

Tanera Christmas 2010 Newsletter

Like proud parents at this time of year, we thought a little news from the past year on Tanera might be of interest.

The main event of the past 12 months has been the handing over of the business here from Bill and Jean to the next generation. This took place around Easter time, involving setting up a Public Limited Company which comprises Lizzie, her two brothers (Jack & Harry) and Rich. Bill and Jean are still very much about, enjoying a more relaxed life on the Island, whilst being on hand to help out in moments of crisis! After much form filling and head scratching we think we've got through all the admin and bureaucracy, and have got on with the business of looking after Tanera and – we hope – providing a place for people to relax and enjoy themselves. There have been some exciting developments on Tanera this year, and below are some of the highlights...

New Website launched

In January we proudly launched a new updated website for Tanera. Designed and built by local web design company Plexus Media it has a full Content Management System which allows us to update and upload photos and information at will. It has proved a great asset and we've received some really positive feedback. It is still growing and changing and we will endeavour to keep exciting and interesting new stories coming your way through 2011. A couple of new recent additions are a link to Lizzie's 'tweets' and a new availability calendar for all our properties. Have a look at: www.summer-isles.com, or <http://twitter.com/TaneraMor>.



Working Chums Week

Late May saw the arrival of an intrepid group of southerners. Easing themselves away from their normal desk based existences to lend us a hand with all manner of tasks on Tanera during what turned out to be one of the best weeks of weather we had all summer. This energetic and enthusiastic group achieved a huge amount of tasks, including: path construction and maintenance; beach cleaning (a whole Patricia-load of rubbish was removed); sandwich making; house painting and, at the end of a hard day's work, frying scallops on the beach watching the sun go down. A massive thank you to you all, and we hope that you, and of course others, might like to come back in May 2011 for some more of the same!



Tanera Nights

The idea of using the café in the evenings is something we were particularly keen on this year and we're delighted to say that 'Tanera Nights' – a once weekly knees-up in the café - has been a great success with both locals and holiday makers alike. We had a trial night in June at which we nervously handed out feedback forms. Reacting to the generally positive and constructive comments received the weekly evening has gone from strength to strength, with most weeks fully booked. We offer a simple three course set meal, with much of the food sourced locally (such as delicious prawns from right here in the bay, and salad grown in The Achiltibuie Garden), or is Fair Trade and/or Organic - the aim for all food served in the cafe. With buffet service and mixed seating everyone gets to mingle and meet new folk...and the evenings have a great atmosphere and spirit. The highlight was the final evening in early September to which the crew of the Coigach Lass (the recently constructed community rowing skiff) rowed over from the mainland. After supper the crew headed off into a pretty black, starlit night, but with reports of phosphorescence and a safe landing at Badentarbet all was well.

New Residential Courses

We ran lots of successful residential courses – many that have been running for years and a few new ones too. We were delighted to persuade Jules Macleod of NorWest Sea Kayaking to base herself on Tanera for a week this summer to run two short courses from in Fuchsia Cottage. The combination of a comfortable house, good home cooked food and being just metres from the sea appeared to be a winner: both courses were fully booked and Jules is lined up for two weeks in 2011. A beautiful Autumn weekend saw our first ecology course on Tanera; local ecologist Viv Halcrow taught us all sorts of interesting things about the plants and beasts of land and shore, and the way people have used them over the years. Viv will be coming back for more ‘Flora, Fauna and Foraging’ for a weekend in May and a whole week in September.



We are also in the process of developing some new and interesting courses for 2011. Notably; Bridge House Art will be running a second week (Kitty Jones from Edinburgh will be following Eleanor White’s regular summer week) and Mandy Haggith will hold a Top Left Corner writers’ retreat in September.

Our first wind turbine (the first of many?)

We are extremely grateful to Steve Husband for the loan and installation of his Future Energy 1 KW wind turbine. Steve spent a bitterly cold late April day with us directing the erection of the turbine which has been happily spinning away ever since. Already we can see reduced generator usage and thus diesel consumption, which is brilliant. It’s located very close to the south end generator shed, visible for visitors to understand exactly how energy can be produced in such a remote location. Plans are underway for more of the same in 2011.



Some plans for 2011

2011 is already looking like a nice busy year, with lots of courses scheduled and holiday cottages booked. We will keep striving towards our ambition to become a ‘greener’ island by introducing some more wind power, a solid-wood stove in Murdo’s cottage and perhaps some solar energy generation. We’re also introducing double glazing where necessary and generally improving the energy efficiency of houses, as well as keeping up our efforts on other fronts such as carefully sourcing food for the café and recycling as much as possible.

We are very excited to be joining the Coigach-Assynt Living Landscapes (CALL) project: a new partnership instigated by the Scottish Wildlife Trust to encourage both communities and wildlife to flourish in this beautiful area.

Frank Fraser-Darling, a naturalist who spent time in the Summer Isles in the 1930 & 40s, would be interested in the ‘CALL’ project. The 2011 Summer Isles Stamp issue will feature photographs from his time on Tanera, and plans are underway for the books he wrote about his experiences (‘Island Years’ and ‘Island Farm’) to will be reprinted in 2011.



An exciting year awaits...but in the meantime we’re enjoying this coldest of winters; keeping busy following otter tracks through the snow and fixing frozen water pipes. We hope you have a very happy Christmas and New Year, and look forward to seeing you in 2011.

*Warmest wishes, from Richard and Lizzie
December 2010.*