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SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY, 2019

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# Massive search goes on for missing Stewart

**Hugh Boag**

editor@arranbanner.co.uk

A massive search operation was continuing for a vulnerable man who is missing from his home on Arran, as we went to press.

More than 60 searchers a day have been out combing a huge forest area of some 50sq km since last Sunday, assisted by air and sea support, trying to locate Stewart Leask.

The 70-year-old, from Milngavie, was last seen by his wife at their holiday home in Whiting Bay around 3.45pm on Sunday February 3.

Stewart was heading out for a walk towards Glenashdale Falls with his German Shepherd dog Cor-

rie where they regularly walk. On Monday police confirmed that the dog was found on a bridge near the Dyemill car park in Lam-lash and is safe and well.

Mr Leask is described as white, 5ft 7in in height and of medium build with short grey hair, short beard and moustache. He wears glasses and when he was last seen he was wearing a large red waterproof parka jacket, blue jeans, sturdy walking boots, beige gloves and a grey trapper style hat with ear flaps.

He was last seen on Sunday afternoon by a woman on her horse on the forest road above Glenashdale Falls and police are keen to find his hat, gloves or any other item of clothing.

The police also revealed that Corrie's dog collar was missing when found. In his last conversation Mr Leask said he was beside a forest sign for Whiting Bay.

The multi-agency search has involved The Police Scotland helicopter, the Coastguard helicopter and volunteers, the RAF Mountain Rescue, as well as Arran Mountain Rescue Team – who have been out day and night all week – two specialist sniffer dogs, and police divers, Coastguard and RLNI volunteers.

However, the search has been made more difficult by the thick vegetation, boggy and uneven ground, and the forest cover. Weather conditions have also been poor, limiting the work of the police helicopter.

And with a warning of poor weather conditions over the weekend the teams have been keen to press on with their work which is now being co-ordinated from the command centre set up at Whiting Bay hall.

Locality Inspector Colin Convery, from Saltcoats Police Office who is co-ordinating the search operation said: 'We are extremely concerned for Stewart's



Inspector Colin Convery gets an update on the search from Police Scotland mountain rescue leader Grant Hindle. 01\_B06missing01

**MISSING PERSON**

Appeal for information

**Stewart Leask**  
Age 70

Described as 6ft in height, of medium build with thinning dark brown and grey hair and a beard. He wears glasses and when last seen he was wearing a grey trapper style hat with ear flaps, a red parka jacket and blue jeans.

Last seen heading towards Glenashdale Falls, Whiting Bay, Arran with his small German Shepherd cross dog about 3.45pm on Sunday 3rd February

Please contact police on 101 with any information which may assist.

Continued on page two The missing person poster which has been put up across the island. 01\_B06missing10

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# Searching for Stewart

Continued from page one  
wellbeing and safety. He has had some health issues lately and although he regularly walks in this area he always returns home after a short time. He has never been missing for this length of time.

Speaking on Wednesday he said: 'At the moment we have around 60 multi-agen-

cy personel searching for Mr Leask which is a substantial committment of resources.

'They been carrying out extensive searches around the area where the dog was found, the Glenashdale Falls area and also the wider area covering Lamlash and the large forest area to the south of Whiting Bay

'Due to the terrain and the cold weather conditions, our local officers are being assisted by support unit of-ficers and specially trained search advisors.

'We have also been focusing on supporting the family of the missing person at this difficult time.

'What has been particularly noteworthy has been the response from the local community who have helped both in the search, in challenging weather 'conditions and in their support for the family.

'While the formal search of the area continues, I would appeal to the community, particularly in the Whiting Bay area, to check outbuildings sheds and the like in case Mr Leask has sought shelter.

'I would urge anyone who has seen Stewart to



The police team searching in thick scrub and young fir trees above Glenashdale Falls. 01\_B06missing08

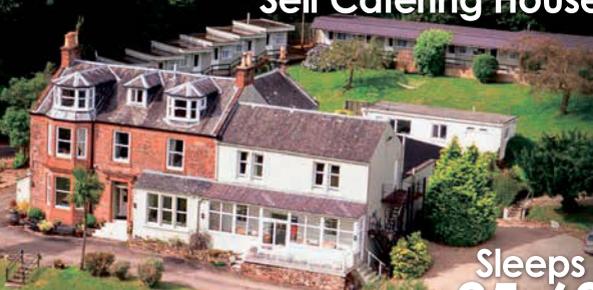


The police mountain rescue team take a break from the search. 01\_B06missing05

come forward as soon as possible. Any information, no matter how small

could help us trace him. Information can be passed to Lamlash or any police

office through 101 quoting reference number 3057 of 3 February 2019.'



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Inspector Convery chairs a multi-agency briefing attended by representatives of Police Scotland, the police mountain rescue team, the Arran Mountain Rescue Team and the Coastguards. 01\_B06missing02



Inspector Convery puts a missing person poster up at Glenashdale Falls. 01\_B06missing04



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A poster on a Whiting Bay sign near to where he was last seen. 01\_B06missing03



The bridge at the Dyemill car park where Corrie was found. 01\_B06missing09



The lifeboat searches the sea off Whiting Bay. 01\_B07missing11



Dave Watson and Kirsty Smith out with search dog Caileag. 01\_B06missing06

# Jazz Cafe Band still in tune nearly 20 years on

Colin Smeeton  
editor@arranbanner.co.uk

Hard to grasp, but it is nearly 20 years since John Gibson wrote to the Arran Banner asking why there was every kind of music on Arran except jazz.

A month later, the Jazz Cafe Band (JCB) emerged, initially without even a name and, despite all the odds and line-up changes, it continues to thrive today.

## Session

Audiences can experience and hear for themselves exactly why the JCB has become something of an island institution at their next regular session at Whiting Bay village hall on Friday February 15, from 8pm-11pm, where the audience are invited to BYOB.

John Gibson is still there on trombone, the only 'survivor' from the band of 2000, aided and abetted by Spike Bayne's



The Jazz Cafe Band pictured at one of their public performances last year. 01\_B27bikes10

hot tenor sax, the vocals of the 'sensational' Biff Simpson, and a rhythm section of Tom Buchan on guitar and Malcolm Kerr on drums.

It's trad, it's accessible, it's

danceable, and you don't have to like jazz to like the Jazz Cafe Band. Be sure to catch their next gig at Whiting Bay Hall, and don't forget your dancing shoes.

# Campaign for plastic-free fruit and veg

An online campaign to get a plastic-free fruit and vegetable section in the big Co-op in Brodick has taken a step forward.

Barbara I'Anson, who led the social media campaign, has written to the Co-op after a Facebook post calling for the move received more than 450 comments and many more likes.

As well as reducing the use of plastic, there were suggestions to use paper and reusable net bags for fruit and veg.

In a reply, Brodick Co-op manager Liz McLean said: 'The Co-op regional manager and I are very much aware of the concerns being raised by customers. The strength of feeling is plain to see.'

'Food packaging decisions are not made at store level but I have forwarded on the letter. The Co-op is working hard on this issue and, in partnership with our members, we can work towards our common goal.'

The request follows a number of environmentally responsible initiatives which are taking place on Arran, among them the Plastic Free accreditation – the first in Scotland – by the campaign group Think About Plastic (TAP). The accreditation by Surfers Against Sewage refers not to the island being plastic-free but that various steps are being taken in the fight against single-use plastic.

Arran's environmental charity Eco Savvy has also been instrumental in introducing a wide range of measures aimed at combating waste, encouraging recycling and upcycling, and environmentally responsible behaviour.

Their initiative known as the Co-op food share, in conjunction with the Brodick Co-op has seen thousands of pounds of food, which would have ordinarily gone to waste, being distributed before it spoils and preventing it unnecessarily going to a landfill.

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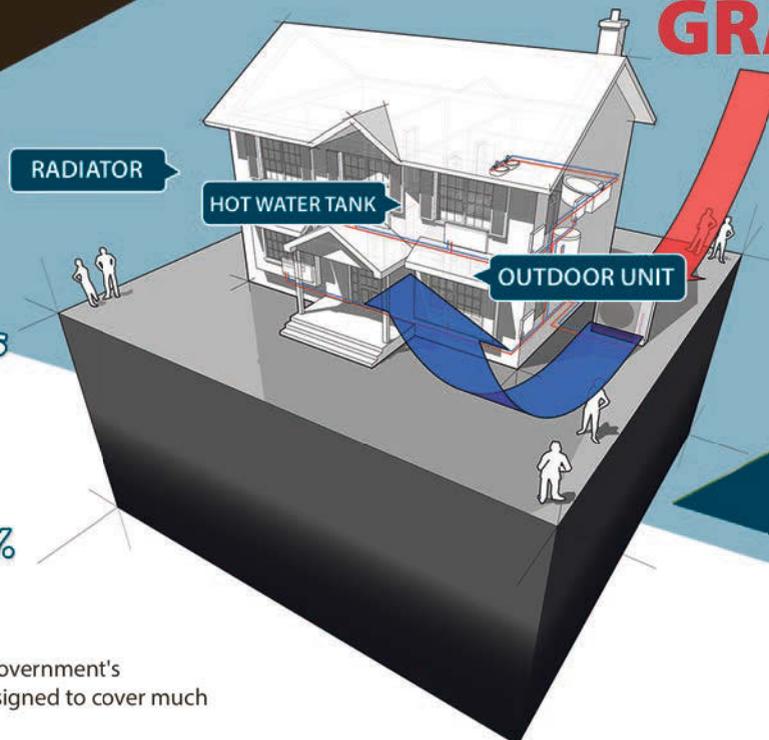
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# Arran kids are

Children from across Arran made a green pilgrimage to Eco Savvy's annual environmental event called Be Green which saw a number of Arran organisations hosting activities for children that were both fun and educational.

