

Wedding bells on Bardsey



Fig 1: Steve and Emma on their wedding day with the Bishop of Barking

On Thursday 18 October 2007, Steve Stansfield and Emma Bowler were married at the chapel on Bardsey. Connor Stansfield was best man. The last wedding on Bardsey was the marriage of Tim and Dot Tyne on the island in 1995. The ceremony was carried out with a Special Licence obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the clergyman who actually married them was a birdwatcher, a member of the BBFO and regular island visitor, The Rt Revd David Hawkins, Bishop of Barking.

Emma walked down the aisle on the arm of Bevan Healey. Bob Normand rang the Chapel Bell. Emyr Roberts decorated the Chapel with flowers and lit the candles. Alicia Normand and Bevan Craddock witnessed the signing of the registers. Neil Healey made the kneeling stool which was used in the Abbey Tower where their wedding was also blessed. He also

videod the ceremony. The stool was cushioned and stitched by Emma and Alicia. Steve Porter was the official photographer. Carole Shearman, artist on the island, cleaned and decorated the School where the reception was held in the evening. Official transport was provided by Ernest Evans in the decorated buggy (by Angharad Roberts), from the Chapel to the School. Wedding cakes were provided by Christine Evans and Alicia Normand, and the wedding feast was provided by Gareth Roberts from Cwrt, his wife Meriel, daughter Angharad, and Helen and Geraint Griffith (all of whom attended the ceremony).

During the ceremony, Lessons were read by Steve Porter and Rachel Porter. Christine Evans read a poem written by herself. The music and singing were by Dianne Charles. Boat transport to the wedding was provided by Dafydd Phillips.

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A Word from the Chairman..



Despite the lack of sunshine on the mainland this year, it was a busy season on Bardsey this year – most of the houses were fully booked through July and August to the second week of September.

Already, there have been a number of enquiries and bookings for 2008, so remember to book early to avoid disappointment.

We received a number of letters praising the standard of the houses, gardens and the care and attention that was given to visitors by the warden, Emyr Roberts and the effective boat service operated by Colin Evans. The healthy state of the fields and livestock, cared for by Gareth Roberts, was also commented upon by visitors.

A number of faithful volunteers returned once more to help with the ongoing maintenance work on the houses, some during the season, others during the usual September period. Emyr also had volunteers to help with the cleaning on a Saturday. BITL's is indebted to the staff and friends who give up their time to volunteer to make the place as pleasant as possible for visitors. Emyr is already busy preparing the houses for the 2008 season.

I'd like to wish you all Season's Greetings and good health for you to be able to visit Enlli in 2008.

Richard Williams, Acting Chair



Fig 2: Gwen from Anglesey busy volunteering

Hi-Tec tractor spotted

There hasn't been a 'hi-tec' tractor on Bardsey since 1950 and before then in 1930. In August this year a bright and shining hi-tec machine went over to work in the fields to prepare the big bales, essential winter feed for the livestock. For any sentimentalists the old tractor still played a part in the proceedings. It won't be retiring just yet.

New gates, old design



Fig 3: Dewi Jones, Chwilog fixing one of the gates

Walking up from the Cafn this year, you may have noticed a series of new gates in place along the track up to the lime kiln. The gates were made and placed by Dewi Jones, a local craftsman living in Chwilog. The gates are of a high standard and follow the design of the original gates. Six have been put in place already and a further twelve are in the process of being made. The Trust is very grateful to Dewi for his work, to Colin for transporting them to the island and to the AONB Llyn through Cyngor Gwynedd Council for their financial contribution to the work.

Bird sightings

Some of the rarities found on the island during the Autumn include snow buntings, Richard's pipits, yellow-browed warblers, black redstarts, barred warbler, water pipits, wood lark and an adult male red-flanked bluetail (a first for Wales) found by Ben Stammers.



Native sheep return



Fig 4: Lambs crossing the Sound

After an absence of 5 years descendants of the original sheep of Enlli were returned to the island. This lineage of a Welsh breed has existed on Enlli for as long as can be remembered. A change in farm tenants led to this flock being brought from the island but a small number were maintained at Uwchmynydd by Gareth Roberts (Cwrt).

During that summer of 2002 Claire Barber was artist in residence on Enlli. The departure of the original flock inspired her to make use of some of the last fleece gathered and, amongst other things, she made a thick felt cape from this wool. This cape still remain on the island.

The farm tenancy has changed again this year and at the end of July and early August the island was cleared of over one thousand ewes and lambs. This enabled Gareth Roberts to return some 300 Welsh ewes, descendants of the original flock, to graze again on Enlli.

