Aig cuirm-chiùil aig deireadh seachdain na féise, fhuaire canaidhean agus teaghlachtaichean cuireadh gu taisbeanadh dhen tânt aig na 89 com-pàirtichean a bha an lathair aig Fèis a’ Bhaile am bladhna.

Chuaidh Ali Ross leis na dathan – le solais stèidse. Chuir an deòrrach Derek Prescott ris na seallaidhean a glachtrum na féise, is fhuaire luchd-amharc cothrom na deòrachtha fhaicinn. Mar a’ bhaist, ’s iad na gcleithead ceud a dh’ionnsaich a’ chlann a rinn an oidhche agus cha do leig iad sìos sinn. Tha na clasaichean còmhla-ciùil gach latha far an robh cothrom aig clann nach robh aig an fhèis pàirt a ghabhail ann. Le taic bhon luchd-teagaisg a bha againn airson na féise mar Iain Mac Ille Mhìcheil, Sharon Hassan, Cìorstaidh Fowler, bhrìachd a’ chuirm-ciùil le snas.

Fad na seachdain bha clasa a bharrachd againn de chòmhlain-ciùil gach latha far an robh cothrom aig clann nach robh aig an fhèis pàirt a ghabhail ann. Le taic bhon luchd-teagaisg a bha againn airson na féise mar iain Mac Ille Mhìcheil, Sharon Hassan, Cìorstaidh Fowler, bhrìachd a’ chuirm-ciùil le snas.

Tha a’ chromataidh a’ toirt taing mhòr dhan h-uile duine a chuidich Fèis a’ Bhaile ann a bhith cho soirbhcheall am bladhna, gu h-àirde Fèis Spè, Fèis na h-Òige agus an “Sgioba-G”. Gideanach, do dh’Àrd-sgoil Bhaile Thèarlaich airson taic leantainneach.

At the end of fèis concert, families and friends were treated to a colourful, visual and musical display of talent from all the 89 participants who attended Fèis a’ Bhaile this year.

As ever, the children’s musical achievements are the highlight of the evening and they certainly did not disappoint! The Groupwork classes manage to treat the audience to something new each year - if you can imagine traditional music with ‘Beatboxing’!!!

Calum Alex of Sgioba-G did a wonderful job as Fear an Taigh, assisted by children from each class who introduced their own sets in Gaelic.

A main development over the past year was their Groupwork Project which was led by tutors, Irene Fraser and Hugh Marwick. The highlight was when they performed at Eden Court along with Fèis na h-Òige as part of The Blas Festival. The committee would like to thank all involved in making this year’s fèis such a success especially Fèis Spè, Fèis na h-Òige and Sgioba-G. Also to Charleston Academy for their continuing support.

Buill A’ BHùRd

Tha còignear bhall as urchuigh tighinn air Bòrd Fèisean nan Gàidheal. Tha sinn a’ cur fàilte air ais air Catriona Nic an t-Saoir (Fèis Loch Abar) mar Chathraiche; Katag NicNeill (Fèis Bharragh); Derek MacI’llIhminne (Fèis a’Bhealaich); Magaidh Chaith (Fèis an Earraige); agus Mairi Oakley (Fèis na h-Òige) nam ball ùra cuideachd.

Board Members

Retiring Directors were Chair Katie Adam, Jane MacNeil, Vice-Chair Peggy Nicolson and Alasdair MacDonald. We thank them all for their commitment and support.
FÈISEAN ANN AN LOCH ABAR AGUS GLASCHU

‘S e àm caran sàmhach a tha seo an-dràsta ach tha na clasaichean a’ ruith gach seachdain mar as àbhaist air feadh Loch Abar.

Tha Fèis Loch Abair direach air a’ choinneamh bhiadhainn aca a chumail agus chaidh a h-uile sian mar bu chòir gun atharrachadh sam bith air a’ chomataidh.

Tha Caoimhin Rodgers, Oifigear Leasachaidh Fèisean Loch Abair, gu bhith cuideachd a’ coimhead as dèidh Fèis Ghleann Albainn, Fèis Lannraig a Tuath, Fèis Ghlaschu, Fèis Chille Chonbhal agus Fèis Innis an Uillt bho seo a-mach. Thuirt Caoimhin: “Thachair mi ris a’ chuid as motha dhiubh agus tha mi a’ coimhead air adhart ri bhith ag obair còmhla riutha.”

