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Look, I did the dook!



Celebrating completing the challenge of the New Year's Day dook in Brodick last Sunday is one swimmer who joined dozens of others taking part in the annual event and others around the island. More photographs on pages 10 and 11. 01_B01dookers01

New year sees little cheer as 'perfect storm' halts ferries

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Arran faced another week of travel chaos as a 'perfect storm' of disruption caused by atrocious weather and Covid staff shortages seriously impacted ferry services.

Arran's new year got off to the worst possible start, with passengers stranded on both sides of the Firth of Clyde after all ferries on the main Ardrossan-to-Brodick route were cancelled last Sunday, leaving those who had travelled to Arran for their New Year celebrations stuck on the island. Others trying to get home had to spend another night on the mainland.

That was followed by the vital

7am service being cancelled three days in a row, and on Tuesday there was just a single sailing in the morning before the sailings were cancelled for the rest of the day due to adverse weather.

As disruption continued this week, the refit of the MV Caledonian Isles was delayed so it could help try to maintain a lifeline service. But another Covid incident saw the cancellation of planned additional sailings by the MV Hebridean Isles on Wednesday.

Additional sailings from Lochranza to Claonaig and Tarbert were being run by the MV Loch Tarbert this week to try to help the situation.

Stranded visitors on the

island last week also led to a scramble for beds, but this was resolved by the joint efforts of Auchrannie Resort and VisitArran, although work on a more robust contingency plan in the wake of such future incidents continues apace.

With supplies beginning to run low on the island, the Co-op working with CalMac got five delivery trucks stuck on the island off on Wednesday morning with two full trucks making the return journey.

The latest disruption came after CalMac announced a temporary timetable for the route which had left Arran with just one replacement ferry for most of January, the

Continued on page 2.

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The MV Caledonian Isles and MV Hebridean Isles lie storm bound in Brodick on Tuesday. 01_B01ferries02



Five Co-op lorries line-up to board the MV Caledonian Isles after delivering vital supplies.

New year sees little cheer as 'perfect storm' halts ferries

Continued from page one.

MV Hebridean Isles, to cover for the MV Caledonian Isles which is now expected to leave for her annual overhaul today (Friday).

Sam Bourne, chairman of the Arran Ferry Action Group, said last weekend was 'complete chaos' with 'passengers abandoned on both sides of the Firth of Clyde'.

'Between Covid, weather and infrastructure issues, we are facing a perfect storm of disruption. Islanders travelling for healthcare or work are facing significant disruption. It's going to be a very challenging few weeks for all of the island communities up and down the West Coast.

'This combined with the ongoing problems with the berth in Ardrossan, resulting in the regular cancellation of the key 7am service from Ardrossan to Brodick, means we are now facing a serious crisis of connectivity.'

He added capacity could be regularly limited to 40 per cent of normal levels for the next few weeks, without any other weather or technical disruption.

And added: 'The community on Arran has proposed various practical options to mitigate the ongoing effects caused by the disruption on the main route. These have been roundly rejected thus far by CalMac.'

A CalMac spokeswoman said on Wednesday: 'We apologise for the recent disruption caused to scheduled sailings to and from Arran. In spite of our best efforts to maintain services, the unprecedented speed of the spread of covid cases at this time is resulting in the need to cancel services

at very short notice. Although we re-crewed and deep cleaned the MV Caledonian Isles after confirmed Covid cases were identified, poor weather then prevented any further sailings from going ahead.'

'MV Caledonian Isles returned to service on the Ardrossan-Brodick route on Monday and MV Loch Tarbert operated three return sailings to Lochranza from Tarbert.'

'MV Hebridean Isles has now also returned to service. However, due to continuing adverse weather, all sailings between Ardrossan and Brodick were cancelled for the remainder of yesterday. MV Loch Alann operated additional sailings to help provide additional capacity to Arran during this exceptional period.'

Last week CalMac said 93 crew and 18 port staff were unavailable because of Covid. This equates to a Covid absence rate of nine per cent amongst vessel crews and five per cent

amongst port staff and is in addition to a non-coronavirus absence rate of six per cent.

In a statement issued on Hogmanay Robbie Drummond, CalMac managing director, said: 'Over the past week, the number of Covid-related absences amongst vessel crew has increased by 166 per cent, from 35 on Christmas Eve to 93 today. Covid absences amongst port staff have risen by one third over the same period. The loss of such large numbers of staff makes it necessary for us to take immediate action to try and preserve essential services to communities.'

'We fully appreciate the difficulties these changes will cause for some of our customers and we apologise for any disruption that may result. However, because this situation is changing rapidly, we must protect core services, which is why we are now having to introduce this temporary timetable.'

'Years of neglect' to blame for spiralling repair costs

The ever spiralling cost of repairing the CalMac ferry fleet has risen to more than £17.3 million a year, new figures reveal.

Since the start of the current CalMac ferry franchise in 2016, the total cost of repairs was £83.6m, with some of the sharpest increases being for ships running beyond their original 20-year lifespan.

One of the steepest increases in repair costs is on the seven-year-old MV Catriona which sails between Lochranza and Claonaig and Tarbert, which has increased by 197 per cent.

The cost of repairing Arran's main ferry, the 29-year-old MV Caledonian Isles, rose by 73 per cent and the 37-year-old MV Isle of Arran has increased by 61 per cent. The average age of the 31 vessel fleet is 22 years.

While the boats are operated by CalMac, they are owned by

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) with claims this week the company recently extended the lifespan (on paper) of the vessels from 20 to 35 years to give a better gloss to CMAL's balance sheet.

Rhoda Grant MSP, Scottish Labour's island spokeswoman, said this week that the SNP's approach to the CalMac ferries is 'shambolic' and was caused by 'years of neglect'.

She said: 'The SNP has abandoned island communities and left Scotland's lifeline ferry fleet to rust. Years of neglect have left Scotland's ferry fleet in a pitiful state and its catastrophic mismanagement of the Ferguson's Marine contracts made a bad situation worse.'

'It is little wonder costs are soaring when we are relying on vessels a decade past their lifespan. The SNP's shambolic approach to shipbuilding has

failed islanders, workers and taxpayers.'

A spokeswoman for CMAL said: 'If vessels are properly maintained, there is no reason why they cannot operate effectively, efficiently and safely for more than 40 years.'

'CMAL has a significant plan of vessel and harbour investment underway, backed by a £580 million commitment from the Scottish Government for an initial five-year period from 2021 to 2026. We'd like to see at least the same amount invested again in fiscal years 2026-2031, which would mean over the 10 years from 2021-2031, the average age of the fleet could be brought down to 15 years.'

A Transport Scotland spokesman said it will be investing hundreds of millions of pounds in the years to come to help deal with the ageing CalMac fleet.