Even with snow making travel to Whiting Bay village hall difficult, more than 210 children attended the fun day which included activities from partners Brodick Co-op, Arran Community Land Initiative, Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) and North Ayrshire Council (NAC).

The event was to celebrate green initiatives and environmental action on Arran through a range of activities with educational themes in order to raise environmental conscientiousness among Arran's youth.

The Co-op played its part by donating fresh fruit which was enjoyed by the children, who pedalled on an Eco Savvy smoothie bike blending the fruit into smoothies and which carried a message of food waste and environmental travel and physical activity.

The fun activity tied in perfectly with the Eco Savvy and Co-op partnership where food is being distributed and used rather than being sent to a landfill.

Children learned about the initiative and were given the opportunity to take



Lamlash Primary pupils show their support for being green. Photo Chris Attkins.

part in a competition to design a logo for the food share project.

The winning design, which is yet to be announced, will be used as the official logo for the initiative and a cash prize of £150 for their school to put towards an environmental project or towards becoming an eco-school.

Home Energy Scotland and the Eco Savvy energy team delivered an energy monopoly activity. This saw the children split into teams where they were quizzed on energy efficiency questions. They were rewarded with fuel bill savings for questions answered correctly and charged with higher fuel bills and water charges for getting energy efficiency questions wrong.

Alan from Home Energy Scotland said: 'It was an absolute pleasure to be involved in some fun, educational activities to hopefully inspire kids to think

about living greener, and more sustainable lives and be aware of the impact our day-to-day lives can have on the environment.'

Jim Park from the Arran Community Land Initiative showcased a worm farm which appeared to intrigue some of the children and make others squirm in equal measure. As well as being entertaining the fun activity of being able to handle the worms raised an appreciation for nature and helped to instil the will to protect it. The pupils were also able to feed the worms cabbage and vegetable leaves that coincidentally came from the food share initiative.

COAST hosted an informative and effective display with its sea scene created from plastic waste which carried a striking artistic message. This activity combined appreciation and education around the marine environment to encourage environmental im-

provement and protection.

NAC hosted an activity around recycling and putting plastic in the correct bin and representatives also shared an updated plastics recycling guide which is available in the Eco Savvy shop in Whiting Bay.

Providing the children with examples of recycling, Eco Savvy had a stand showcasing its eco products and ethos.

These included bamboo toothbrushes, refillable coffee cups and water bottles.

Jude King, Eco Savvy project manager, said: 'Whilst it's vital that this is a fun-filled day for the Arran pupils, it is even more important for us to make all activities environmentally educational and for awareness around climate change issues to be brought home. I think this was certainly achieved throughout the day.'

'We hope the children left with motivation to increase environmental conscientiousness for the benefit of their futures, and challenge those around them to do so to too.'

'We really appreciate the schools and teachers coming from all corners of the island and thank you to all the environmental initiatives involved in the day, and to our volunteers who all contributed to making the day a great success.'



Children learn about the Co-op food share logo competition.



Is it ready yet? Children pedal their way to a free smoothie.

# very keen to be green



Eco warriors from Whiting Bay Primary School pupils show their green credentials.  
Photograph: Chris Attkins. No\_B06eco02



Children listen eagerly to Val Waite, who describes methods of sustainable practice at the Eco Savvy stall.



A popular activity, children enjoy the challenges of energy monopoly.



Pupils line up to try out the smoothie bicycles.



Children have a go at handling worms from the Arran Community Land Initiative.



Jenny Stark of COAST talks to the children about marine conservation and pollution.

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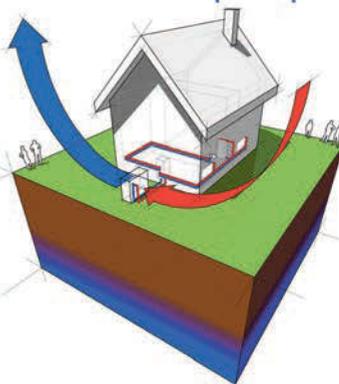


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# Labour warn of £20m funding gap

The Scottish Government's budget was passed after the SNP struck a deal with the Greens last week.

Finance Secretary Derek Mackay said the budget included more core funding for councils and extra powers for them to levy local parking and tourist taxes.

The budget also included £90m for the core local government settlement, an increase in the cap on council tax rises to 4.79 per cent, as well as cross party talks on replacing the tax and a move to three-year local authority budgets.

The North Ayrshire Council share of the local government settlement is

£249.5 million – a reduction of £4.6 million or 1.8 per cent. The council meets on February 27 to set its budget for 2019/20

Here, North Ayrshire Council Labour leader Joe Cullinane gives his verdict on the budget: 'Between December and now, the Scottish Parliament has received £150 million of new 'Barnett Consequentials' from Westminster yet the great negotiators, the Scottish Greens, have extracted less than two-thirds of those funds to protect vital public services.

£54 million of the new Consequentials are instead being squirrelled away

in Derek Mackay's slush fund.

'This means that North Ayrshire Council's core revenue grant is being cut by around £4 million and with no financial support for the local government pay award nor a solution to the shortfall in teacher's pensions, our funding gap for next year is £20 million.

'Having failed to use their own fiscal powers to protect vital local services, the SNP and Greens are instead shifting the responsibility, and consequentially, blame onto councils for the difficult decisions that lie ahead.

'Arbitrarily raising the Council Tax cap to 4.79 per cent makes the system of local government finance even more unequal – the more affluent parts of Scot-



North Ayrshire Council leader Joe Cullinane.

land, which have plenty of Band F, G and H Council Tax properties, can raise substantially more than areas like North Ayrshire where the majority of our properties are in the lower bands.

'We then have the absurdity of a workplace parking levy. Quite rightly trade unions are lambasting this absurd idea of taxing workers to get to their work, especially at a time when the local gov-

ernment and teachers pay awards are not finalised. 'The SNP and Greens seem to think it would be acceptable to give our hard working public servants a pay rise in one hand and then take it away with the other. North Ayrshire Labour will not be hammering workers with this absurd tax.

#### Cuts

'This remains a cuts budget imposed on communities by the SNP and Greens in Edinburgh. Our SNP MSP's should be ashamed of the cuts they are pushing through – and its little surprise that they won't debate me in public to defend their cuts.

'North Ayrshire Labour will continue to fight against the cuts. Having broken their silence over the budget, it seems our SNP counterparts on the Council are now happy to endorse the cuts.'

## Taste of Arran scoops a proud place on NFU menu

Taste of Arran produce in the form of Arran Dairies ice cream was this week included in a carefully selected menu of the finest Scottish produce served at the National Farmers Union (NFU) Scotland's annual dinner and AGM, which took place at the Radisson Blu, Glasgow.

The menu, which featured produce from across the country, started off with a twist on the traditional Scottish haggis dish, which was served as a scotch egg with rumbledethumps and homemade brown sauce.

The centrepiece of the meal was a pairing of Scotch lamb and beef. The two meats were served as roasted lamb rump, ballotine of beef shin, beef cheek croquette served with fondant potato, caramelised parsnip puree, confit tomato and red wine jus.

The meal finished with a dessert of apple bavarois, calvados gel, fennel, and Arran Dairies caramel ice cream.

Guests were also treated to one last tasty bite later in the evening when melted Scottish cheese on toasted artisan bread was served for supper.

Scotbeef and Marks and Spencer were the headline sponsors of the whole conference, with the dinner itself being supplied by a range of Scottish producers.

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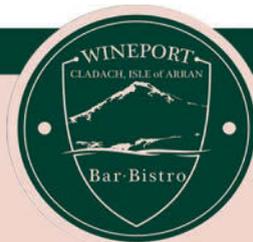
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# Transforming junk into haute couture

Three sixth-year pupils from Arran High School who have spent the past year designing a custom-fitted outfit for the Bank of Ireland Junk Kouture competition are on the brink of finding out if their design will be selected as one of the regional finalists in the competition.

Now in its ninth year, the competition for secondary school pupils to use everyday junk materials – taking into account elements such as fashion, design, engineering and environmental sustainability – to create

striking works of wearable art.

Along with their tutor Cecilia Paul, Kirsty Kerr, Joely Allison and model Ellie Ewing anxiously awaited the announcement which was due last night (Thursday) – after the Banner went to press.

### Finalists

Hoping to be selected as one of the finalists at the live show, which will take place either in Dublin or in Derry, the group of fashionistas, if unsuccessful, will still have a second chance through the lifeline

vote that takes place from Monday February 11 to Friday February 15.

Supporters can vote for the Arran team once a day during the vote.

The regional final vote will take place between Monday February 18 and Friday February 22, and the grand final vote between Monday April 1 and Friday April 5.

Further details on how to vote and information on the competition can be found online at [bojunk-kouture.com](http://bojunk-kouture.com) or on the Junk Kouture Facebook page.



Ellie Ewing with the creation which has been entered into the Bank of Ireland Junk Kouture competition.

