

Latha Luaidh Waulking Day with Sgioba Luaidh Inbhirluaidh (Inverclyde Waulking Group)

The Waulking Day – a day looked forward to by the women of the Township, a day when important work was done, in good company, with plenty of fun and gossip!

Waulking – the technique of finishing newly woven woollen cloth by soaking it and thumping it to shrink and soften it, and tighten up the weave, so that the cloth is warmer and more weatherproof.

Sgioba Luaidh Inbhirluaidh (*Inverclyde Waulking Group*) specialise in the traditional Gaelic songs which accompanied this work.

On this day in **Stoner's Barn**, we will be working on a length of "raw" tweed.

First the cloth is soaked in dilute ammonia, which helps to soften the cloth and remove the grease. The precious liquid is known as *maistir* in Gaelic. In the old days the ammonia was obtained from the potty under the bed, and was stored up in a big tub to mature till ready for use!



Soaking the cloth.



Waulking at Auchindrain



Measuring. Is it ready?

The wrung-out cloth is soaped, then pounded on the table until it is shrunk by the desired amount. We aim to reduce the width from 32 inches to 28". As we pass the cloth round the table, the songs help us to keep together in rhythm, and lighten the hard work. One person sings the solo line, and the rest join in the chorus, which may consist of words, or meaningless syllables (vocables).

Waulking songs are quite unique, a precious heritage of song, giving an insight into all aspects of life in days gone by. Sgioba Luaidh think it is very important to keep them alive, and to present them in the context of work for which they were composed.



A waulking in the superb setting of Auchindrain Township is a memorable experience, re-creating life in days gone by. Sgioba Luaidh are delighted to bring our songs to Argyll, the original heartland of Gaelic language and culture.