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Arran Active among the prizes in retail awards

Arran Active, the popular outdoor retailer in Brodick, has won another top prize in the prestigious The Great Outdoors readers' awards.

The shop picked up bronze in the independent retailer category in the 2021 awards after winning a second place silver award last year.

Arran's largest fully independent outdoor retailer faced some stiff competition with nine other outdoor stores – with five or fewer stores – competing for the title of Independent Retailer of the Year.

Arran Active and Braemar Mountain Sports were the only two Scottish finalists with the remaining retailers all operating in England, including the popular Lake and Peak districts, with the winning store Needle Sports in Keswick.

The awards, now in their 10th

year, are hosted by The Great Outdoors magazine, with all of the nominations from the various categories coming from readers themselves.

The store is owned by Andrew and Juliette Walsh, who moved to the island and took over a small outdoor shop at Cladach, before moving their new premises at Brodick in 2016.

Delighted

Andrew told the Banner: 'We are delighted that, for the second consecutive year, Arran Active was placed in the top three independent outdoor stores in the UK.'

'It is an honour to be even nominated alongside some truly great stores in the traditional outdoor heartlands of the Lake and Peak districts.'

'As ever, a massive thank you to our amazing customers – thank you for voting too! – and

to our wonderful team in the store. We have exciting plans for the season ahead and look forward to welcoming you all. Happy New Year!'

In a statement TGO magazine said: 'What makes these awards different – and gives extra kudos to the winners – is that it's you, our readers, who decide the results.'

'From talented authors and tireless campaigners to charming campsites and cosy pubs, the winners across our 15 categories represent the most inspirational personalities, organisations and businesses in the outdoor world.'

'Congratulations to everybody who received an award – and a huge thanks to you all for taking the time to vote for them.'

For a list of winners visit tgomagazine.co.uk/awards/ reader-awards.

Self-isolation relief but worry as schools go back

Businesses on Arran breathed a sigh of relief this week as the Scottish Government announced the relaxation of the strict self-isolation rules.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed a cut from 10 days to seven from midnight on Wednesday, if people record two negative tests and have no symptoms, bringing Scotland into line with the rest of the UK.

And in a second change the requirement for 'fully vaccinated' close contacts of positive cases to self-isolate will be replaced by taking lateral flow tests every day for seven days.

The chance to the rules, which have fuelled a so-called 'pingdemic', was a welcome relief for hospitality and other businesses struggling with staff absences, as well as the island's hard pressed health services and CalMac.

Latest official figures show there were a record number of confirmed Covid cases on the island which stood at 43 ahead of the new year – there has been no updated figure since. Across Scotland a continuing

surge in Omicron cases is set to see figures break the one million mark.

There is further concern of a rise in cases as Arran schools went back to class yesterday (Thursday). A number of Arran High School pupils, between 12 and 17 years, have had their second dose of the vaccine but they were asked to take a lateral flow test before the first day back and then take them twice weekly after that. A further clinic for the age group is to be held on the island on Sunday January 16.

However, there is also concern that teacher absences, as a result of catching Covid or self-isolating, could also disrupt lessons.

The First Minister, in a virtual address to MSPs this week, agreed that she expects continued growth in the level of infections as people return to school and work and that infections will become more widespread in the days to come.

Ms Sturgeon outlined the new advice on testing, which she says has been 'carefully

considered'. People who have symptoms should still book a PCR test. However from tomorrow, if you do not have symptoms and get a positive result using a lateral flow test, you do not have to book a PCR test.

Instead, Ms Sturgeon said, people should immediately isolate and report their results online so that contact tracing can begin. The risk of getting a false positive on a lateral flow test is very low – about three in 10,000, she said.

Ms Sturgeon added: 'These changes are significant and they are not completely without risk. However at this stage of the pandemic they do strike an appropriate balance between the continued importance of self-isolation in breaking chains of transmission and reducing the disruption self-isolation causes in the economy and other critical services.'

No further curbs were announced on Wednesday but existing restrictions in Scotland will continue in place until Monday January 17.



Andrew Walsh outside the Arran Active store.

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Arran gift card on trend as it goes digital

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Arran is one step closer to creating a digital offering after becoming one of the first places to introduce new digital gifting technology from Scottish payments provider Miconex, through the popular ArranCard.

The ArranCard is now available as an e-card that can be sent to the recipient's phone instantly as either a text or email. Using a Love Local app, recipients of the e-card can then add the balance to their digital wallet and make their purchase using Apple Pay or Google Pay either online or in-store.

The introduction of the new digital ArranCard is the latest initiative to support businesses and position the island for the future by enhancing

digital connectedness. VisitArran introduced the ArranCard in April 2017 and it can be spent in more than 60 businesses on Arran, including retail, food and drink, accommodation and activities. Physical versions of the ArranCard which can be sent to the recipient by post are still available.

Sheila Gilmore, executive director of VisitArran said: 'We have introduced the digital ArranCard to make shopping and experiencing Arran more accessible and appealing for a wide variety of customers, adapting to how they want to shop and pay both now and in the future.'

'The ArranCard has already locked more than £60,000 into our local economy, encouraging people to spend here in Arran rather than online or in other destinations. The

introduction of the digital ArranCard takes that one step further, making it even easier for people to show their support for local businesses in a convenient way.

'We're pleased to have our own digital gift card in place. Customers now have the choice between the physical ArranCard that they can wrap up and hand over in person or the digital ArranCard that they can send to family and friends instantly.'

The ArranCard is part of the multi-award winning Town & City Gift Card concept from payments provider Miconex.

Colin Munro is the managing director of Miconex and said: 'The new digital ArranCard aligns with three key trends. The first is convenience – one in three adults are said to choose gifts based on how soon they can get them.



Colin Munro MD of Miconex.

'The second is the desire to shop local – there was a 2,000 per cent increase in online search for 'support local businesses in 2020'.

'The final trend is the move towards mobile. By 2023, an estimated 12 million people will use their phones as their

primary payment method and by 2022 mobile payments are set to overtake cash and credit card as the preferred payment method, second only to debit card.

'The new digital ArranCard is an important step in the evolution of the island's gift

card, but also in the evolution of the destination itself, giving customers ultimate choice in how they support and spend with local businesses.'

Free calendars for over-50s

Age Scotland is offering free calendars for people aged over 50 with an address in Scotland, writes Colin Smeeton.

The calendar features useful information and practical advice for making the most of later life, including issues such as power of attorney, energy bills, as well as information on additional support and services from the charity

and partner organisations. Age Scotland's information and project development manager Heather Smith, said: 'Our calendar is a popular and useful resource for older people, packed with information to help you stay safe, comfortable and well

this winter – and all year round.

'We know it's something many groups and individuals look forward to, so we're delighted to once again be offering our Age Scotland calendar free of charge to over 50s in Scotland.