## Corrie Film Club The Square (2017)

– Cert 15

After last week's mini film festival, Day in the Dark, Corrie Film Club returns to presenting its regular February film.

The Square is a unique, Swedish, knife-sharp satire on art, culture and communication in the digital age.

Christian is a respected curator of a contemporary art museum in Stockholm gearing up to launch a new show which features The Square, a daring installation examining altruism and our duty to help others.

The film won the Palme D'Or at Cannes in 2017.

Please note that although this is a certificate 15 it is only right to point out that there are sexually explicit scenes in the film.

You can watch this film tomorrow (Sunday) in Corrie and Sannox Hall at 8pm.

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## Editorial

Sadly, it is at times of adversity that the true spirit of community which exists on Arran really shines through.

The police inspector leading the search for Stewart Leask recorded his gratitude to the people of Arran this week and it is well deserved.

Arran Mountain Rescue Team volunteers have been out day and night since Sunday, and many of them are exhausted and will have to take some time off just to recover their strength.

The Arran Coastguard team has also been out and faced some tough terrain and weather conditions, while the lifeboat crew has been scouring the coast.

But that is not all. Neighbours and friends have rallied round the family offering much-needed support and have themselves gone into the hills to join in the search.

Then there is feeding all those out searching. The command centre in Whiting Bay hall has been inundated with sandwiches, home-baking, soup and much more to keep the volunteers nourished.

Of course the search has also had huge resources from the police and other authorities on the mainland, and everyone is grateful to each and every one of them for their dedication and effort to find Stewart.

### Thought for the week

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.' John 1:1

## Machrie doubts

Sir,

As a golfer of long experience of golf on Arran – I was introduced to the game in Whiting Bay in 1958 – and as a member of Machrie Bay since 2013, I was initially uplifted by the report in last week's Banner of the proposal to expand the course to 27 holes and to upgrade it and the facilities. Certainly any improvement from the current changing rooms in the toilets of the tea room would be welcome.

The possibility of a first class course in this location could enhance Arran's attraction as a golfing destination and provide the possibility of the three Ms' golfing trail by road and ferry: Machrie Bay, Machrihanish and Machrie (Islay).

However, after further thought I have significant doubt on the practicality, financial probity and social desirability of such development.

Machrie Bay is located on the edge of Machrie Moor – and there lies the clue to the quality of the ground. It is peaty and boggy. It retains water for a long time. It is not in my experience 'the sandy and well-drained' ground described in the report. Many times I have seen a well-placed drive land in the middle of the fairway, never to be seen again as the ball was swallowed up by the soggy Machrie turf.

In contrast the greens are always immaculate and this is testimony to the expert care of the current greenkeeper, who achieves this against the odds and with a friendly spirit. It seems to me unlikely that

there is any practical way of creating this excellence in the fairway and rough areas of the course due to the water-retaining nature of the soil.

If I had £20 million to invest, I would expect a return of at least four per cent, ie £800,000. So this begs the question as to how many golfers need to be attracted to cover this and, say, £500,000 of running expenses for 27 holes – this is a conservative estimate based on my membership of two championship clubs in Perthshire.

A revenue of £1.3m from an average round of say £50 would need 26,600 golf rounds. This average green fee takes account of published top rates and group discounts and is about double the other Arran courses. If we assume this to be achieved in the five visitor months of May to September, ie 150 golfing days, this would require 173 rounds per day. Going out in threes every eight minutes would need eight hours a day, every day, hail, rain or shine for five months. I do not think that this is likely.

Such a course would need about 12 skilled green keeping staff – where would they be sourced from and where would they live?

While I believe that it is unlikely to attract the 173 golfers a day for five months solid, one has to ask where they would come from. There isn't the pool of hotels on the west coast of Arran to provide this. The traffic issues over the String Road have to be considered in terms of wear and tear and the impact on the general tranquillity of the area. I

think it would be more prudent and achievable to upgrade the current nine-hole course to a dry state, if that is technically possible, and build a club house along the lines of the Tee Room at Shiskine. Nine-hole golf is more in line with current trends for shorter periods on the course. Rather than 27 holes at Machrie Bay I would prefer nine dry holes.

In my view this project is over optimistic in its ambitions and expectations of technical and financial success. I think it will bring unwanted busy-ness to the west coast and the investors' cash will disappear, like so many of my drives, into the bog of Machrie Moor.

Yours,  
**Ian A Brown  
Blairgowrie**

## Twenty's plenty

Sir,

So pleased to see Mark Russell's bill bringing in 20 mph for all residential roads, Arran Banner February 2.

Here are a few facts relating to the speed of vehicles. If you double vehicle speed then the energy and the ability to kill goes up four times. This is because the energy is related to the velocity squared. A car doubles its energy between 20 and 28 mph. Reducing speeds to 20 mph will immediately halve the KSI (killed and seriously injured) rate and adds only two minutes to the average commute.

Apart from reducing the KSI rate this reduction will resurrect the most powerful factor improving physical and mental health and this is wild child's play.

Thirty years ago 10 per-

cent of children were driven to school and now this is 90 per cent and 30 years ago the roaming distance of a six-year-old from their house is now matched by a 10-year-old. We must do all we can to give children a chance to run, play and explore outside.

Perhaps one day we could even see our streets taken back as play and social areas by children with the creation of Dutch Woonerfs or Home Zones where cars have 10kph speed zones weaving between swings and outside BBQs?

Yours,  
**Colin Guthrie  
Brodict**

## Dementia talk

Sir,

Dementia is frequently in the news these days, where once it was never mentioned. Often there are stories about a miracle scientific breakthrough, a new medicine, or a special diet that will make it go away. Although such headlines are mainly incorrect, there is no reason to give up hope.

Professor June Andrews is the adviser to the Dementia Services Development Trust (DSDT), a Scottish Charity that works world-wide to improve the lives of people with dementia. She is the author of Dementia the One Stop Guide. It describes what dementia is, how to delay it, and what to do if you or someone in your family is affected. On Tuesday February 19 Professor June Andrews will give a presentation based on her book in St Molios church, Shiskine at 2pm. All welcome.

Yours,  
**Liz Clarke,  
Torbeg.**

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# Growth deal brings major investment boost for area

Ayrshire and Arran is set for a major jobs boost after it was confirmed that more than £240 million is set to be ploughed into the local economy.

The long-anticipated Ayrshire Growth Deal will now become a reality after the UK and Scottish governments confirmed they would each invest £100m into a package of projects.

The deal is likely to create thousands of jobs, bring £2billion of investment into the area, improve local infrastructure and breathe new life into the local economy. It will also help support the wider Scottish and UK economies.

Arran is most likely to benefit from a major bid to enhance Ayrshire and Arran's coast and capitalise on the superb opportunities that the area's harbours and ports provide.

The proposed projects will make a major contribution to the delivery of national tourism strategies such as 'Awakening the Giant' (marine tourism) as well as providing opportunities to address issues such as the provision of land for the development of new housing.

At a visit to the Halo site in Kilmarnock last week Scottish Secretary David Mundell MP confirmed the financial package agreed by the UK government.

And in parallel the Scottish government, which had already made clear its

commitment to the growth deal, announced that it too would match the funding confirming it would also invest £100m.

Mr Mundell MP was joined on his visit by the three Ayrshire council leaders, chief executives and representatives of the growth deal team from both the public and private sector.

The multi-million pound investment will help drive economic development across the region, boosting jobs, creating opportunity and encouraging further inward investment.

## Employability

The funding levels for specific projects will be confirmed within the coming weeks and is expected to focus on employability and skills programmes, innovation, aerospace and energy projects at Hunterston and Cumnock as well as vital improvements to digital connectivity and regeneration.

Mr Mundell said: 'The UK Government's £100 million investment in the Ayrshire Growth Deal will be transformative for the region, boosting jobs and prosperity right across Ayrshire. This brings UK government investment in growth deals in Scotland to £1.2 billion, a huge commitment to growing Scotland's economy.'

'We look forward to working with the Ayrshire councils, the Scottish Gov-



Scottish Secretary David Mundell at the launch of the Ayrshire Growth Deal in Kilmarnock.

ernment and the private sector to finalise the details of the innovative projects to be funded through the growth deal.'

The three Ayrshire councils will commit financially to the deal with their investment likely to be around 20 per cent of the overall package.

Councillor Joe Cullinane, leader of North Ayrshire Council, said: 'This has been a real collective effort by the three Ayrshire councils, cross-party politicians, the public and private sector and many other partners.'

'We are thrilled to have now received this confirmation of funding from the UK and Scottish govern-

ments and are excited to say that work will start on these projects this year.

'We have all worked incredibly hard and can now look forward to some really exciting times for Ayrshire. It's up to us now to deliver these projects and create the jobs and investment this area so desperately needs.'

The Ayrshire Growth Deal partners include the three Ayrshire councils, UK and Scottish governments and national agencies, with support from the private sector. Investment will be in key assets and sectors that will not only positively impact Ayrshire but the Scottish and UK economies too.

## Chicken shed house refused

A bid to convert a former chicken shed into a house in Whiting Bay has been refused by North Ayrshire Council planners.

The proposal for the redundant agricultural building at Dippenhead Farm was rejected by planners on the grounds that the existing building was not in an acceptable location or of appropriate scale and character for conversion to a house.

### Adverse impact

It would also have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character of the area, they said.

