing the great central boss are four lions carved in high relief. The great central boss and the three at the extremities of each of the arms and summit are formed from interlaced nests of serpents. Other interlaced designs on the reverse also represent serpents and their representation of the renewal of life by their ability to 'renew' themselves by casting off their skins. This is possibly also used as a metaphor for the Resurrection and for the similar resurrection of Christian believers. How the cross has survived intact is a mystery as Norse Viking

raiders over the early centuries of its existence smashed such objects as a matter of course. Perhaps its expert craftsmanship and beauty of design impressed even them.

We then continued to Port Ellen and said a special thank you to our Islay and Jura hosts for the major amount of effort they had put into making our trip to Islay and Jura such a great success. Upon arrival in Oban the group went its separate ways but first we thanked Susan Chisholm, representing Argyll & the Islands Enterprise and Co-ordinator of Nadair Trust project – Heritage Tourism Training, for her expert skills in conjunction with Eleanor McNab, for organising the trip which went off like clockwork. On reflection, during the five days there was hardly a moment that had not been filled with some fascinating activity or other and we showed Susan our appreciation in the usual way and with our sincere thanks. The idea was left hanging in the air that not all of the Argyll islands and those close by, had been visited by our group!

6. OBSERVATIONS BROUGHT BACK

6.1 The overriding impression of the projects and their participants, drawn mainly as volunteers from their local communities, were the common factors of drive, sincerity, enthusiasm, dedication and a total lack of self seeking and promotion. Their general approach to difficulties was to treat them as a challenge with a ‘can do’ attitude that produced an infectious positive approach that instilled confidence in their plans and a corresponding appropriate response from the funding bodies.

Their general driving force is the serving of others and the pleasure of achievement which clearly produces a lot of satisfaction for them. They were a pleasure to meet and to be with and for us to witness that special quality that promotes the serving of others and to see that our ‘can-do’ positive attitude is still alive and well on our Atlantic coastline.

6.2 It is hard to single out any particular project as an example of ‘how to do it’ and it is probably better if those that are interested in any particular one should contact the participants directly. I would be happy to supply contact details for this purpose.

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30th October, 2004

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