'Especially in a year when social contact has been limited, it's vital to ensure everyone is aware of the organisations and services available to them, and has access to information on how to make the most of later life. 'We'd urge any older person

looking for an easy way to keep track and stay informed throughout 2022 to get in touch to request a copy.'

Copies can be ordered online at www.age.scot/calendar or by calling Age Scotland's national helpline on 0800 12 44 222.

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THE ARRAN BANNER

Support your favourite local cause at Co-op

Three causes on Arran have already raised more than £1,300 from the latest round of the Co-op community fund.

The money is raised by Co-op members on the island buying the store's own-brand products and so far this has raised £761.39 for Arran Well-Being CIC; £302.06 for Isle of Arran Junior Triathlon Club and £257.42 for Arran Hockey Club, a total of £1,320.87.

Co-op Member Pioneer Scott Harwood said: 'I'd like to give a big thank-you to all the Co-op members out there who are raising one pence for every £1 they spend on own-brand products, as well as raising one pence towards our community partnership fund, just by shopping in-store or online.'

Co-op members can select which local cause they wish to support by going to the membership tab on the Co-op smartphone app.

The Arran Co-op stores handed over more than £38,500 to local groups when the last round of the annual funding closed last November.

Scottish Opera to perform its highlights event at Lochranza

A vaudeville-inspired Opera Highlights show by Scottish Opera will visit Lochranza during its 18-venue tour next spring.

The Edwardian-inspired production will include much-loved classics such as Hansel and Gretel, Die Fledermaus and La Bohème, as well as lesser known gems.

The production will also feature the world premiere of a new piece by Scottish composer Lucie Treacher, which weaves together scenes from the 1927 novel *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf.

Director John Saviourin said: 'There is such a rich variety of repertoire in this season's Opera Highlights - Puccini to Operetta, to a newly-commissioned piece by up-and-coming Scottish composer Lucie Treacher - and I'm so excited to create a fun, visual world full of performance magic.'

Scottish Opera general director Alex Reedijk added: 'I am thrilled that such a fine company of young performers is able to tour all across Scotland in



The Opera Highlights show, seen here in 2020, will visit Lochranza at the start of March.

the spring. I hope this delightfully entertaining and vaudevillian-themed Opera Highlights will help to encourage our audiences to make a welcome and safe return to live performances, for the first time in two years in many

cases.' Performances will begin in February with the Lochranza Village Hall performance taking place on Thursday March 3 at 7.30pm.

Tickets for the Lochranza, and all other performances, can be purchased

at www.scottishopera.org.uk. Scottish Opera tours extensively across Scotland, from the largest-scale theatres to the smallest of rural venues, to reach as many audiences as possible.

Their specially-adapted 40-foot long trailer brings pop-up opera performances to thousands of people each year.

In the summer of 2021 the company performed more than 200 shows of its Pop-up Opera Roadshow, to socially distanced audiences of more than 8,000.

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LETTERS

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Joy at new year

It was great to see some collective joy and happiness on New Year's Day on Arran after the two years we have been through.

In particular the dooks which took place around the island really seemed to catch people's imagination this year. Maybe it was the mild weather – maybe it was the chance just to get out of the house and do something.

Out and about on walks it was great to hear 'Happy New Year' greetings offered to those passing by – acquaintances or not. The New Year events also went off largely hitch free and the music continued well into the night air.

The only disappointment was maybe the TV fare – surely the BBC, and particularly STV, can do better than that – but that is just my personal view.

January 2022 has sadly not got off to the best of starts as the pandemic continues to bite hard with the Omicron variant not going anywhere fast and the ferries being hit hard meaning it is a new year but the same old story with no respite from widespread disruption.

But we still look forward to the year with renewed hope that 'things can only get better'.

We wish everyone on Arran and Happy New Year and positive and prosperous 2022.

Thought for the week

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!' **2 Corinthians 5:17.**

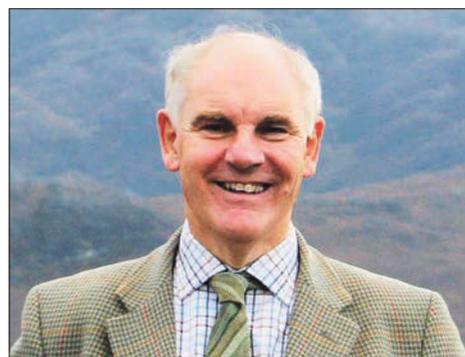
Highlands and Islands must remain competitive in 2022

A new survey by the Highlands and Islands Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has identified the problems and pitfalls affecting small businesses across the region, including those on Arran. It is the last of five surveys carried out by the FBS in 2021 and the only one that looks at the state of play for small businesses in general across the wider region since Omicron began. Here development manager David Richardson outlines the main findings.

If there's one thing we've learned for certain over the past two years it's that in a pandemic, nothing is certain.

Punch-drunk businesses have already closed and opened twice, some receiving generous survival grant support, others nothing, and we have a business community and general public often unsure about what is expected of them next. Life has been extremely tough.

Fortunately, we know a lot about the issues facing small, independent firms and how they've changed through time thanks to the five local business surveys that FSB Scotland has conducted this year. The most recent, which covered the Highlands, islands, Moray, Argyll and Arran, closed in mid-December and found that smaller firms were surprisingly positive about the past year, around three quarters doing okay or better.



David Richardson.

Then again, one in 10 has really struggled and now Omicron is wreaking havoc and confidence is falling. Three in 10 businesses are pessimistic about their futures and, not unnaturally, more than a half are really worried about the potential for future lockdowns or the tightening of restrictions.

Omicron is taking a considerable toll on all our lives, not least on those of many in our small, independent business community, and we must all pray its impact is short-lived and that we've seen the end of any dangerous new Covid variants. But the reality is Covid is not going to disappear any time soon and Covid

is by no means the only threat to our business community.

Around a half of Highlands and Islands employers lack the staff needed to meet their needs and there's no sign of things improving in 2022. While around a third struggled on as best they could this year, the rest were forced to cut services, opening hours or both. Inevitably, this impacts on service standards and perceived value for money.

Moreover, around 85 per cent of firms have seen their costs shoot up dramatically thanks to wage rises and rapidly increasing utility and other bills and while four in ten have struggled on as best they can despite shrinking profit margins, a quarter have had their abilities to invest in or expand their businesses reduced and almost two in 10 believe rising costs are impacting on their survival chances.

So we have all the uncertainty of the Covid pandemic, we have a serious staff shortage, particularly for tourism and hospitality businesses, and we have rapidly rising costs and other inflationary pressures. With all this being heaped on the shoulders of businesses that want to pay fair and competitive wages and that want to give first class service, something has to give and beleaguered firms are reacting to these trials and tribulations in a number of ways, including reducing hours and services and downsizing.