The application by a couple from Dumfries and Galloway was for the former chicken shed which is located to the

west of the A841 at Dippenhead, west of Pirogue

The design brief was to use the existing building in creating a contemporary three-bedroom home, taking advantage of the panoramic views over the Firth of Clyde, and using sustainable materials and renewable energy technology to minimise the building's carbon footprint.

The architects said that by bedding the building into the surrounding landscape they would be transforming an otherwise run down brownfield site in the countryside into a positive contribution to the amenity of the area, but this interpretation was rejected.

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# Opera Highlights tour visits Arran

Scottish Opera's much-loved Opera Highlights set off this week around Scotland with a brand-new show. Four singers and a pianist will journey to 18 venues across Scotland from Ayrshire to the Western Isles.

Opening in East Kilbride, the tour will reach Arran on Tuesday March 12 playing at Whiting Bay village hall at 7.30pm before the final concert in Paisley two days later.

Sara Brodie directs a programme of works by composers from across the centuries, from Handel and Gluck, to Mozart, Verdi, Britten and Bernstein, carefully curated by Scot-

tish Opera's head of music Derek Clark.

Scottish Opera emerging artist 2018/19 soprano Lucy Anderson, who sang the role of Countess Ceprano in the company's 2018 revival of Rigoletto; mezzo-soprano Heather Ireson; tenor Tom Smith and baritone Harry Thatcher join music director/pianist Elizabeth Rowe to bring to life some of opera's best-known arias alongside hidden gems and forgotten favourites.

Director Sara Brodie said: 'Opera Highlights 2019 offers a dazzling array of operatic hits from Wagner to Gilbert and Sullivan. We promise an evening of fri-

volities, folly and flirtation as our singers take you to the depths of the underworld, Paris at dawn, a Viennese masked ball and a tryst by the Thames. Four erstwhile travellers journey the seas of love and back again, in scenes of picaresque torment and delight, to warm your hearts on a chilly night.'

Scottish Opera general director Alex Reedijk said: 'Following the tremendous success of our 17-date autumn Opera Highlights tour, we are greatly looking forward to visiting 18 smaller and rural venues in the spring. This new, pint-sized production is a celebration of opera and the ac-



Harry Thatcher, Lucy Anderson, Tom Smith and Heather Ireson in rehearsals for the Opera Highlights tour. Photo Sally Jubb

complished creative team will no doubt bring out the

best in this talented cast, as they journey around Scot-

land from Barra to Boat of Garten.'



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## Schools receive funding to tackle litter menace

Schools on Arran have been awarded a share of more than £6,000 as part of the 2019 national Wrigley Litter Less campaign to support youngsters in tackling the country's rising litter levels.

With communities across the country continuing to face high litter levels, children and young people are being empowered to take action – learning more about waste and devising initiatives that will help to tackle the litter problems on their own doorsteps.

Arran High School and the six primary schools on the island are among 34 schools across the country to share the funding.

Michelle Gillan, education development officer, at Keep Scotland Beautiful, said: 'Since its launch in 2013, the Wrigley Litter Less campaign has worked with almost 170 schools and nurseries Scotland-wide to engage young people and activate them to take action and help address our rising litter levels.'



PART OF THE  
Keep Scotland Beautiful  
CHARITY

The Eco-schools logo.

'It is fantastic to see such significant levels of enthusiasm and commitment from the participants.'

'The campaign is clearly helping to create Scotland's future environmental ambassadors.'

Litter Less is an annual campaign organised in Scotland by environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful on behalf of the Foundation of Environmental Education (FEE) and sponsored by the Wrigley Foundation.

Litter Less activities

will run throughout the whole year and are being delivered as part of Eco-Schools programmes in 12 countries worldwide, including Scotland.

Litter Less funding is being distributed to 34 early years, primary and additional support needs schools.

Each will receive £200 to support their local litter campaigns.

Keep Scotland Beautiful has been running the campaign for five years, and in that time 121 schools have participated.

# Heroes help raise £1,200

Where can Wonder Woman, Superman, Batman and even the Ghostbusters all be found in the one room?

That would have to be at the fundraising event organised by Arran film producer, director and actor Craig Maclachlan in memory of his dad Douglas, who died from cancer last year.

Raising money for Marie Curie and Macmillan Cancer Support, the fundraising night, held in Loks bar

and restaurant in Glasgow, raised more than £1,200.

The night was attended by almost 100 people, including some from Arran.

Craig had collected a number of prizes for the raffle with businesses on the island making up nearly 30 prizes, and Arran products were the hit of the night. An auction raised more than £600.

The event was fun-filled, with five films shown from independent filmmakers all

over Scotland, live music sets and the cosplayers led by Wonder Woman, Scots actress, model and cosplayer Nicolette McKeown.

Craig said: 'I would like to say a massive thank you to residents and the businesses of Arran, they really came through for us, supported us and helped make our fundraiser as good as it was. People loved the Arran connection and it'll attract a few new faces to the island that's for sure.'



The Ghostbusters in full costume.



Glasgow singer and songwriter Mic Clark performs.



International performer Mike Edwards.



Wonder Woman Nicolette McKeown hands out the raffle prizes.



Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman at the fundraising night.



Alan Dunn from Brodick and Whiting Bay artist Catherine Scott with event organiser Craig Maclachlan enjoying the night.

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Entrants must be 18 or over. Employees of Scottish Field, the competition promoters, and their direct families are ineligible to enter. No purchase necessary. The winner will be first correct entry drawn after closing date. No cash alternative is available. The winner will be informed by telephone. Usual Scottish Field rules apply. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition - your name, address, telephone number and email address. If you wish to receive news and offers from the third party running the competition, then please mark the words "OPT IN" on your postcard entry. If you enter various competitions on one card, you will be opting in for every competition running. Unless you opt in to receive further marketing information we will only contact you if you win a prize in the competition. Scottish Field (Wywex Media) will retain your information for a maximum of 3 months after the competition closes and then it will be deleted. If you have opted in to receive third party information, the data you have supplied will be passed to the third party company running the competition. This may be used for the purposes of the third party contacting you regarding new products and services for a period of 3 months, unless you agree to an extension with the third party company at a later date.

# Choir put their heart and



The choir raise their hands during an energetic number.



The soul choir in mellow mood.

The Arran Soul Choir really raised the roof at their 'Souled Out' concert which they performed to a proper sold out house on Saturday January 26 at the community theatre in Lamlash.

It was the third concert by the soul choir, who had more than 60 singers on stage for the show. There were more solos from choir members and a new repertoire from uplifting gospel numbers to dedications to Aretha

Franklin. It is exactly a year since the choir's last concert and members have been working hard, doubling their repertoire in that time.

The choir would like to thank the numerous people who supported the event: guest soloist Kirsty Collins, who works as an HR team leader for North Ayrshire Council, Megan Hamill, Arran Events and external lighting agency Ross McCrone, which added the professional feel of production value.



Samantha Payn accompanies on the French horn.



The choir belt out another song.



Colin MacDonald and Mike Bailey.



Moira Manson and Janie Moor side by side.



Shay MacLeod performs with the choir.

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# soul into performance

With cabaret-style seating, table candles and snacks and soft drinks provided, there was a real ambience in the venue for a terrific show.

Choir leader James O'Neil said afterwards: 'Thank you to everyone who helped, and literally strained themselves, to make this one we won't forget.'

The raffle held raised £570 in aid of the Arran Music School's widening access fund

which will allow the music school to bridge the gap for young people who can't access the range of tuition/activities currently offered within all Arran schools.

New members are always welcome at rehearsals which take place on Thursday from 7pm to 9pm in the high school, £3 per session pays for music, coffee and cake.

*All photographs by David Hogg*



A tuneful Megan Hamill.



Members of the choir sway along to the music.



Evelyn Hamilton in fine voice.



Kelly Henbery performs a solo with the backing band and James O'Neil on piano.



Colin Guthrie lends his powerful voice.



James O'Neil makes a point as he conducts the choir.



Kelly Henbery in soulful voice.

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## Secondary pupils to be taught life-saving skills

Secondary school pupils on Arran are to be given CPR training as part of a nationwide campaign adopted by North Ayrshire Council (NAC) to reduce poor survival rates from cardiac arrests outside of hospital.

Joining the ranks to make up 23 of Scotland's 32 local authorities which have joined the initiative, NAC has promised to roll out the training to provide pupils in the area with the vital skills that could help save a life.

Heart charity British Heart Foundation (BHF) Scotland has welcomed the news and is working with the remaining councils to achieve 100 per cent coverage.

There are around 3,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Scotland each year but the survival rate is just one in 12 and for every minute without CPR, the chances of surviving drop by up to 10 per cent.

International evidence has shown that in countries like Denmark, which legislated for all secondary pupils to learn CPR, survival rates for out of hospital cardiac arrests tripled.

Those councils backing the campaign in Scotland have now pledged to work with BHF Scotland to develop a plan to ensure that every secondary pupil receives CPR training.

To find out more about CPR or to apply for a Call Push Rescue CPR training kit, which is free for eligible secondary schools, visit [www.bhf.org.uk/cpr](http://www.bhf.org.uk/cpr)



Harry Davidson is the new vice president of Arran Historical Society. Inset, president and founding member Grace Small. 01\_B06historical01 and 01\_B06historical02

# Harry is new society vice president

Chairman Colin MacKenzie welcomed the 58 members to Brodick Golf Clubhouse for the annual general meeting of Arran Historical Society on Monday January 21.