LOCHABER AND GLASGOW FÈISEAN

We are now entering a quiet period for the Fèisean but the weekly classes are still running throughout Lochaber.

Fèis Lochabair recently held their AGM and all went well with the office bearers holding their posts for the coming year.

As well as being responsible for the Lochaber Fèisean, Kevin Rodgers, Development Officer has now taken on Fèis Ghleann Albainn, Fèis Lannraig a Tuath, Fèis Ghlaschu, Fèis Chille Chonbhal and Fèis Innis an Uillt. He has already met with the majority of the Fèisean and is looking forward to working with them.

FÈISEAN NANN EILEAN SIAR

Air 19 dàmhair chaidh faraidhean Chaledonian Mhic a’ Bhriuthainn a luighdachadh fo sgeama ùr RET (Road Equivalent Tariff) a thathar an dùil a thairgse gu ruige àm an Earraich 2011. Le bhith a’ tabhann phrisean nas lugha tha Rìaghaltas na h-Alba an dòchas piseach a thoirt air turasachd nan eilean agus eaconomaidh dùthchail a bhrosnachadh. Tha sinn gè chinteach gum bi mòran a’ gabhail a’ chothroim a tha seo agus saolaidh sinn gur e seo an t-àm as fheàrr na làithean-saora agaibh a chur air dòigh. Ma tha sibh am beachd sgrìob a thoirt dha na h-Eileanan an òrdh bhliadhgan a' luach-saora ag a bheil Fèisean sam bith a' gabhail a’ chothroim a tha seo leis a thairge. Bidh fàilte chrìdeil gur feitheamh.

WESTERN ISLES FÈISEAN

Taking advantage of a new pilot scheme that was introduced in October to lower the cost of travelling by ferry, it is now feasible for Jenna Cumming, Development Officer for the Western Isles, to cover Fèisean in the Isle of Skye. The new fares reflect the cost of travelling an equivalent distance by road. The Scottish Government hope that this reduction will encourage tourism and strengthen local economies. If you are planning to visit the Western Isles next year make sure you visit our website to find out if there are any Fèisean or Ceilidh Trails taking place.

Some of the 2009 dates known so far are:

- 6 - 10 April: Fèis Taigh Dhonnchaidh
- 6 - 10 July: Fèis Tìr an Eòrna
- 13 - 17 July: Fèis Tìr a' Mhurain
- 13 - 17 July: Feis Eilean na Hearadh
- 13 - 18 July: Fèis Bharraigh
- 27 - 31 July: Fèis Eilean an Fhraoich
- 3 - 7 August: Fèis an Rubha

FÈISEAN MHUILE

Fèisean nan Gàidheal provided some financial assistance towards Fèis Mhuile who were involved in the Òran Ùr do Mhuile competition which was organised by the local Mull Mod Committee to celebrate 70 years of Mull Mods.

Eighteen enthusiastic youngsters attended and all took part in guitar, Gaelic singing and songwriting, accordion and fiddle classes. They all had great fun and managed to write a song about Mull’s wicked weather which that weekend consisted of thunder, lightning, and hail rapidly followed by snow!

However the weather could not dampen the spirit of the Òran Ùr do Mhuile competition which was fantastic. There were plenty of entries and the songs were sung by local musicians Alasdair Whyte and Kirsty Mackinnon. For one competition the lyrics were provided but a tune had to be written, and this meant that Alasdair Whyte had to sing the same song twice but with two different tunes, not an easy task!

Backing vocals and musical accompaniment were by Mary Ann Kennedy and Findlay Napier’s band. Adjudicators were Fiona Mackenzie, Calum Munro and Anne Lorne Gillies (who watched the competition via a Skype link set up in the hall).

The Music to Lyrics adult competition was won by Allan MacDonald with Gheibhinn cadal math.

All in all it was a great night and a fantastic competition and, regardless of the foul weather, was followed by a cèilidh into the wee small hours.

A CD of all the winning entries was produced by Watercolour Music Productions and can be purchased at various outlets.

Lochaber Whyte: Lang the new song!
Fèis TRÈANAIDH 2009

The Fèis is set for 14/15 March 2009, and will be held at the Ben Wyvis Hotel set in its own grounds in the pretty former spa village of Strathpeffer, just north of Dingwall.