A total of 14 per cent are automating in a bid to reduce their dependency on staff. However, if there's no other option, they will have no choice but to reluctantly raise prices. Almost a half have already done so and a quarter could be forced to do so in the months ahead.

We must all fervently hope that wage increases will help businesses attract the staff they need, that business costs will stabilise or decline and that consumer demand from residents and visitors will not shrink in the face of shaky consumer confidence and rising inflation. Above all, the Highlands and Islands must remain competitive in 2022.

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However, we realise that mistakes happen from time to time. If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@arranbanner.co.uk; telephoning the chief reporter on 01770 302142 or write to the Group Editor at Wyvex Media, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Estate, Oban, PA34 4HB. We will try to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter, by emailing: inquiries@ipso.co.uk.

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Names and addresses MUST be supplied to indicate good faith, although these details can be withheld from publication. Telephone numbers, if available, should also be included. Anonymous letters will not be considered. Please write to: Letters, The Arran Banner, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8AJ. Fax: (01770) 302021.

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Winter mountain training in sunshine

Ropework and casualty handling on Sail an Im

Arran Mountain Rescue Team (AMRT) enjoyed sunshine, snow and spectacular views during their recent winter training exercise.

Heading up to Sail an Im, north of Caisteal Abhail, team members took part in a training session which involved a mixture of ropework and casualty assessment/handling.

An AMRT spokesperson described the training as 'a superb day in some lovely winter sunshine'.

While the sun was shining, conditions underfoot with snow on the ground were far icier than last month's training when members traversed the island in small teams from east to west and west to east, with each group choosing their own routes and navigating across the island.

Training plays a big part in being an AMRT member, with members taking part in regular formal courses and in-house workshops, as well as planned exercises in the hills and mountains in all weather conditions.

All AMRT members are volunteers and receive no pay for rescues or their time. New team members serve a 12-month probationary period and receive extensive training before becoming full team members.



AMRT members lower a stretcher down the side of a steep valley during training.

All photographs: AMRT.

Team members practice their ropework while lowering a stretcher down the mountain.



An AMRT member looks out from a frozen mountain towards the sea.



The mountain rescuers are treated to a spectacular sunset after a day's training in the mountains.

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A little egret in flight.

Little egret sightings but is there one or more?

Last month, December 2021, I received 17 records of little egret from 12 locations on Arran. Records stretched from Merkland Point in the north through Brodick Bay, Lamash Bay, Whiting Bay, Kildonan to Sliderry Shore. All records were of a single bird. Was it one bird flying about or more than one? For example, there was a record of one in Whiting Bay on 29th, followed on 30th by one in Kildonan in the morning and one in the afternoon by Fisherman's Walk, Brodick.

To try to answer this question I would be pleased to have any reports of little egret. From Nick Giles' photograph, this well named little white egret is an easily recognisable bird.

It used to be a rare bird in the UK. Following an expansion across Europe, Little Egret first appeared in the UK in significant numbers in 1989 and first bred in Dorset in 1996. In Ireland it first bred in 1997, the first in Wales was 2002, and the first breeding record in Scotland was in Dumfries and Galloway in 2020.

The first Arran record was a single bird on Sliderry Shore on July 1, 2013. It did not linger. The second record was in 2017 and this bird lingered from Friday August 4 to Monday

Bird notes

by Jim Cassels

August 7, mainly in Sandbraes. Since then, the number of records has built up. In 2018 there were 14 records from 12 locations. In 2019 there were 28 records from 17 locations. Last year, 2021, there were 52 records. It may be becoming established and may in time join our resident Grey Heron as a breeding species.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy your birding and keep safe.

Please send any bird notes with 'what, when, where' to me at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or email me at jim@arranbirding.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you. For more information on birding on Arran purchase the Arran Bird Report 2020 and the Arran Bird Report, the first 40 years. Plus visit the website www.arranbirding.co.uk

Winter and our wo

The Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) has been running a year-long media campaign to raise awareness of the many exciting habitats and species that can be found in Arran's seas, many protected by the South Arran Marine Protected Area. In its final instalment we look at marine life during winter. There is more information on COAST's social media or visit www.arrancoast.com

It is not just life on land that is affected by the shorter days and cooler temperatures of winter.

The seasons also affect many plants and animals in the sea which show marked change in their behaviour as they respond to the changing environmental conditions at this time of the year.

As anyone who swims in the sea all year round will know, changes in seawater temperature lag behind changes in air temperature.

Although seawater temperatures start to fall after the end of September, it is not generally until around November that seawater temperature really

begins to drop. For those of us who prefer to keep our feet firmly on land, one of the more obvious signs of the effect of winter on the marine environment is the large accumulation of seaweed washed up on the shoreline.

Some seaweeds – such as kelp that was described in a Banner article back in May – are perennial, with often only a small part of the plant, sometimes just a crust of living material, remaining attached to the seabed throughout the winter.

Larger pieces of seaweed from these perennial plants, together with the fronds of annual seaweeds, are stripped from the seabed by autumn

and winter storms. Much of this broken-off plant material is dispersed widely within the marine environment and is an important addition of organic matter into the marine food chain that contributes to the sequestration of carbon by the marine environment.

The proportion that ends up on the shore creates a strandline habitat that provides a home for small invertebrates such as sand hoppers to survive; in turn they provide food for birds foraging on the shore.

This strandline plant material also contributes organic matter and moisture to beach sediment that can encourage growth of so-called pioneer

Surprisingly, despite the apparent inhospitable conditions of winter, this is a time when some marine species are actively breeding, spawning or laying their eggs.

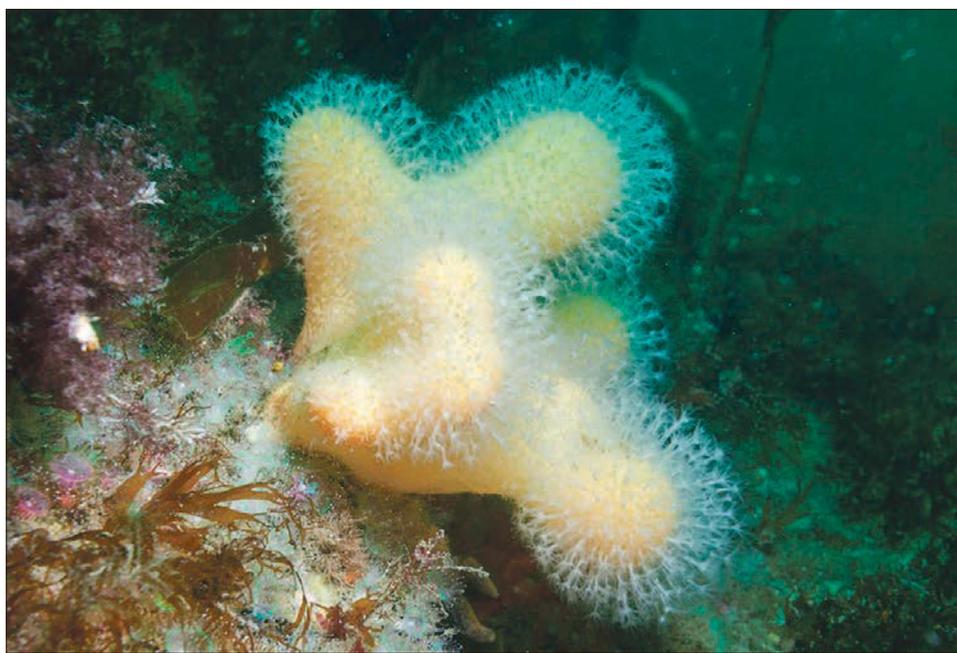
coastal plants which can help to stabilise the upper shore.