There was an excellent soup and sandwich buffet followed by tea and coffee with cakes before the official business with reports by the chairman, secretary and the treasurer.

The deaths of Stewart Lambie and Jane Murray were remembered. They

had been founder members of the Arran Antiquarians, the forerunner to the present society which was founded in November 1993. At this first meeting in Brodick Library, 40 members joined with another 11 expressing an interest.

The society was founded and developed by the late Dr Hugh Mckerrall.

A committee was formed, the rules drawn up and in the following weeks a programme for 1994 was ar-

ranged. The society members in more recent times had been very elderly and in 2016 the name was changed to Arran Historical Society to try to attract 'younger members'.

At the meeting Harry Davidson accepted the post of honorary vice president, to serve alongside Grace Small, president and a founder member.

Any member wishing to join the committee is welcome. There is a need for people with some technical

knowledge of computers and sound systems to help before and after each talk to set up and take down the equipment.

The programme for the year is similar to the first programme in 1994: a mixture of history of Arran and Scotland, recent and older, epic tales, wedding customs, architecture, fishing, archaeology, whisky – legal and illegal – social history and Andrew Carnegie.

The field trip will be to Skipness Castle and Celt-

ic Chapel. The annual trip is to the new Burns centre and another venue. The first meeting is on Monday February 18 when Charles Currie from Blackwaterfoot will speak on the Arran connection with Ossian's tales.

The society would like to thank Graeme Dobson, Christopher Park and Little Rock catering for the excellent buffet and management and other staff at the Brodick Golf Club for the excellent service.

## Selling your Whisky Cask?

If you own a cask of Scotch Whisky and are interested in selling it, we would love to hear from you.

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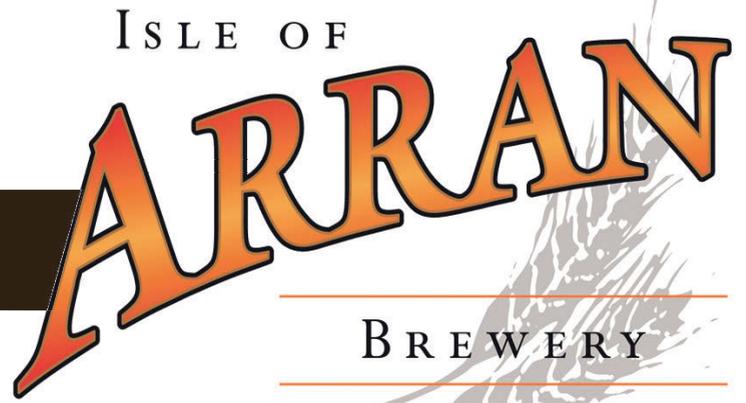
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Octopus Centre - Tennis	Old Pavilion, Lamlash open seven days, any time
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Brodick Castle, garden only	Open 9am-dusk
Art Exhibition, local artist Jane Nichol	Isle of Arran Distillery, Lochranza, 10am - 4pm
Soap making and candle dipping	Arran Aromatics, Brodick, 10am - 4pm
Public Swimming	Auchrannie Spa Pool, Brodick, 10am - 3pm & 6pm - 8pm
Arran Brewery	Open - Mon, Friday & Saturday, 10am - 5pm
	Tuesday - Thursday, 11am - 4pm. Tours daily at 2pm

## Saturday 9th February

Flow Yoga	Ormidale Pavilion, Brodick, 9am
Winter Rink Bowls	Blackwaterfoot Bowls Club, 1.30pm
Scotland 6 Nations Rugby Match, shown live	The Drift Inn, Lamlash, 2.15pm
Family games	Auchrannie Games Hall, 2pm - 3pm
Fun in the pool	Auchrannie Spa Pool, 3pm - 4pm
Live Music - The Sensational Biff Simpson	Crofters' Music Bar and Bistro, Brodick, 7.30pm Live
Music - The Sharpeez - the very best of Rhythm & Blues	The PHT, Lamlash, 9pm
Over 21s' Disco	Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 10pm

## Sunday 10th February

Live Music - Jermey Levi	Crofters' Music Bar and Bistro, Brodick, 1pm - 4pm
Family games	Auchrannie Games Hall, 2pm - 3pm
Fun in the pool	Auchrannie Spa Pool, 3pm - 4pm
Live Music - The Sharpeez - the very best of Rhythm & Blues	The PHT, Lamlash, 4pm
Alcoholics Anonymous meeting	Brodick Church Hall, 5pm - 6.30pm
Folk Music Session	Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 9pm

## Monday 11th February

JogScotland mixed ability running group	Whiting Bay 5.30pm
Adult Tennis	Blackwaterfoot, 5.30pm
Circuit Training	Auchrannie Spa Leisure, 6pm - 7pm
Live Music - Arran Dawn	Crofters' Music Bar & Bistro, 6.30pm
Isle of Arran Bridge Club, all welcome	Brodick Golf Club, 7pm for 7.15pm
Tae Kwon Do, adults and over 10s,	Brodick Church Hall, 7.00pm - 8.30pm

## Tuesday 12th February

Healthy Outdoors Team	Brodick Country Park Ranger Centre, 10am - 1pm
Eco Savvy Energy Surgeries	Ormidale Pavilion, Brodick, 10am - 3pm
Winter Rink Bowls	Blackwaterfoot Bowls Club, 1.30pm
Alcoholics Anonymous meeting	Brodick Church Hall, 2pm
Bridge class (beginners/improvers)	Brodick Golf Club, 2.30pm - 4.30pm
Arran Pace Makers - Jog Scotland Beginners Group	Ormidale pavilion, Brodick, 5.30pm
Steak Night - two ribeye steaks & bottle of wine	Crofters' Music Bar and Bistro, Brodick, 5.30pm
Arran Hockey Club - Juniors (5 -14yrs)	Ormidale Pavilion, Brodick, 6pm - 7pm
Flow Yoga	Corrie Hall, 6pm
Netball	Arran High School Gym, 7pm -8pm
Scottish Country Dancing	Brodick Church Hall, 7.30pm
Trev's Pop Music Quiz	Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 9pm
Traditional Music Sessions	Brodick Bar, 9pm
Body Blitz	Auchrannie Spa Leisure 9.30pm - 10.30pm

## Wednesday 13th February

Yoga	Auchrannie Studio, 9.30am - 10.30am
Brodick Gardens Volunteers	Brodick Castle and Country Park, 9.30am - 1pm
Knit and Blether	Bay Wool & Crafts, Whiting Bay 10.30am -12.30pm
Arran Heritage Museum	Rosaburn, Brodick, 11am - 3.30pm
Chair Yoga Exercise Class	St Mollo's Church Hall, Shiskine, 11am
Archives and Genealogy Service	Arran Heritage Museum, 10.30am -12.30pm & 1.30pm - 3.30pm



Dog Classes	Whiting Bay Hall, 12.30pm
Arran Pace Makers Running Group	Brodick, 5.30pm
Flow Yoga	Shiskine Hall, 6pm
Live Music - Tim Pomeroy	Crofters' Music Bar & Bistro, 6.30pm
Tae Kwon Do Juniors 6.30pm - 7.30pm, Advanced Juniors & Adults, AHS, 7.30pm -8.30pm	Lamlash Church Hall, 7.30pm
Alcoholics Anonymous meeting	The PHT, Lamlash, 5pm - 9pm
Curry Night take away or eat in	The PHT, Lamlash, 8.30pm
Family Friendly Pub Quiz	Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 9pm
Rock 'n' Pop Bingo	

## Thursday 14th February

Morning fitness	Auchrannie Spa Leisure, 9.30am - 10.30am
Chair Yoga Exercise Class	Ormidale Pavillion, Brodick, 10.30am
Arran Heritage Museum	Rosaburn, Brodick, 11am - 3.30pm
Steak Night - two steak dinners and a bottle of wine	Drift Inn, Lamlash, 5pm -9pm
Isle of Arran Bridge Club, All welcome	Little Rock, Brodick, 7pm for 7.15pm
Badminton, all welcome	Shiskine Hall, 7pm
Arran Hockey Club - Seniors (12 yrs +)	Ormidale Pavilion, Brodick, 7pm - 8.30pm
Arran Soul Choir	Community Theatre, Arran High School, 7pm - 9pm
Brodick Embroidery Group	Brodick Library, 7.30pm - 9.30pm
Body Blitz	Auchrannie Spa Leisure 9.30pm - 10.30pm
Tommy's General Knowledge Quiz	Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 9pm

## Friday 15th February

Yoga	Auchrannie Spa Leisure, 9.30am - 10.30am
Arran Heritage Museum	Rosaburn, Brodick, 11am - 3.30pm
Alcoholics Anonymous meeting	Whiting Bay Hall, 7pm
Tae Kwon Do	Advanced (Advanced Class) Arran High School, 7.30pm - 8.30pm
Live Music - Mike Bailey	Crofters' Music Bar & Bistro, 7.30pm
Friday Night Quiz	Whiting Bay Golf Club, Whiting Bay, 8pm
Jazz Cafe Band	Whiting Bay Hall, 8pm - 11pm

## Saturday 16th February

Flow Yoga	Ormidale Pavilion, Brodick, 9am
Winter Rink Bowls	Blackwaterfoot Bowls Club, 1.30pm
Family games	Auchrannie Games Hall, 2pm - 3pm
Fun in the pool	Auchrannie Spa Pool, 3pm - 4pm
Live Music - The Sensational Biff Simpson	Crofters' Music Bar and Bistro, Brodick, 7.30pm
Music Arran presents Magnard Wind Ensemble, Tunnell Trust winners.	Brodick Hall, 7.30pm
Over 21s' Disco	Ormidale Hotel, Brodick, 10pm



[www.arranbrewery.com](http://www.arranbrewery.com)

# A life less ordinary

Hugh Boag  
 editor@arranbanner.co.uk

High Corrie may today be a quiet, secluded clachan in the hills above the main village.

