

# Weel Bressa, Whit News?

If you'd like to get in touch with us or have something to include in the next issue contact Beatrice - [bealowe2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bealowe2@yahoo.co.uk).  
Or call Sharon on 820 706 or 07547280040  
or email. [bressaydevelopment@gmail.com](mailto:bressaydevelopment@gmail.com)

## Bressay Development Ltd update

This years Bide Da Day takes place over two days, the 29th & 30th of July. Please get in touch if you can help out at any of the events or would like any information. Details can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Please keep delivering items for recycling to the school, a list of what we accept can be found on our website but do remember to give your milk bottles a good rinse out.

The community library is one of the rooms in the school available for hire and with its cosy surroundings is great for informal meetings. Rent is charged at £15 for a morning, afternoon or evening session. Tea, coffee and cake plus facilities including a projector can be provided.

Thanks to all those who attended events or helped out at the Speldiburn Cafe's official opening weekend. Special thanks to Maurice for performing so brilliantly (and without rehearsal) the Speldie Burn reel, Tavish for his speech, the fantastic First Foot Soldiers and the musicians who made for such an enjoyable Sunday afternoon. BD Ltd directors enjoyed the opportunity to show off Bressay's cafe and community hub, now one year into operation.

## [www.bressay.org](http://www.bressay.org)

BD Ltd's brilliant new website is now online! We have included information on all BD Ltd activities - the Speldiburn cafe & GAN Shop, recycling, bulky waste uplifts, plus upcoming event details. The site also includes information about other Bressay groups and businesses plus visitor information - places to visit, transport, accommodation, etc. There is plenty of scope to add more to the site in the coming months and years. We would like to say a big thank you to NB Communications for their help.

## Speldiburn Cafe Exhibition

The new Speldiburn Cafe exhibition includes bright Shetland scenes and detailed wildlife prints, drawn in colour pencil by Shetland artist John Birnie. Prints and postcards are available to buy in the cafe.



Maurice Henderson performing the Speldie Burn reel. The tune was composed by the late Harry Tulloch of Newhall, the burn - now just a drain - runs by the outside of the school.



Congratulations to our very own Speldi babe Rozanne and Eric on their recent marriage. Here, just in case you've missed it is the photo of the fabulous feather topped bride to be!

## What's on.

**Speldiburn Cafe** open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays,  
11.30am - 3.30pm & Saturdays, 11.30am - 2.30pm.

**Bressay Heritage Centre** open Tuesdays, Wednesdays Fridays  
& Saturdays 10am - 4pm and Sundays, 11am - 5pm.

**Speldiburn GAN Shop** open Tuesdays, Fridays & Saturdays  
12.30pm - 2.30pm

**Under 5's** - Tuesday mornings, 10.30am - 12.30pm.

**July;** 29th & 30th - Bide Da Day in Bressa

**August;** 4th August - Fiddle Frenzy concert & dance with  
Rack 'n' Ruin. 7.30pm - 11.30pm in the Hall.  
4th - 13th - Boat week exhibition at the Heritage  
Centre.

27th - Bressay Garden & Produce Show. Doors  
open 3pm, in the Hall. Schedules available from the  
Mail Shop & the Speldiburn Cafe.

## BD Ltd Bulky Waste Schedule 2017

Month	Date	Location
September	Sat 16	Voeside
November	Sat 18	Hall

## Noss Open Day

The annual Open day, organised by SNH, took place on the 1st of July. Volunteers from the Bressay Hall Committee provided soup, sandwiches, burgers and home bakes, all money raised going to Hall Funds. The photos below show Hall volunteer Hannah Bateson (top) and visitors Kate Wills and Cleo Gifford (bottom) getting their faces painted in the pony pund.



## E J Smith's nightmare voyage

Part 2. Conclusion of the  
story begun in edition no 13.

[extracts from an  
unpublished memoir by  
Elizabeth J. Smith (née  
Anderson)] Courtesy of  
Elizabeth Edwards & Linda  
Sutherland.