There are examples of some marine animals becoming completely inactive over winter, and seemingly going into a form of hibernation for a number of months.

For example, the feeding polyps of the soft coral, Dead men's fingers, that give this animal – a relative of sea anemones – a furry appearance when they are extended, can remain withdrawn giving the creature a leathery look.

Another colonial marine animal where the transformation from summer to winter forms is quite dramatic is the football sea squirt.

During the winter the individual units (known as zooids) of the colony break off, leaving a rather shapeless lump which,



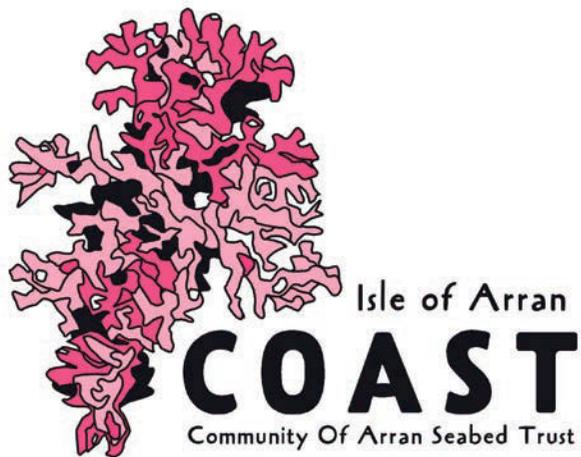
Dead men's fingers polyps extended. Photograph: Lucy Kay



Dead men's fingers polyps retracted. Photograph: Lucy Kay



Wonderful seas around Arran



come spring, will once again transform itself as new zooids regrow.

Other animals hide themselves away to avoid the ravages of winter conditions.

Some individual blue-rayed limpets, which feed on kelp fronds during the summer, move down the plant into the claw-like holdfast of the kelp as autumn approaches, to avoid being swept away as the kelp fronds break off during winter storms.

Other mobile species, such as bottom-dwelling and territorial fish like Ballan and cuckoo wrasse, tend to tuck themselves away into crevices and holes.

Other species move into deeper water offshore.

Surprisingly, despite the apparent inhospitable conditions of winter, this is a time when some marine species are actively breeding, spawning or laying their eggs.

This may be part of a life

strategy that enables them to avoid predators that are likely to be more active in the spring and summer, or it may be a strategy that enables their offspring to exploit an anticipated abundant supply of food as the seawater warms and daylight increases as we move into spring.

But in general, as on land, underwater through the winter has an overall sense of nature slowing down for a time, with much less seaweed growth and generally fewer marine animals to be seen.

This seasonal pause in the frenetic activity of marine life around our coasts gives us an opportunity to reflect on our connections to, and dependence on this largely invisible part of world.

The functioning of our oceans, including the seasonal changes and variations, is part of a continuous, globally-connected cycle of activity to which we are inherently

connected in so many ways; from the pleasures of time spent at the coast and personal encounters with marine life, to the global influence of the oceans on our climate and the supply of oxygen we breath.

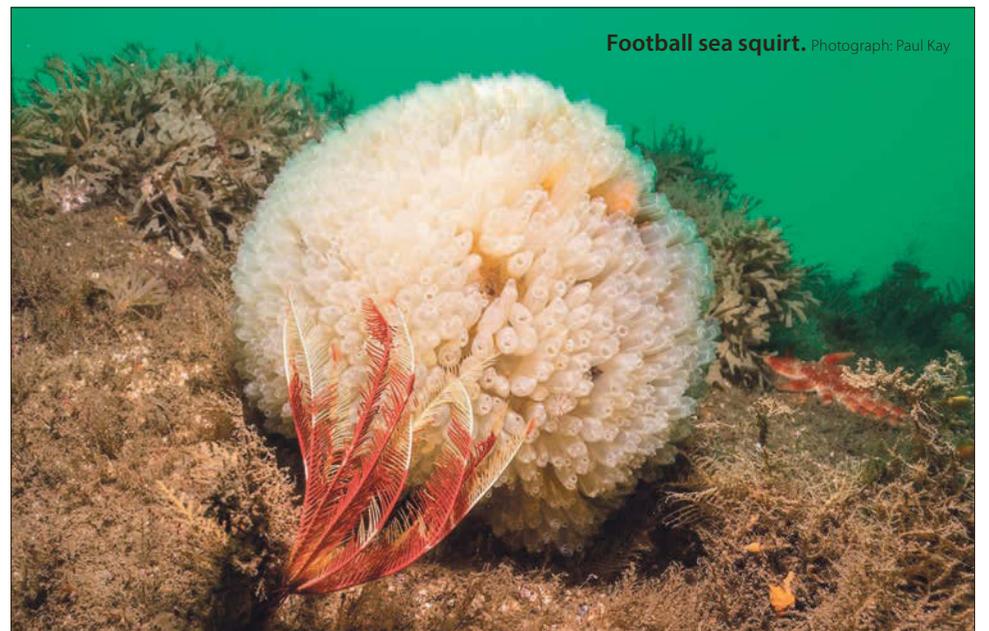
The Banner articles over the past year have showcased a small amount of the diversity of marine life living on the coasts and in the sea around Arran, in the wider Clyde and further afield in Scotland, and have highlighted the importance of the Lamlash Bay No Take Zone and South Arran Marine Protected Area to help recover and protect that marine life.

As Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 2021 closes, as well as celebrating the wonderful and fascinating plant and animal life of our seas, we celebrate the continued efforts of the community on Arran to champion the marine environment and their calls for better protection and management into the future.

Although seawater temperatures start to fall after the end of September, it is not generally until around November that seawater temperature really begins to drop.



Male cuckoo wrasse. Photograph: Howard Wood



Football sea squirt. Photograph: Paul Kay



Strandline seaweed. Photograph: Paul Kay



Ballan wrasse. Photograph: Howard Wood

A splashing good start to 2022

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



It wouldn't be New Year's Day on Arran without dozens of people taking to the water for a loony dook and this year was no exception.