But in the 1950s it appears to have been a rather more lively settlement with a bitter feud between Arran's best known writer and a gun-carrying Russian.

Much is known of the dramatist, poet and writer Robert McLellan, who worked principally in the Scots language, and whose works are celebrated every year during the McLellan Festival.

The other gentleman is rather less well known but a fascinating character.

Despite spending just a few short years on the island he left a lasting mark with his book *Arran with Camera & Sketchbook*. The man was Axel Firsoff.

## Wife and son

He came to Arran with his wife Marjorie and son George, after living in Aviemore, in the autumn of 1948 and first settled somewhere to the south of Whiting Bay. He later moved to Rigsides in Sannox and finally to Burnbank in High Corrie, where he was living in September 1950 when he finished his book.

But it was during the four years that he lived there that he had a running feud with McLellan, who lived next door, and was said to sleep with a loaded pistol under his pillow such was his fear of being a white Russian among Scottish Communists, with allegiances to the old Soviet

## Axel Firsoff a man with a gun, a feud and who courted controversy

Union and Ukraine, wherever they may be – even in High Corrie.

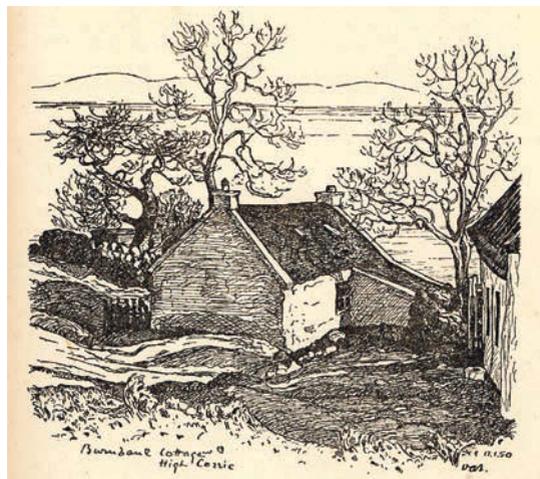
Old locals speak of the antagonism between them and the story goes that McLellan once used a frying pan to drive a horse or cow at him.

But the feud apart, Firsoff, a keen mountaineer and skier, certainly spent a great deal of time learning not only about the history of Arran, but its landscape – by walking its length and breadth – its geology, flora and fauna, its language and its people to write a comprehensive narrative on the island which, although fascinating, can be a little dry. He also took all of the photographs and drew the sketches.

It is quite obvious to see, in reading the book, how Firsoff became a leading amateur astronomer and a prolific published author but even in this field his views, including those on extraterrestrial life, were controversial. And it all started on Arran.

While on the island, Firsoff acquainted himself with James Morrison Rollo Gladstone, a former rector at St Paul's, Rothesay, and a retired canon from the Episcopal Church who lived in The Manse on the island.

Gladstone had recently declared himself the rector of the local Sannox Congregational Church, despite having no authority



Firsoff's drawing of Burnbank Cottage in the book.

whatsoever from the bishop. Four years into Canon Gladstone's unauthorised takeover he proposed Axel Firsoff for membership of the British Astronomical Association and he was elected in 1951.

But where did it all begin? He was born Valdemar Alex Firsoff, but preferred to be called Axel, in the Ukraine (then part of Imperial Russia) on January 20 1910, despite numerous sources implying he was Swedish, but he often translated Scandinavian languages into English, which is probably the reason for the confusion.

## Russian revolution

Around the time that he was seven, the Russian revolution occurred and the Firsoff family fled to neighbouring Poland, living in the south of the country, not far from the Czechoslovakian border,

now known as Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Their new home was in the region of the Tatra mountains, which would play a huge part in Firsoff's future interests, because mountain scenery, geology and skiing all became subjects which interested him greatly, and about which he would write many future books.

In the 1930s Firsoff gained a degree in English, philosophy and astronomy and followed this up with an MA in languages, both awarded at the University of Krakow. He worked briefly at the Krakow Observatory. Precisely what Firsoff did just prior to the Second World War is unclear, although it seems he may have worked for a short time at a Swedish observatory.

As related in his later books, in 1939 he became secretary of the Federation Internationale du Ski, which explains his presence in Zakopane in Southern Poland at the time of competitions for that year.

However, with Germany invading Poland in September 1939, staying in that country was no longer an option for Firsoff, so he decided to live in Scotland which many of his Polish countrymen, many in the military, had now chosen as a base.

He had become a great lover of mountain scenery in his youth in the Tatra highlands, so the choice



Alex Firsoff as he would have looked when living on Arran.

of Scotland as a home was understandable. During the 1950s there were stories that Firsoff helped supply the Norwegian resistance via fishing boats from Scotland during the Second World War.

Firsoff would make good use of his MA translating from Scandinavian and European languages into English for book and newspaper publishers. That work had led to him becoming an author and being an accomplished artist and photographer meant he could also provide many of the illustrations.

## Third book

In 1944 his wife Marjorie Lillian gave birth to their son, George.

By 1947 he had published his third book entitled *The Unity of Europe*. The same year he was granted British citizenship.

At the time *The Unity of Europe* was published Firsoff, his wife and young George were living in a cottage called Shunem in Aviemore.

While based there he wrote one of his most successful books, enti-

tled *The Cairngorms on foot and ski*, published in 1949, by which time he had moved to Arran.

According to Firsoff, after the book's publication he became an instructor for the British Skiing team at Aviemore in the build-up to the February 1952 Winter Olympics in Oslo, but it is not clear how he fitted this in with living on Arran.

There followed the Arran years but by 1954 he had moved to Lochearnhead presumably so he could carry out research for what was to be his final mountain guidebook entitled *In the Hills of Breadalbane*, an account of the region in the southern/central Scottish Highlands.

The following year he had moved south to Glastonbury in Somerset which would become Firsoff's permanent address for the rest of his life and work until his death in 1981.

With thanks to John Inglis for bringing this fascinating man to my attention and for lending me *Arran with Sketchbook and Camera*.



Burnbank in High Corrie, as it looks today, where he had a feud with Robert McLellan who lived next door. 01\_B06firsoff02

# Magnard are set to delight Arran audience

Highly accomplished musicians in their own right and equally as successful as an ensemble, Magnard Ensemble will be showcasing their talents at an evening performance taking place in Brodick Hall next weekend.

Hosted by Music Arran, and sponsored by the Tunnell Trust for Young Musicians, Magnard Ensemble will delight audiences at their concert on Saturday February 16 at 7.30pm.

Performing since 2012 the Magnard Ensemble have built a reputation for delivering high quality concert performances and dynamic educational projects. The ensemble made their international debut at the Culture and Convention Centre Lucerne, Switzerland in January 2017.

During the 2014/2015 season, the quintet simultaneously held a chamber music fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music, as well as the inaugural joint fellowship between the RAM Open Academy and Wigmore Hall Learn-



Accomplished performers Magnard Ensemble will be showcasing their talents in Brodick.

ing. Currently the ensemble are selected artists for the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust, the Tillett Trust Young Artist Platform and the Tunnell Trust.

Not just performers of established music, Magnard Ensemble are also known for their passion for new music. They have premiered works by emerging composers such as Leo Geyer for Lord Mayor's composition prize, and Ewan Campbell for Listenpony and were invited to be the resident ensemble for East Anglia young composer competition in 2018.

The players all follow their own professional performing careers, appearing as soloists, chamber musicians and with orchestras including London Philharmonic Orchestra, Southbank Sinfonia, Royal Northern Sinfonia, the BBC orchestras, and major UK opera orchestras.

During 2016, their Revolting Rhymes and Mar-

vellous Music project was launched nationwide to celebrate the centenary of Roald Dahl's birth, in partnership with Paul Patterson, Martin Butler, the City Music Foundation and Music Link International. Featured on BBC Radio 3's 'In Tune' programme in September 2016, the ensemble has delivered concerts and workshops at festivals and venues across the country.

As per usual with Music Arran concerts the seating will be in a café style and refreshments will be available.

Tickets at £10 per person are available, on-line from [www.arranevents.com](http://www.arranevents.com), in Inspirations in Brodick or at the door.

Any young people or students, along with one accompanying adult, will be welcomed free.

