

# Aisgearnis

*Special Edition Newsletter: Askernish Open Golf Weekend*



*Ralph Thompson's*

## Club Chairman's Message

*Welcome to a special edition of the Askernish Golf Club newsletter featuring the results, news & dramatic gossip from the Askernish Open Golf Weekend 2011.*

*As you will read there was some excellent scoring during the competitions and more than a few 'Champagne moments'!*

*For myself it was a real pleasure to stand on the 1st tee and greet so many friends returning to play in the event again, and so many new faces who we hope to welcome back in 2012.*

*As I said at the weekend, there are a huge number of people to thank for all their efforts... too many to mention here. But i'm sure you'll join me in thanking all those who had a hand in the presentation of the course, the organisation of the event, and (most importantly) the running of the clubhouse.*

*We hope you'll keep an eye out for the details of next years Open Weekend which we intent to make bigger and better.*

*See you on the links!*

*Ralph*



*Andy MacDonald shot an amazing gross 70 on his way to victory.*

## **The Mackenzie & Ebert Quaich: perfect weather, low scores, new amateur course record!**

First up for the weekend was an opening Stableford competition - The Mackenzie & Ebert Quaich, a trophy in recognition of the role Golf Architect Martin Ebert has had in the restoration of golf at Askernish.

Martin, joined by his business partner Tom Mackenzie, were delighted at the strong turnout of 40 players in fine weather – the local golfer turnout being put to shame by a vast visitor turnout.

In-form local George Murray again had a top-finish coming second with 36 points, but both he and 3rd placed “Mr Consistency” Brian Smith (also finishing with 36 points) were well-behind the victor.

The Quaich was presented to a deserving winner in the form of Stornoway low-handicapper Andy MacDonald. Andy, who was playing Askernish for his second time ever, shot a remarkable 2-under gross 70 – a new Amateur Course record at Askernish – for 40 points, starting with an eagle on the 1st and narrowly missing out on one on the 18th green. An exceptional round of golf, that will take some beating. Well-done Andy!

A quick mention too for young Elliot Ebert, son of Martin Ebert, who triumphed in the junior section by collecting an excellent 42 points playing from the same tees as the adults.

## **SUPPORTING THE ISLES - The value of the Askernish Open to the South Uist Economy**

This year was hugely successful - there was a 40% increase in competitors who participated in 2010, coming close to that of the opening of the restored golf course in 2008.

Nearly three-quarters of all the players were from outside the Uists and nearly half of the visitors were playing at Askernish for the first time ever! The international field came from as far away as the US, Canada, and Belgium, and there was a party of golfers visiting from Finland.

This makes the Askernish Open Golf Weekend a considerable tourism draw to the South Uist islands. The average visiting golfer for the event stays for three nights and spends just over £300 locally during their stay.

Overall, this weekend of golf was worth an approximate 179 tourist days and over £18,000 to the Uist economy.

100% of the Open Weekend's participants said they will recommend the Askernish Open Golf Weekend to others, and 99% are considering returning to play again in 2012.

## Askernish Open Championship: Skye Golf Club Champions for 2011

The main event of the weekend was the Askernish Open Championship. A full day of golf with a huge array of prizes ranging from the Men's Championships right through to beginners & children's mini-event.

The Men's prizes were hotly contested; two sections in the nett prizes were competed for and Askernish's own Greenkeeper Nollie MacKinnon triumphed in the 13-28 handicap section, whilst Niall MacPherson of Benbecula picked up 1st place in the 0-12 handicap section.

The overall Men's Champion, and the prize of being immortalised on the trophy was hotly contested and was decided over the narrowest of margins. Visiting from London, Andrew Tracey scored low early on, but he was pipped by two players both of whom scored 78 gross. Alisdair Henderson of Stornoway came second on a better inward half to Skye's Jonathon MacKinnon. Jonathon shot a round of 78 in which nothing could go wrong; *"it was second to none"* he said.

The Ladies section saw a strong contingent of visiting ladies compete from the Hebrides, England and Internationally. In the nett section it was a home victory for Askernish as Morag Nicholson triumphed over Jane Nicholson of Stornoway.

In the gross section Tina Russell of Ireland came in as runner-up to Jill MacKinnon of Skye who, despite taking a 12 on the final hole, triumphed and took the crown of Askernish's 2011 Ladies Champion.

**Right: Askernish Open Champions for 2011;  
Jill & Jonathon MacKinnon from Skye Golf Club**



## Hole-in-one... on the 11th !!!

On his way to claiming 1st place in the 0-12 nett section on Saturday Benbecula's Niall MacPherson played undoubtedly the shot of the weekend; a hole-in-one on the infamous par-3 11th hole. Niall and his playing partners spent some time hunting for his well-struck tee-shot around the green before, as a last-ditch effort, they checked in the hole to find that he had played the perfect shot and hadn't even known it!



This year the 'closest to the pin' prize had been moved from the 11th hole after many claiming it was too challenging a hole, Niall has proven that even the hardest of Askernish's holes can be mastered!

**Photos courtesy of :**

Norrie MacDonald

John Kemp

Storas Uibhist ( [www.storasuibhist.com](http://www.storasuibhist.com) )

## International Team Competition: Finnish & English Victory, Eriskay narrowly pipped!

Sunday saw the International Team Competition – a celebration of all those who travel to play at Askernish – it was a windy affair with rain rolling through and it was a fine opportunity for the Askernish members to flourish. However, only the Eriskay team - featuring Paddy Forbes as team captain, was able to put together a challenge whilst a visiting troop of Finnish golfers - obviously used to the challenging climatic conditions - took the prizes by storm. In the Texas-Scramble team format scoring was always going to be good and the international visitors didn't disappoint with their two teams shooting under par. The eventual winners was a multi-national accord of Finnish & English; Martin Ebert, Tom Mackenzie, Ville Nurmi, Timo Manserus with a score of 70 gross - 67 net.



*The winning English & Finnish Team*