Mild weather last Saturday encouraged lots of people to take the plunge in Brodick and there were also plenty of brave dookers in Blackwaterfoot and Lochranza. While Covid restrictions meant there was no official Douglas Dook, there was a good turnout at noon, the traditional start time for the dook in Brodick, including members of Arran's LGBTQ+ community supporting the first Arran Pride event to be held later this year. The event also attracted parents with children and visiting and island swimmers of all ages.

Mild New Year's Day weather tempts dozens of swimmers into chilly waters off Arran



Chris Park from Little Rock takes the plunge. 01_B01dook14



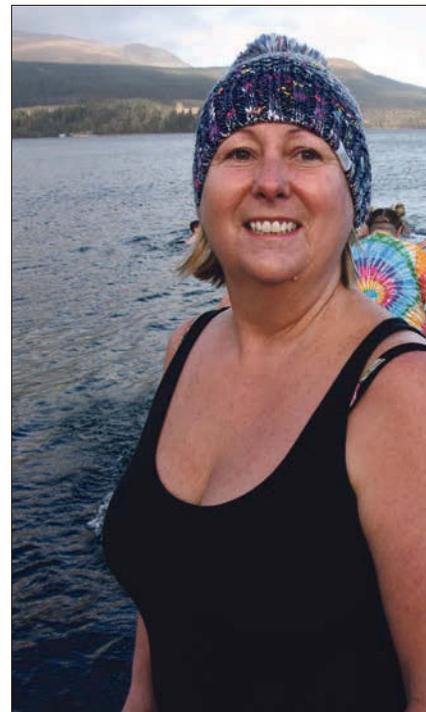
Malin Stewart, Emma Jessop and Jess Brass at the Blackwaterfoot dook. Photograph: David Henderson.



The dookers prepare to enter the water. 01_B01dook02



Loony dookers take the slipway into the water. 01_B01dook04



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Dog Friendly

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Two dookers smile for the camera with Goatfell behind them. 01_B01dook13



Above: Members and supporters of the LGBTQ+ community who took part in the dook. 01_B01dook01



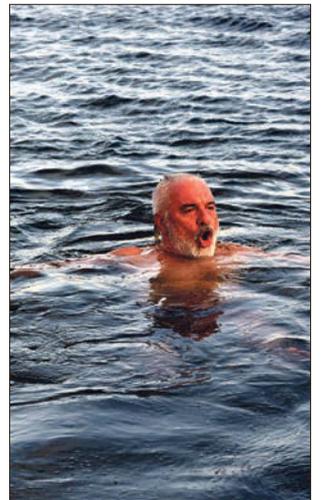
Two of the dookers wave to friends. 01_B01dook12



Children enjoy taking part in the dook. 01_B01dook09



Left: Dookers emerge from the water. 01_B01dook10



One dooker feels the water cold. 01_B01dook05



Above: Two dookers jump off the pier at Lochranza. 01_B01dook16

Left: A dooker leaves the water. 01_B01dook11



All smiles after the dook. 01_B01dook03



There was no messing about by this dooker. 01_B01dook06

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THE ARRAN BANNER 20 YEARS AGO

Saturday January 5, 2002



Around 99 red balloons are released at Whiting Bay in protest at a proposal to build a power station at Hawthorne Quarry. The balloons are also an attempt at showing how far the emissions would travel. 01_B01ABTYA01



Whiting Bay footballers turned out in force for the annual match between the Cameronia Hotel and the Shurig Bar. Team Cameronia won convincingly with a score of 9-2. 01_B01ABTYA02



New year golf winners at Shiskine are, from left, Denise Sherwood (Alan Smith Plate), Willie Kelso (Colditz Quaich) and Rosemary Baillie and Brian Sherwood (DS Bannatyne Shield).

01_B01ABTYA06



Johnnie and Elaine Kelso lead off a Gay Gordons at their barn dance at Viewbank Farm, Whiting Bay. 01_B01ABTYA05



Deep Joy entertain Hogmanay revellers in Whiting Bay Hall. 01_B01ABTYA04



Hogmanay celebrations: Gillian Frame and Back of the Moon at the Brodick Bar. 01_B01ABTYA03

What's on

in association with Isle of Arran Brewery

www.arranbrewery.co.uk

TOURS AND TASTINGS BY APPOINTMENT



Every Day

Arran Brewery, Shop Open – Monday to Saturday 10am – 4.30pm, Sunday, 12noon - 4pm

Brodick Castle & Gardens Brodick, Open daily, 10am – 5pm (last entry 4.30pm)

Brodick Mini Golf, Open seven days, 10am - 5pm-ish, ALL weather

Lamlash Putting Green, Open daily, 10am - 4pm

Lamlash Tennis Courts, Open All hours

Trout Fly Fishing, Loch Garbad, bank fishing

Whiting Bay Bowling Club, Open to book call 01770 700636

Saturday 8th January

Eco Savvy Community Shop, Whiting Bay, 10.30am – 4.30pm

Rink Games, Blackwaterfoot Bowling Club, 1.30pm

Open Session, Crofters' Bar and Bistro, 3pm – 5pm

Live Music, Crofters' Bar and Bistro, from 9pm

Live Music, The PHT, Lamlash, 9pm – Midnight

Sunday 9th January

Arran Chess Club – new members welcome, Crofters', Brodick, 10.30am

What's Happening On Arran, <http://www.arranmedia.co.uk>, 4pm

Alcoholics Anonymous Zoom Meeting, go to alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk, 7pm

Monday 10th January

K.A. Leisure, Lamlash, 6pm - 10pm

Arran Rugby Training, Juniors and Seniors, Ormidale Park, 7pm - 8pm

Tuesday 11th January

Healthy Outdoor Team, Brodick Castle, 10am – 1pm

Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Brodick Church Hall, 2pm

Rink Games, Blackwaterfoot Bowling Club, 1.30pm

Junior Hockey, P1 - S3 (age 5 to 14 yrs), Ormidale Pavillion, Brodick, 6pm – 7pm

K.A. Leisure, Lamlash, 6pm – 10pm

Wednesday 12th January

Hydrofit, Auchrannie Resort, 10.30am – 11.15am

Eco Savvy Community Shop, Whiting Bay, 10.30am – 1.30pm

Archives and Genealogy services, Arran Heritage Museum, 10.30am -12.30pm & 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

Arran Pace Makers please check Facebook @ [arranpacemakers](https://www.facebook.com/arranpacemakers), Venue varies, 5.30pm