## Isle of Arran Drama Association Drama Festival



Tickets £7 each

Available at Book & Card Shop from Mon 18th to Thu 21st @12 noon,

or at the door Doors Open 7.00pm - Curtain up 7.30pm

### Thursday 21st Feb

#### A Dog's Life

Play by Pam Valentine  
Lamlash Junior Drama Club  
**Numquam Non Paratas**  
Comedy by Andy McNamara  
Whiting Bay Music & Drama

### Friday 22st Feb

#### Home at Last

Comedy by Eileen Brandon  
Whiting Bay Youth Group  
**Rest in Pieces**  
Comedy by James Cooke  
Whiting Bay Music & Drama

### Saturday 23rd Feb

#### Girl on an Empty Swing

Play by Allana Knight  
Lamlash Junior Drama Club

#### Chips with Vinegar

Play by Harry Glass  
Lamlash Drama Club

Thursday 21st, Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd February  
Adjudicator: Mr Ronnie Mackie  
**Arran Community Theatre**  
Arran High School, Lamlash

#### Marigold Mews

A Farce by Peter Rolls  
Shiskine SW1



#### Between a Writer's Block and a Hard Place

Comedy by Rory Morrison  
The Young Ones



#### We'll Go No More A Reivin'

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# Wintering flocks a January highlight

## Bird notes

by Jim Cassels

JANUARY

In comparison to last January, January 2019 was as cold but was considerably drier with almost a third of the rain of the previous January. With snow at

times even to low levels, the weather was not conducive to being out of doors. Nevertheless almost 100 species were reported.

Highlights included: eight

woodcock above Pirnmill on 16th and five Jack Snipe by Sliderry Shore on 23rd. Both are species which move out of the colder continent in the winter. Other highlights included four goosander off Balliekin shore on 10th, a moorhen on Mossend Pond on 22nd, a little grebe on Fisherman's walk on 27th and a dipper at Glenashdalewater Foot also on 27th.

In addition there were reports of all three divers including: four Great Northern diver off Pladda on 9th, four black-throated diver in Sannox Bay on 26th and two red-throated diver off Imachar on 28th.

Five species of geese

were reported namely: two white-fronted geese with 480 greylag geese in the Shiskine Valley on 1st, 12 Canada geese in Clachaig on 3rd, two pale-breasted brent geese on Silver Sands on 6th and 92 pink-footed geese in Sliderry on 8th.

A solitary whooper swan in the Shiskine Valley throughout the month was probably the same bird that has been reported all last year that did not appear to migrate north at the end of last winter. Other wintering wildfowl included: 75 teal at Carlo on 4th, two goldeneye on Coire Fhionn Lochan on 10th and 45 wigeon at Sliderry on 27th.

### Mixed flock

Wintering flocks included: 17 turnstone on Silver Sands on 2nd, 110 curlew in Corriecravie on 4th, six purple sandpiper on Silver Sands on 6th, 40 jackdaw in Catacol on 14th, 80 lapwing in Shiskine in 17th, 12 golden plover in Catacol Bay on 19th, a mixed flock of over 100 fieldfare and redwing in Shiskine on 23rd and 111 common gull at Claulchlands on 27th. There were no January reports of waxwing or brambling.

Interesting garden birds in January included: a great spotted woodpecker in Lamdash on 25th, ten long-tailed tit in Torbeg also on 25th and on 28th two bullfinch in Marganahelish and a goldcrest plus a tree creeper in Corrie. In a future Bird Note there will be a report on



Fulmar – early exploration of nesting cliffs.

Photo: Carl Reavey.

the Arran RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch Weekend of January 26 to 28.

While there was only one record of returning lesser black-backed gull, Catacol Bay on 24th, and only one record of returning gannet, Lamdash Bay on 30th, shelduck were on numerous coastal territories including Auchenhew, Claulchlands, Cosyden, Drumadon, Fisherman's Walk, Kildonan, Kilpatrick, King's Cave and Pirnmill. Other signs of approaching spring included: 18 courting eider in Whiting Bay on 17th, displaying golden eagle over Lochranza on 23rd, three fulmar visiting nest sites in Catacol on 25th and a blackbird singing in Lamdash on 28th. But the winter is not over yet.

Enjoy your birding

Please send any bird notes with 'what, when, where'



White-fronted goose, one of five species of goose on Arran in January.

Photo: Jim Cassels.

to me at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or e mail me at jim@arran-birding.co.uk I look forward to hearing from you. For more information on birding on Arran purchase the Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012 as well as the Arran Bird Report 2017 and visit this website www.arran-birding.co.uk



Goldcrest was the smallest European bird visiting gardens in January. Photo: Brian Couper.

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A gannet which has made an early return from warmer climes. Photo: David Hogg.



Jack Snipe, a well-camouflaged winter visitor. Photo: Dennis Morrison.

# THE ARRAN BANNER 20 YEARS AGO

Saturday February 6, 1999

## Fighting back

Village stores and post offices around Arran may be eligible for relief of 50 per cent on their business rates. With small shops all over the island fighting what many think is a losing battle against the Co-op, this may look like a positive step in aiding the village shops' fightback.

But not every small shopkeeper may benefit.

The provisions apply to general stores and post offices in designated rural settlements, which includes all settlements on Arran.

But does Muchie's Stores in Lamlash, which has no post office, but must compete with Co-op stores in both Lamlash and Brodick, qualify?

For this move towards helping the small shopkeeper to strike back is to have any impact, surely all stores on Arran, except

the Co-op and possibly Alldays, would have to be eligible for rate relief.

## Castle clear-up

The Friends of Brodick Castle have been hard at work this week preparing the castle grounds for the opening in April.

And there is so much to clear up following the devastation to the castle grounds by the Boxing Day storms at the end of last year.

There are logs, twigs, fallen tree trunks, tangled brush and bracken everywhere. Some cleared from the west end of the castle this week may date from as far back as 1860.

These happy helpers do not actually cut down damaged trees but follow the main contractor, sawing the brush left into manageable bits and piling it on to bonfires, which give off a strong, but unusually sweet-smelling smoke.



Friends of Brodick Castle ahead of their clear up work. 01\_B06twe01



Can you see your face in it yet? Rachel Phillips, Helen Boyd, Dorothy Cross and Peggy Grundy prepare the copper for the new season at Brodick Castle. 01\_B06twe03



The friends are hard at work clearing trees before burning them on bonfires.

01\_B06twe02



Readers will have seen the odd colour picture creeping into the 20 years ago pages. Clearly in 1999 colour photographs began being circulated with press releases, although the Banner was still printed in black and white, as was the case here with the launch of the new civil marriages guide by North Ayrshire Council. Seen here are Arran registrar Eileen Griffin with North Ayrshire's principal registrar Sandra McGregor. The photo was by Stevenston photographer John Keachie, who is still to the fore. 01\_B06twe05



New postmistress Naomi Paul settles behind her counter ready to serve stamps, advise on postage rates and deal with pension books. Four-year-old Naomi won this post office set last week in a Padraig Post competition. 01\_B06twe04

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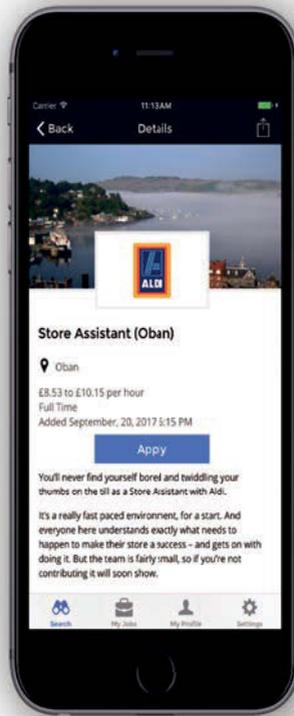
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## Public Notices

**Machrie Bay Golf Cub's AGM**  
will be held at 7.30pm on  
Thursday 21st March in  
Machrie Hall.  
All Members welcome.

## Unison AGM

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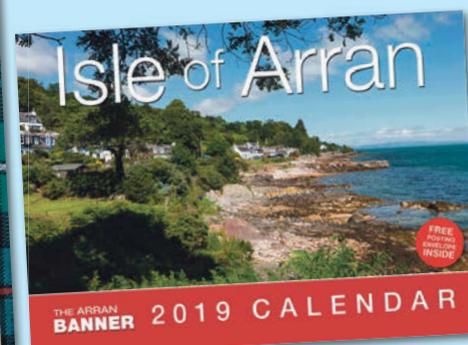
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CHURCH NOTICES

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

Parishes of North Arran, Brodick, Corrie, Lochranza, Pirmill and Shiskine Independent but working together

Minister:

Rev Angus Adamson

Parish Assistant:

Mrs Jean Hunter:

Worship will be conducted in the above churches at the following times to which all are invited.

**Sunday 10th February**

Pirmill and Lochranza Churches together, 10.15am Morning Worship including the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Pirmill.

Shiskine Church, 12noon Morning Worship including the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Brodick Church, 10.30am

Morning Worship.

Corrie Church, 11.30am

Prayer Meeting, 12noon

Morning Worship

There will also be a Service of Worship in Montrose House at 1.30pm.

**SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

(Part of the Worldwide Anglican Church)

St Margaret's, Whiting Bay.

**Sunday 10th February**

Holy Communion 11 am.

Rev Canon Simon Mackenzie

Coffee after service

ALL WELCOME

**ARRAN FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

(continuing)

**Sunday 10th February**

Morning Service 11am

Trust Housing Lounge, Glen Estate, Brodick

Evening Service 6.30pm

5 Glen Road, Brodick

All welcome

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

Kilmory linked with Lamlash

"A faith to proclaim ~ a fellowship to share"

**Sunday 10th February**

Mrs Liz Clarke

Kilmory - 10 am, Lamlash -

11.30 am.