Meantime, the crew had not been idle. Thudding feet and scramblings to and fro indicated that they were in the process of stopping the gaping hole caused by the broken skylight, by drawing over it a tarpaulin, and securing it by ropes. A tremendous sea had come on board, carrying away the bridge ladder, which had crashed down on the skylight, hence the flood. The same wave bent the iron stanchions of the bridge, and very nearly carried away Capt. Leask, who, however, held on, and recovered himself in a few moments. Just when things had been adjusted, another huge wave tore away the tarpaulin, and again the green pillar appeared among the unlucky thirteen; but as by this time the lower bunks were empty, less distress was felt, and the crew soon secured the tarpaulin with extra lashings.

Another struggle occurred on deck, when some deck cargo broke adrift and took charge, injuring the cook, who had taken a hand in the emergency. Cooked food there was none; I had a thick biscuit and a bottle of soda water, and on this I lived from Wednesday till Saturday. On Friday night I cried from weakness, not from fear – we were past that. But still part of my mind despised myself for crying at all. I have always felt like crying when very hungry, or when for a long time without food.

A kind of dream-like state succeeded this so that I hardly felt the tossing back and fore which were [*sic*] to leave my arms and shoulders black and blue, Nellie having been accommodated in another bunk. However, I was in far better case than those who had been sick, and did manage sometimes to crawl back and fore with drinks for some of them.

The gale showed signs of abating on Friday, and on Saturday the *St Magnus* made her way into Kirkwall harbour. No one of the passengers was usually allowed ashore according to Admiralty restrictions; but owing to the really serious condition of some of the passengers rules were relaxed, and we were allowed to land, some being carried ashore on stretchers to receive medical attention. I shall never forget the kindness of the Kirkness folk who took two of us to their house. I had to take especial care not to wolf the lovely food they placed before us.

At last we reached Lerwick. The *St Magnus* had been driven 20 miles north of N. Ronaldsay, and had, it was said, only 2 hours' coal in her bunkers before the weather allowed her to regain shelter. An old whaler, converted into a collier and named *Active* foundered in the very waters through which we had passed. Her end became known only when an Orcadian picked up a bottle on the shore, bearing a message written by J. Scott Jamieson, Levenwick (a relative of Willie's<sup>3</sup>) – "Vessel sinking. Engine room flooded. No hope, but trust in God's mercy." Such, too, might have been our fate. Our folk were alarmed for the safety of the steamer, my father, as a seaman, knowing the conditions exactly, and maintaining stoutly in the face of reports circulated to quiet anxiety, that "she was neither in Peterhead nor Wick, but hove-to somewhere" – in which he was right.

One has to experience a storm at sea to realise the power in the forces of Nature, and to learn true humility.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. of Willie Smith, EJS's husband (LMS)

## Bressay History Group

Several old Bressay boats will be on display outside the Heritage Centre during this year's Shetland Boat Week (7th - 13th August). An indoor exhibition to accompany the display will feature boats which were familiar sights in Bressay's past. [bressayheritage@btinternet.com](mailto:bressayheritage@btinternet.com). Phone 820 750

### Excavations in Noss

On 30th May, members of the Bressay History Group visited Noss to investigate a stone tunnel which was known to project under the western gavel end of the Gungstie house. The tunnel had been discovered in the 1950s by Lollie Sutherland when a cracked flagstone led to a partial collapse outside Gungstie. Access from inside the house was discovered in 1966 when Peter Manson and Robbie Eunson were employed by the Garth Estate to renovate the sitting-room, now the present visitor centre maintained by Scottish Natural Heritage. They removed the wooden floorboards, laid a concrete floor and whilst taking apart a walk-in cupboard revealed the inner end of the tunnel.

History Group members took measurements and opened a small trench outside the house to access the tunnel from above and remove the debris used to make safe the collapsed tunnel in the 1950s. It was apparent that the tunnel continued for a further 1.18m making a total length of 3.48m. The excavations exposed coursed stonework capped with larger flags which gave the tunnel an average width of 0.97m and a height of 0.76m. Photographs were taken and a plan was drawn.