K.A. Leisure, Lamlash, 6pm – 10pm

Rock and Pop Bingo, Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 9pm

Thursday 13th January

Eco Savvy Community Shop, Whiting Bay, 10.30am – 4.30pm

Arran Cancer Support Group, Banner Lodge (left of Heather Lodge), Brodick, 2pm

K.A. Leisure, Lamlash, 6pm – 10pm

Senior Hockey (12+), Ormidale Astro Pitch, 7pm – 8.30pm

Friday 14th January

Eco Savvy Community Shop, Whiting Bay, 10.30am – 4.30pm

K.A. Leisure, Lamlash, 6pm – 10pm

Alcoholics Anonymous Zoom Meeting, go to alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk, 7pm

Live Music Crofters' Bar and Bistro, from 9pm

Saturday 15th January

Eco Savvy Community Shop, Whiting Bay, 10.30am – 4.30pm

Rink Games, Blackwaterfoot Bowling Club, 1.30pm

Open Session, Crofters' Bar and Bistro, 3pm – 5pm

Live Music, Crofters' Bar and Bistro, from 9pm

Live Music, The PHT, Lamlash, 9pm – Midnight



Walkers take a well earned rest during a previous mountain festival.

Mountain festival programme due to be released

by Colin Smeeton
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



The eagerly anticipated Arran Mountain Festival programme for 2022 is expected to be published within days in the run up to festival booking lines opening in mid January.

With bookings and popular trails in high demand – many being snapped up as soon as they are available – the festival programme offers all of Arran's most popular routes as a staple and a few 'off the beaten track' options as changing annual additions.

The ever-increasing popularity of the Arran Mountain Festival, which will take place between Friday May 13 to Monday May 16 this year, is largely due to confidence-inspiring local walk leaders who have a local knowledge and love of the routes and mountains which are all classified according to difficulty and ability levels.

Naturally, Arran's amazing

landscapes and unique vistas attracts thousands of visitors annually, however, the small group numbers, experienced walk leaders and the social aspect of the group walks – many with post walk refreshments later in the day – continue to see bookings sold out within days of booking lines opening.

Anyone interested in taking part in the festival can sign up at www.arranmountainfestival.co.uk to receive updates and a notification when booking lines open.

The 2022 programme will also be available with full details of all routes and activities on their website once published.

Brewery Dug

The Isle of Arran Brewery's Brewery Dug is the brewery's American Style IPA, with the label featuring Helga, the friendly boxer owned by 2 of the brewery staff.

A dry hopped beer with strong citrus flavours, a great beer for sipping in the garden on a warm day.

The beer is available throughout the island in bottles, including at the brewery shop at Cladach, Brodick.



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PUBLIC NOTICES

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL: COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

CHILDREN ENTITLED TO START P1 – SESSION 2022/2023

Children who attain the age of 5 years between 1 March 2022 and 28 February 2023 should be registered to start primary education from August 2022.

Registration for August 2022 is an online process and will take place during the period Monday 10 January 2022 and Sunday 30 January 2022.

Information on how to register your child can be found on the Council's website: www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk or by telephoning 01294 310000.

You have the choice to submit a placing request to a primary school outwith your catchment area but you must first register with your catchment primary school.

If you decide to make a placing request, then you should complete an online placing request application via the Council website: www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk, before 15 March 2022.

More information on placing request applications and how we process these can also be found on our website.

Registration at your catchment area primary school does not guarantee entry to that school.

Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education)

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive
Cunninghame House
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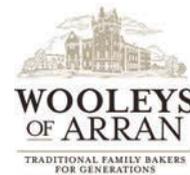
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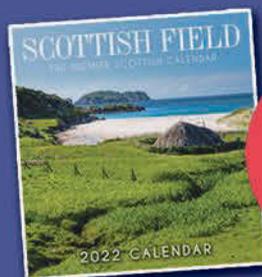
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CHURCH NOTICES

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Parishes of North Arran, Broddick, Corrie, Lochranza, Pirnmill and Shiskine

Independent but working together
There will be a streamed service
fortnightly, this can be found
on the three Church websites.
Keeping with new guideline,
please take a lateral flow test
before coming to a Church
Service.

Sunday 9th January

Lochranza & Pirnmill Churches-
Service at Lochranza Church
10.15am Morning worship
Shiskine Church at 12noon.
Morning worship.
Broddick Church at 10.30am.
Morning worship.
Corrie Church at 12noon.
Morning worship
The Food Bank continues from
Broddick Church

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Whiting Bay and Kildonan Church of Scotland

Charity Number: SC014005

Sunday 9th January

Worship will be conducted at
10.30 am.

Under new Church of Scotland
guidelines, you are encouraged,
please, to take a lateral flow test
before coming to worship.

Track and Trace also required.
ALL WELCOME.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Kilmory linked with Lamlash

"A faith to proclaim ~ a fellowship
to share"

Scottish Charity SC015072

Sunday 9th January

Kilmory at 10 am

Lamlash Church at 11.30 am

To comply with 'Trace and
Protect' regulations, name and
contact details will be asked for,
on entering

We are also reminded to take
a Lateral Flow Test on the day
we intend to come to church, to
attend if negative.

We will be observing all socially
distancing procedures
All welcome

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

(Part of the Worldwide Anglican
Church)

St Margaret's, Whiting Bay.

Sunday 9th January

Epiphany 1

Holy Communion at 11 am

Richard Trewby

ALL WELCOME

Coffee after the service

We observe strict SEC guidelines

ARRAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister - Rev. Vince Jennings

Tel: 01770 600222

www.arranbaptistchurch.org.uk

Sunday 9th January

Services will be held in the

Ormidale Sports Pavilion,

Broddick at 11 am.

All welcome but current Covid

restrictions are in place.

Sermons will be on our webpage
following the Sunday.

ARRAN FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING)

Sunday 9th January

Morning Service at 11am

Free Church Building, Alma

Road, Broddick

All welcome

ARRAN FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Sunday 9th January

Morning service at 11 am

Shiskine Free Church

All welcome

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Saturday 8th January

Vigil Mass at 5pm - booking not
required

Sunday 9th January

Mass 11am - Booking required.
Booking for mass is essential.

Please note new booking contacts:
email: cjenks@btinternet.com or
telephone 01770 870245 to check
availability and confirm your
place.

Please be aware we are still
maintaining social distancing and
capacity remains restricted.
In accordance with Scottish
Government requirements face
coverings must be worn in church
(unless exempt) and NHS Test
and Protect details will be kept.

BLESS O LORD THIS ISLE OF
ARRAN

ST ROCH PATRON OF THE
SICK PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF THE ISLES,
PRAY FOR US.

ST COLUMBA PRAY FOR US.

