

WW100 Islay 2018

Islay's determination to commemorate the loss of the troopships *Tuscania* and *Otranto* in 1918 one hundred years on was made clear at three lively meetings, the first in December 2015 and two further ones in January 2016, following which the WW100 Islay group was formed. The Museum of Islay Life had invited individuals and organisations across Islay to take part in "blue sky" thinking as to how the island might mark the centenary. It was agreed that the *Tuscania* and *Otranto* commemoration should be part of a wider commemoration of the island's own losses in World War 1. The WW100 Islay group meets every six weeks working together to support the commemorations.

The plan is to construct a programme of Commemorative Events in 2018, from 5th February to 11th November, which would be drawn together into a lasting legacy which could be revisited by individuals and the community in the future. The overriding themes should be remembrance, reflection and reconciliation.

The centre piece will be a Day of Commemoration, part of WW100 Scotland's commemorations, on the 4th of May 2018 where we hope to welcome a member of the Royal Family as well as dignitaries from Scotland, the wider-UK, America and Europe. This will be wrapped by services at each of the locations of the cemeteries where men were buried, both remaining and temporary. Various events and exhibitions will be created throughout the island from February to November. The Armistice Day service at Kilchoman will draw the commemorations to a fitting close.

As well as the planned events the group is speaking to the Scottish Woodlands Trust to establish a native woodland planted to remember all the Islay and Jura men who went to war and the American servicemen who were buried on Islay - it will be a native woodland interspersed with some US State trees.

Also a WW100 Trail is being created - this will identify and mark significant Great War sites across Islay with discreet WW100 Islay plaques supported by a website and printed brochure. Incorporated into this is a collaboration with the RSPB to improve the interpretation panels around the American Monument, at the Mull of Oa, by including more information about the loss of the two troopships and also some of the personal stories from both American servicemen and Islay people. Discussions are also being held with the War Memorials Trust to ensure that all the Islay war memorials are well presented for 2018.

There are also many other community groups involved planning associated events: The Islay Quilters are recreating the Stars & Stripes sewn the night before the first of the *Tuscania* funerals, the original is now in the Smithsonian Museum, Washington DC; The Islay Book Festival is planning a WW1 theme for 2018; the Community Garden is building a raised bed which will be planted with the State Flowers of those who lost men in the *Tuscania* and *Otranto* tragedies.

The WW100 Commemorations will involve the whole island - the schools, guides and scouts will be involved in the sewing of flags, adopting buildings that will form part of the WW100 Trail, taking part in the 4th May event and planting trees. Already presentations have been given to lunch clubs across the island and more are planned. A parade of the voluntary and emergency services in Bowmore is being planned - showing how these skills which played such an important role 100 years ago are still central to island life.

"In chosen ground on Islay's shore those gallant men are laid
 And by the kindly Highland folk their lonely graves were made.
 When tales are told of other days and sorrows that have been
 May we then tell theirs and keep their memory green."
 (Anon)

Proposed Allocation of Argyll & Bute Council Contribution

Description	Notes	£
4th May Event	infrastructure and logistics	10,000
American Monument	collaboration with RSPB to improve interpretation panels at American Monument	5,000
WW100 Trail	contribution to plaques, guidebook, website	3,000
War Memorials	working with the War Memorials Trust in improving the external War Memorials on Islay - the WMT will fund up to 75% of the work required	5,000
Misc Costs	travel costs, merchandise	2,000
		25,000

The Museum of Islay Life is applying to various national organisations and foundations for funding, for example Museums Galleries Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund, War Memorials Trust, the Shroder Foundation and MacTaggart Third Fund. The indication of funding and support from Argyll & Bute Council has been helpful in these bids.

Key Dates:

Date	Commemoration	Description
5th February	Tuscania Memorial Services	Services at Killyean, Kilnaughton and Port Mor (the temporary grave yards). Soup and sandwiches in Port Mor afterwards.
4th May	WW100 Scotland Commemoration	Service at American Monument, Port Ellen War Memorial and exhibition at Ramsay Hall. VVIP event.
26th August	VC Plaque	David MacIntyre Lowe, VC - service at Portnahaven.
6th October	Otranto Memorial Service	Service at Kilchoman. Followed by soup and sandwiches at Kilchoman Distillery (tbc)
11th November	Armistice Day	Services across the island.