The stonework at the end of the tunnel was jointed into both sides and appeared to mark a definitive end rather than continuing to the banks. A number of artefacts were recovered including the skull of a cat, some smaller bones, pieces of burnt wood, a small collection of shell, a stone roof slate and a small fragment of plaster. These would suggest that the tunnel was last used in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Although there are prehistoric structures in Noss such as the cellular building at Cols Ness and the burnt mound at Hellia Cluve, in addition to the early Christian chapel and burial ground immediately to the south of Gungstie, the tunnel appears to be more recent and perhaps contemporary with the extension to the original house. The primary interpretation of the tunnel was of a food store, with a cool, constant ambient temperature and free-draining sandy soil. More speculative ideas included that, despite being uncomfortably narrow, it could have provided an immediate refuge from the Press Gang, which sought to enforce men into naval or military service in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was observed in Bressay with the tale of Jimmy Lamb leaping over the banks to escape at the Veng and also the school pupils, Andrew Leask and James Spence, taken from the Swarthoull schoolhouse in 1808. The tunnel could equally have been a place to stow contraband such as alcohol and tobacco and avoid paying excise duty. Indeed a large quantity of gin was found within the walls of Mousa Broch in the nineteenth century, hidden to avoid the gaze of the Customs Office in Lerwick.

Thanks to SNH wardens from providing transport to Noss and to John Scott and David Manson for selecting and transporting the flags which were used to reinstate the tunnel roof upon completion of the excavation.

### Elizabeth Jane Smith Collection

The Bressay History Group holds a large collection of dialect words collected during 1934 - 1944 by the late Elizabeth J Smith, Old Manse, Bressay. In each issue we will give you a word which she heard used in Bressay.

Last issue > **yasp (adj)** = agile; supple; able; energetic.

This issue > **plüt (v)**



Taken from below the collapsed part of the tunnel looking towards the entrance into the visitor room, this photo shows the well built walls and roof along with some remaining debris.



The far end of the tunnel was initially obscured by sandy soil. Though seemingly less well finished than the rest of the passage it did prove to be a dead end.



Bernard, John, Linda, Jane, Chris and David, the trench and replacement flagstones are visible in the centre of the picture.

# SPELDIBURN

Cafe

Light  
Lunches &  
filled rolls

Homebakes

SOUPS  
SOFT DRINKS

THE RIFAN SHIP

SPECIALS

THE RIFAN SHIP

Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 11.30 - 3.30  
Saturday 11.30 - 2.30



# Bide da day in Bressa

## Family fun!

### Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th July

#### Guided walk to Cullingsbrough

Saturday & Sunday 11.15am (approx 1.5 hours)  
 St Mary's Kirk & 10th century graveyard, broch,  
 fishing bothy & noosts, ruined water mills & more!  
 Transport available from the school  
 Call Sharon on 07547280040 to book

#### Gardie Garden

Saturday & Sunday 2pm - 5pm  
 Walled gardens, woodland walks,  
 artworks to discover, or just sit in peace.  
 Wheelchair access. No dogs please.

#### Knowes Garden

Saturday & Sunday 2pm - 5pm  
 Secluded croft garden with lovely views  
 on Bressay's east side.  
 Garden bus tour leaves the school both days at 2pm  
 Call Sharon on 07547280040 to book

#### Open Croft

Saturday 11am - 5pm  
 Pigs, turkeys, hens & Shetland sheep  
 Parking limited to 5 cars maximum

#### Speldiburn Cafe

Saturday 10.30am - 5pm Sunday 11am - 5pm  
 Choice of soup, sandwiches  
 Tea, coffee & cake - all day  
 Art exhibition by John Birnie

**Bairn's crafts** Saturday 2.30pm - 3.30pm

**Bairn's games & sports** Sunday 2.30pm - 3.30pm

#### Maryfield House

Restaurant and bar open every day for lunch and dinner  
 For bookings call 01595 820203

#### Bressay Heritage Centre

Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday 11am - 5pm  
 Exhibition includes WW1 & Keldabister farm .  
 Admission free (donations welcome)

**Speldiburn Good As New Shop / crafts for sale / car treasure hunt / tombola /  
 Rescues & Wrecks trail info / directions at the school and Heritage Centre.**

Check Bressay Development Ltd's Facebook & [www.bressay.org](http://www.bressay.org) for further details.



A minibus will provide regular transport to and between ferries and attractions

#### Saturday Ferry times

In: 9.00 10.00 11.00 12.00 1.00 1.30  
 Out: 2.00 3.00 4.00 5.00

#### Sunday Ferry times

In: 9.00 10.45 12.30 1.00  
 Out: 2.00 3.00 4.00 5.00