A run and a dip to welcome new year



Left: the four pose for a
shot after completing the
challenge. 01_B01run04

Below left: the runners
complete their 10k on
Broddick shorefront. 01_B01run01
Below: Carol, Abbie, Lorna
and Fiona cool off with a
new year dip after their run.
01_B01run02

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RUSSELL - Campbell.
The family of Campbell
Russell would like to thank
everyone who sent messages
of sympathy, it was greatly
appreciated. We would also
like to thank the doctors,
nurses and all the care staff
who attended Campbell
with kindness and patience.
Norma and Family

SILLARS - Iain (Sid).
Sincere thanks to everyone
for all the expressions of
sympathy, in words, cards and
flowers, following the death
of Iain (Sid) Sillars. Warmest
thanks to all who attended
Iain's funeral in church and at
the cemetery, and who stood by
the roadsides, to the Doctors
and Nurses in Lamlash and
Crosshouse hospitals, and to
the Air Ambulance Service. To
David and Clair Hendry, for all
funeral arrangements. Many
thanks also to Liz Clarke for a
warm and thoughtful Service,
to Chris Marriott for giving a
eulogy full of both humour and
poignancy, and to Ali Hume
for piping the lament. A sum of
£387 was raised in donations
to the Air Ambulance Service.



by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk

Arran Pace Makers got the new
year off to a flying start with a
run and jump last Sunday.
Organiser Lorna Logan

met up with Carol Brown,
Fiona Mackintosh and Abbie
McKelvie for a 10k run round
the Fairy Glen and Glenclay
loop then back to Christmas
tree at the Broddick slipway for
a quick dip in the sea to finish



- before a well deserved hot
chocolate from Little Rock all
round.

Arran Pace Makers meet
weekly at the Ormidale Pavilion
on a Wednesday at 5.30pm for
a varied running programme.

Anyone interested in joining
should contact the group on its
Facebook page. Arran's other
running group, jogscotlandar-
ran, meet in Whiting Bay on
a Monday, also at 5.30pm,
starting on January 17.

ARRAN BANNER GOLF

Shiskine Golf Club

Friday December 31, gents
Mahogany Trophy. 1st class: 1
J Salton (winner) 47-7=40 BIH,
2 S Kerr 47-7=40, 3 and scratch
J McNally 44-3=41. 2nd class
1. Wm Robertson 51-11=40, 2
Wm Kelso 52-10=42 BIH, 3 C
Dair 50-8=42. Magic twos W
Robertson, J McNally, J Salton
x2.

Saturday January 1, ladies
Alan Smith Plate. Silver: 1
Sheila Gray 56-11=45, 2 Alice
Anderson 59-11=48, 3 and
scratch Fiona Miller 58-7=48.
Bronze: 1 and winner Dot
Robinson 56-13=43, 2 Jill
Carrick 60-15=45, 3 Elizabeth
Kelso 63-15=48.

Saturday January 1, gents
Colditz Quaich. 1st class: 1
and winner and scratch Iain

McLean 45-5=40, 2 S Black
47-6=41, 3. S Scholes 52-6=46.
2nd class: 1 E Cameron 50-
9=41, 2 W McNally 52-10=42
BIH, 3. B Kelso 51-9=42. Magic
twos I McLean x2, A Stewart.
Sunday January 2, D S
Bannatyne Shield. 1 Elizabeth
Kelso and Wm McNally 52-
12.5=39.5, 2 Dot Robinson and
Rab Robertson 52-10.5=41.5, 3
Helen Abram and Ross Traill
51-8.5=42.5.

Lamlash Golf Club

Thursday December 30, Yellow
Medal. 1 Robbie McGunnigle
65-9=57, 2 John O'Sullivan
85-28=57, 3 Jim Young 78-
18=60. Magic twos Robbie
McGunnigle @14th and 16th,
Paul Cowan @13th.

Sunday January 2, course
backwards. 1 John Quigley

37pts, 2 Alastair Crawford
36pts, 3 Neil Young 35pts BIH,
4 Ian Bremner 35pts. Magic
twos Alastair Crawford and
Dylan Smith @14th, Russell
Adams and Stuart McLaren
@3rd. Best scratch Craig
Young 36pts to Stableford.

Fixtures: Sunday January
9, Winter League at Broddick,
Lamlash v Whiting Bay.
Thursday January 13, Yellow
Medal, 11am draw.

Machrie Bay Golf Club

Tuesday December 28, two
club competition, ladies: 1
Alice Anderson 31.5pts, 2 Piet
Johnstone 38.5pts, 3 Jenni
Turnbull 40.5pts. Gents: 1
Willie McNally 33pts BL6,
2 John Milesi 33pts, 3 Brian

Sherwood 35.5pts. Tuesday
January 4, Winter Cup. 1
Colin Rutterford 75pts, 2 Alex
Morrison-Cowan 76pts, 3
Reuben Betley 77pts BIH.

Fixtures: Saturday January 8,
Lochranza Hotel Cup. Tee-off
noon. Tuesday January 11,
Winter Cup, tee-off noon.

Corrie Golf Club

Monday January 3, Monday
Cup. 1 Donald Logan 67-11=56,
2 John Quigley 67-8 = 59 BIH,
3 Allan Napier 70-11=59 BIH
over Raymond Burke. Magic
twos Graeme Andrew @1st
and 2nd, John Quigley @1st
and 13th, Donald Logan @5th,
Alastair MacDonald @4th.

Fixtures: Saturday January
8, 18-hole medal. Monday
January 10, Monday Cup.
Ballot at noon.


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All the Holy Isle competitors with winner Andy McNamara, centre, and Daisy McNamara, far left.

Family success in Holy Isle kayak race

by Colin Smeeton
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Andy McNamara took first place in the Holy Isle kayak race held in glorious sunshine last week while his daughter, Daisy, secured first place in the female category and came fifth overall.

Daisy also set a new ladies record of one hour 37 minutes but most satisfying of all, she beat her mum, Elanor, who finished in sixth place.

The annual event attracted a record turnout of 14 paddlers, though not all were there to race - some were happy to go at a more sedate pace, led by Martin Wood, who even found time to stop for Christmas cake during the race.

Conditions on race day,



Left, a record number of 14 participants set off for the round Holy Isle race and, above, paddlers make their way back in a relatively calm Lamlash Bay.

Tuesday December 28, were almost perfect, with sunshine and fairly light winds, though the promised westerly winds turned into a north easterly

making the journey up the east side of Holy Island a bit more of a challenge.

Andy won in a time of one hour and 21 minutes, using

a new boat, a K1 racer, which is quite a bit faster than sea kayaks. The downside is that it is narrow which increases the chances of a capsizing and which make it a bit more lively on the open sea. Andrew Rigby secured second place in a time of one hour 26 minutes and 16-year-old Andrew Bunting came in third in one hour 34 minutes, closely followed by Gavin Cameron in one hour and 35 minutes. The course record, set by Luke Furze in 2019, is one hour 15 minutes.



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