New bench

Sitting by the Storws (boathouse) at Cafn has been a longstanding practice by island residents and visitors alike. At one time fishboxes formed the seats there. The timber for the seat that most of us will remember had been washed ashore on Bardsey around the late 1960s. It had previously been part of a wooden hatch cover of a freight ship. After many years of good service by the Storws the bench had been slowly deteriorating until recently it collapsed beyond repair. Contributing to this gradual deterioration evidence was seen that the leafcutter bee had been nesting in the wood.

Leafcutter bees



Fig 5: The leafcutter bee at work

Leafcutter bees are native bees, important as pollinators. They are approximately the size of the common honeybee, although they are somewhat darker with light bands on the abdomen. They are solitary bees and don't produce colonies. Instead, individual female leafcutter bees do all the work of rearing. This includes digging out nesting cavities in soft, rotted wood or in the stems of large, pithy plants, such as roses, creating nest cells. Leafcutter bees are well known for their habit of cutting neat, rounded circles out of rose leaves and other plant leaves. They use the leaves to partition cells and seal the entrance to their nests. They will have collected pollen to feed the grub in the cell. Adult females may live up to two months and lay some 35 to 40 eggs during this time. They are not aggressive and have a mild sting that is used only when they are handled. It's likely that rose leaves from Dynogoch garden along with leaves from other plants from the lighthouse garden were used to create the cells in the bench. However, by now a new bench has been erected by the Storws by a merry band of dedicated individuals and in the best tradition reclaimed timber found on the shore was used to create it.





From the archive.... Kings on Bardsey

At the end of the 18th century when the Newboroughs and their friends were entertained, hats were presented to the islanders and "the nominal king and queen were distinguished from the rest by an additional ribbon". The first indication that this office became anything more than a picnic entertainment for the gentry comes in a letter of July 1826: "The poor old King of Bardsey is dead and buried on the island." Three weeks later Lord Newborough's uncle took ship in the *Arvon* from Caernarfon to the island for a ceremony "saluting by crown the King of Bardsey". I believe this would have been the first 'coronation' with the crown made by a lighthouse keeper, which can be seen in Liverpool Museum. It is made of tin, painted gold, with glass 'jewels'. (You have to ask to see it as it's not on display- it is one of my ambitions to see it returned to the island, or at least to Aberdaron.)

Various commentators – visiting the island on a day trip or chatting in the Ship in Aberdaron – have surmised that the 'King' was a sort of agent and rent collector, an intermediary between the estate and the islanders. But none of the 19th century correspondence suggests this – any of the inhabitants it seems is able to address letters directly to Lord Newborough, and they do so, frequently, asking for rent reductions or for employment on his Lordship's yacht, or in the case of Ann Williams of Plas Bach, for permission to retain the land after being widowed. She had ten children, all living at home, and the older boys would help. After this, it seems Lord Newborough took a special interest in the family, and 'rooms were kept' in the house for him to stay, furnished with items specially brought from the Glynllifon Estate.

King John Williams 1st of Cristin Uchaf was chosen it is said because Trinity House had selected him to be in charge of the Lighthouse boat and supplies. However, on 13th April 1841 he was drowned, 'in the 41st year of his age'

crossing to the mainland just one day after his son was born (a previous boy had died aged 4 in 1837; there were two older girls.) This baby, also called John Williams, succeeded his father, but not until he was thirty three.



Fig 6: Postcard of John Williams II
Courtesy Gwynedd Archives Service

Robert Williams of Hendy seems to have filled the role of leader for the next thirty years, though he was never named as King except by his successor as Calvinistic Minister, William T Jones, in his diary soon after arriving on the island.

John Williams II was eventually crowned in 1874, in a ceremony at which it seems Trinity House 'elder brethren' officiated, in full dress uniform complete with gold braid (perhaps Lord Newborough was too elderly to attend) with their ship standing by. The ceremony apparently involved standing on a chair on the small rise on The Narrows, and taking an oath while holding a ceremonial snuffbox. There are stories of him in the book



Tomos o Enlli (Thomas the Islandman) as a gloomy drunk, and the two photographs of him in 1894 and 1899 both show him to have a dark brooding gaze. He never married but lived with his sister and in 1888 there's a reference to the house as the home of King John and the old Queen, Jane Williams (his sister.) About twelve years later he was asked to leave the island as he had become an alcoholic, and the crown was assumed by the oldest inhabitant, Love Pritchard, of Ty Pella.