The programme includes the usual mix of business, cultural and general interest courses. Many have been suggested by previous participants and all have been picked for their usefulness to Fèis personnel. For example, we will have a certificated one-day course in First Aid, computer and Gaelic classes at various levels, courses to help volunteers and tutors to deal appropriately with behavioural and emotional challenges in children, a course to help with public speaking, and even “How to run a Fèis”.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal will pay for two delegates from each fèis to attend (one of whom should be the Annualised Hours Worker, if the fèis has one). Further delegates will be charged the 24-hour rate at cost (£65).

A copy of the programme for the Fèis has been sent to the main Fèis contacts. Further copies are available from Iona MacDonald – iona@feisean.org.

RITA HUNTER

A personal appreciation by Arthur Cormack

Rita Hunter recently left her post as Director of Fèis Rois, after 20 very successful years at the helm. It is difficult to know where to start in quantifying her contribution to the Fèis movement over that period.

When I joined Fèisean nan Gàidheal in 1992, Rita was a member of the Fèisean nan Gàidheal Board. She had recently started full-time at Fèis Rois which, under her leadership, grew into an organisation that delivered a very wide programme of work. Latterly this consisted of 3 Fèisean annually, a Cèilidh Trail (an idea pioneered by Rita), a huge range of classes, workshops and master-classes, a large portion of the Youth Music Initiative work contracted to Fèisean nan Gàidheal by the Highland Council and the Fèis also acted as a traditional music agency.

In addition to all those ‘core’ activities, Rita was the brains behind events like Donald Shaw’s Harvest at Celtic Connections and the Ceòlraidh concerts where young people had the opportunity to work and perform with their choice of traditional artists.

Rita has a seemingly endless capacity for delivering innovative work, which was key to the success of Fèis Rois. Working with thousands of young people, from Ross-shire and beyond, and having responsibility for their welfare while away from home is not something everyone could, or would, take on. Rita was their friend, mentor and ‘mother’ in her years at the helm of Fèis Rois.

Rita has been an important figure in traditional music development in Scotland over many years. She was a member of the Music Committee of the Scottish Arts Council, and chaired a Working Group which led to a report on the development needs of the traditional music sector. As a result of this, the SAC made traditional and Gaelic music the priority for development within its music strategy at the time. She was a member of the Scottish Traditional Music Forum and the Blas Festival Action Group.

The Fèis movement in general, and Fèis Rois in particular, owes an immeasurable debt to Rita Hunter, and we wish her well for the future and hope she will have a continuing involvement in the movement she had a key role in developing.
Anne Willoughby, Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s Executive Manager has graduated with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) having recently completed a PG Diploma in Management Studies. The whole programme took 3 years to complete with a mixture of online studying, day release and residential weekends.

Thuirt Anna “Cha robh e furasta a h-uile càil a dhèanamh agus a bhith ag obair cuideachd ach chòrd an cursa gu mòr rium. Tha mi airson taing a toirt do bhuill a’ Bhùird an cothrom seo a thoirt dhomh agus cuideachd don luchd-obrach a bha air leth taiceil – mòran taing dhuibh uile.”

Chuir Art MacCarmaig meala naidheachd air Anna, ag ràdh: “Bha Anna dìcheallach agus dealasach fhad ‘s a bha i a’ dèanamh a cùrsa agus a’ cumail a h-obrach anns an oifis a’ dol aig an aon àm. Tha sinn moiteil às na rinn i, agus is cinnteach gum bh’ a bha iad gu feum Fèisean nan Gàidheal san àm ri teadh.”

Fèisean nan Gàidheal
Taigh a’ Mhill
Port-Righ
An t-Eilean Sgitheanach
IV51 9BZ
Fòn 01478 613355
Facs 01478 613399
Post-d brath@feisean.org
www.feisean.org

TRIP TO ST KILDA

Earlier this summer, a group including 5 members of the Fèisean nan Gàidheal staff took the trip out on the Orca II, from Leverburgh in Harris to St Kilda. The bumpy journey on the way out was more than made up for by their experiences on this legendary island, boasting the highest sea cliffs in the United Kingdom and the stunning trip round Boreray, Stac Lee and Stac an Armain.