Photogenic and sociable, Love Pritchard became quite famous: he is said to have offered himself and the other menfolk when war began in 1914, but in a fit of pique at being told they were too old, declared himself and the island neutral territory! Unlike John Williams II who was reluctant to have a photograph taken wearing the crown, Love posed at every opportunity and is said to have walked down the High St in Pwllheli in full regalia. "An old salt with a mahogany face framed in whiskers" is how he was described by Mortimer Wheeler, who met him in the pub in Aberdaron in 1922. In 1925 he features in several newspaper articles as leading 'his people' off the island to new homes on the mainland, and declaring himself eager 'to find a nice wife' at the age of 83. Both John Williams II and Love Pritchard died as bachelors and neither admitted to any children.

Christine Evans

New farmers at Ty Pellaf

Many of you will have heard of the new family at Ty Pella even if you haven't met Steve Porter, his wife Jo or Rachel (aged 13) and Ben (11). They have been coming for holidays since the children were small, but their connection with Enlli is deeper than that. For the last three years, they have kept bees on the island and have become a familiar sight kayaking across from Aberdaron to tend them, sometimes with bulky bits of equipment precariously balanced. The bees have done well and their delicious honey has been on sale on the island.

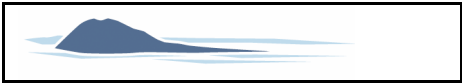
Steve grew up on a sheep farm near Conwy and has always been interested in nature and the environment. A trained Outdoor Pursuits Instructor, he is particularly keen on climbing, caving and kayaking. In the last two years he has completed circumnavigations of Wales and Scotland in his kayak, raising money for a village project in drought-stricken northern Kenya. For the last seven years, his teaching commitment at St David's College in Llandudno has been part-time because both he and Jo have been involved in youth work with a local church. He is passionate about astronomy, and hopes the lighthouse won't interfere too much with star-watching through his new telescope.



Fig 7: Steve Porter with son, Ben

From a longstanding Welsh family in Colwyn Bay, Jo first came to stay on Enlli as a volunteer when she was 15, encouraged by her biology teacher Doris Alcock. She spent three weeks mostly building Heligoland traps in the withies and returned in subsequent summers before going to Lancaster to do a BSc in ecology, followed by a Rural Resource Management course. Working for CCW, she revisited Enlli as part of the Vegetation Survey of Gwynedd. After marrying Steve, she was kept busy with goats, poultry, a large vegetable garden, an acre and a half of traditional hay and wildflower meadow, bees and their products, and of course childcare. She loves crafts of all kinds, especially working with wool – spinning, dyeing, felt-making and knitting – and makes willow baskets of all kinds.

Another job for her now is supervising Rachel and Ben's lessons.



Bardsey Songs on CD

Ready soon - SONGS OF ENLLI, 16 songs associated with the island in one way or another, including one from our patron, Bryn Terfel. Available from the office; price: £10 plus £1 p & p. Profits will go towards the work of the Bardsey Island Trust.

Visit the website www.bardsey.org to check on the date of release of the CD – it might be ready in time for Christmas!



Fig 8: Cover of the CD that will soon be for sale

News from the Observatory

Residents and visitors alike will be sorry to see David leave the island at the end of November. David Wright has been working as Assistant Warden at the Bird Observatory for two years.

A new Assistant Warden is therefore required for the 2008 season. The contract is for 8 months from March 2008. The BBFO are also looking for a Field Worker to undertake a census of breeding Manx shearwaters in May/June 2008 for a period of five weeks. The work will include writing a report of the findings. Those interested should contact Steve directly for further details.

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They are studying most subjects through a distance learning package, but others – such as Welsh – with the help of the LEA and local school staff. Rachel enjoys art and crafts, looking after the animals and is a keen reader. Ben's interests include birdwatching, photography and nature study, and helping on the farm, especially if it involves the farm bike.

The family - including their three dogs Esther, Daisy and Celyn - arrived at the beginning of October and have settled in well, looking forward to the winter (once Jo has mastered the generator) and enjoying making all their Christmas presents this year.

Spreading the word



Fig 9: John at the Eisteddfod stall

Bardsey had had much positive publicity this year with an article in Welsh cultural magazine *Golwg* by Beca Brown about her stay on the island, a feature with Iolo Williams on BBC2 looking at the Manx shearwater, a programme following Colin Evans' progress with the building of the *Maria Stella II* featured on *Dragon's Tail* and Gareth Roberts, Cwrt on the Welsh *Ffermio* programme. Such positive press is always good to promote Bardsey as a place to visit and the Trust as a charity to support it in its attempts to maintain public access to this unique island. While we market as much as possible on the limited budget we have, word of mouth is one of the best ways to tell people about the unique experience of holidaying on the island – so remember to spread the word!