All welcome, including families; children's area

Scottish Charity SC015072

**BANNER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

Whiting Bay and Kildonan Church of Scotland, Charity Number: SC014005

**Sunday 10th February**

Worship will be conducted by

the minister, Rev Elizabeth

Watson, at 10.30am. Tea and

coffee will be served in the

Transept after the service.

**ARRAN FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**Sunday 10th February**

Shiskine - service at 12 noon

- Induction of new Elder.

No evening Service

in Brodick

Rev Benjamin Van Rensburg

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**

**Sunday 10th February**

Sunday Worship at 11am

'Heather Lodge', Brodick

Left of the Douglas Hotel,

opposite the ferry terminal.

Telephone 700346, 820 223

Everyone Warmly Invited

**ARRAN BAPTIST CHURCH**

Minister: Rev Vince Jennings

**Sunday 10th February**

Service 11am

Ormidale Pavilion

Tea and coffee after

the service

Wednesday at 7.30pm Home

fellowship group for bible

study and prayer.

Telephone 600222

Everyone warmly invited

**HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**Sunday 10th February**

Sunday Mass 11am

**BANNER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BANNER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

# Strathpuffer is



The youngsters try to keep warm in the marquee with all their provisions to hand.

There we were on the A9, 14 of us in a mini-bus, heading back home to Arran, hauling a trailer full of bikes, tents, camping kit and all we needed to survive the Strathpuffer 24-hour mountain bike endurance race.

Eleven pupils from Arran High and three adult supervisors, only one of whom had slept in a bed the night before. Exhausted, absolutely exhausted. Except for Stuart who was still yattering on, for a short while at least. It was so worthwhile. A great weekend. The race site is on Forestry Commission land, a Scots Pine forest with many walks and trails. We had pitched up between trees and a large grass area that was covered in frozen snow. Very cold and apparently the toughest year since this event started 14 years ago.

**'Le Mans' start**

AHSMTB Club had entered two teams, one a mixed quad and the other a schools' mixed team of eight, although we only had six riders in ours. The race began at 10am on Saturday morning with a classic 'Le Mans' start and our first pupils racing were James and Louie who, with a little imagination man-



**Arran Golfers Association**

Sunday February 3, Winter League Duncan Trophy at Shiskine Golf Club. Due to the weather and ground conditions the games was played later and only played over 12 holes. Thanks to Stewart and his team for the superb condition of the course.

Alan Dunlop and his team kept the golfers fed and watered and the food was first class.

All three matches ended in a draw with Lamlash still in the driving seat, ahead of the final round at home, but Whiting Bay

and Brodick are ready to pounce.

Shiskine 2 drew with Lamlash 2, Corrie 2 drew with Brodick 2 and Machrie Bay 2 drew with Whiting Bay 2. The table is currently as follows: Lamlash 7pts, Whiting Bay 5pts, Brodick 5pts, Machrie Bay 4pts, Shiskine 2pts, Corrie 1pts.

**Whiting Bay Golf Club**

Sunday February 3, Whiting Bay v Machrie Bay at Shiskine. After a few days of seriously wintry weather the fourth round of the Winter League was reduced to 12-hole matches over Shiskine with the tee times put back slightly.

Whiting Bay battled out a tie draw with Machrie, both sides winning two matches each. This leaves WBGC and Brodick, which play each other in

the final round, sharing second place in the series, a point behind Lamlash with the final round to played at Lamlash.

Fixtures: Sunday February 10, Winter Cup round five, one draw at 10am.

**Corrie Golf Club**

Monday February 4, Winter Cup. 1 J McGovern 72-10=62. Magic twos, A Napier and J McGovern.

Fixtures: Saturday February 9, 18 Hole Sweep, ballots at 9am and 1pm. Monday February 11, Winter Cup, ballot at noon.

**Brodick Golf Club**

Fixture: Sunday February 10, Brandon Qualifier, 9am and noon.

**Talk to us**  
Send your news and photographs to  
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Corrie Golf Club.

## Bruces lift Boyd Trophy

The results of the Arran Bridge Club aggregate competition played on Monday January 28 were: N/S 1 Dougie and Margaret Bruce, 2 John Baraclough and Jim Peacock, 3 Pat Adamson and Brenda Livingstone. E/W 1 Giorsal Kroner and Tom Kelly, 2 David Henderson and Anne McKelvie, 3 Ellie Jones and Elaine Duncan.

The result of the Boyd Trophy played on Thursday January 31 were: 1 Dougie and Margaret Bruce, 2 John Baraclough and Jennifer Wales, 3 Jan and John Beattie.

# a true test of mettle

aged to be the first to get to their bikes, which was a real advantage. Excitement was palpable amongst the hundreds of competitors and their support teams. Louie was the 20th rider back home with an excellent sub-50 minutes circuit, James arriving minutes later. The transition was good and off went Luke next with Stuart not far behind. First casualty home ... Luke, with a grazed knee and staved wrist. The course was treacherous because of lying ice and hardened, rutted single track. At some points it was better to ride off track to avoid unpredictable surfaces.

An excited Eilidh was next for the quad team, with Gregor four minutes later. Both came back safe and sound but finding the conditions extremely difficult. Although there was snow on the ground none was falling, for which we were all grateful. Meanwhile, back in our base tent the wood burning stove, along with sun beating through the plastic managed to get the temperature up to a ridiculous 27°C.

Next out was Charlie, the last of the quad team and then Patryk, both coming back in under an hour and by this time requir-

ing lights to negotiate the tricky course. We had realised that most of the other teams had been to Strathpeffer before and some of them practised on the course too, so the times our riders were getting were very good indeed. The quad team sent out Louie again whilst Sid was out for his first run.

## Buzzing

The resting riders in the tent were buzzing. Trying to get them to eat properly was becoming difficult, as they were on such a high sustenance wasn't a concern. Daisy was the last of our pupils to ride the circuit and came home in a good time. Euan and Mrs Dick went back to the bunkhouse to sleep, as they were both driving home the following day, leaving Robert, Blair and myself to fix the bikes, generators, stove and kids.

By this time of night the outside temperature had dropped to under 3°C below and we were finding out how the new wood burner was performing. At times, as it was a wood burner for tents, we found it clogged up very easily and the temperature inside dropped below 10°C, so a lot of work was done trying to free it from ash. Without

it we would have struggled with the intense cold.

2am. The riders are starting to flag, sleeping bags are coming out but everyone is refusing to succumb to the tiredness and cold. Hot soup is drunk, biscuits nibbled, the chairs are all much nearer the stove. Bikes are being worked on after each leg and we are now finding that during the walk from the tent to the start line, about 500 metres, the derailleurs are freezing up. Patryk and Luke each came back with only one gear working, which was a tough call. Ice is on the underside of every bike and they have to thaw out before maintenance.

4 am. Most riders are now sleeping around the stove when they aren't on the trail. Waking them for their next ride is tricky and it takes time for them to rouse. We all know what it's like to only get a couple of hours sleep, when your body is crying out for more and these pupils then had to get changed into cycle kit, go out in freezing conditions and ride a treacherous course, in the dark. One positive was that at that time of night there weren't as many competitors out, so our riders weren't being held up by slower ones.

## Good spirits

6am. All the riders are now dozing or asleep, when not riding or getting prepared, but by near dawn Gregor is feeling better, as is Daisy, so they are going to do one last lap for their team, who sorely missed them. Stuart had had to do two continuous laps to help out.

Dawn came with clear skies and the threatened snow didn't appear. Everyone was in good spirits and keen for the last push. We only had two hours to go. Both teams knew they were doing very well so were getting quite excited and found renewed energy.

Well done to all the Arran riders who participated, it was a real achievement. Results and standings can be found on the Strathpeffer website.

Thanks to Robert Mc-Neice for all the hard work

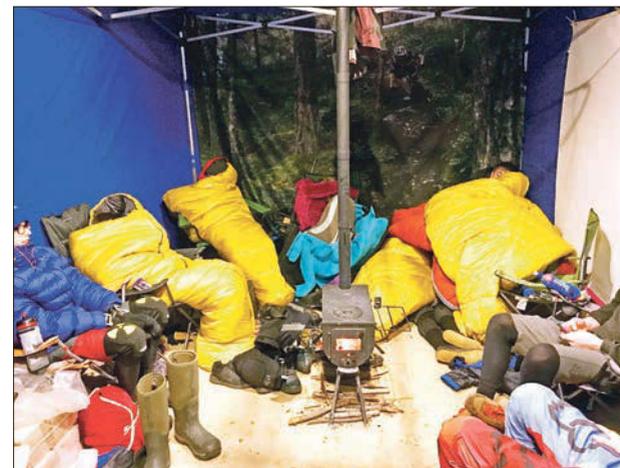


A rider sets off on a night stage of the challenge.

he has done in putting this trip together. It was a totally different event from anything that AHSMTB Club has been involved with before and was much more complicated, but Robert had all the bases covered.

Thanks also to Duncan, Greig and Darryl for the loan of generators, County Carpets for floor covering, Arran Energy for fuel, Phyllis and Ian for the transportation and Kinloch Hotel for the marquee and catering equipment.

Steve Garraway



Huddled in their sleeping bags and trying to get some sleep.



Stuart Logan prepares his bike for the challenge.



Arran riders prepare for one of the night stages.

# SPORT



## INSIDE THIS WEEK:

Strathpuffer is a true test of mettle

# Team takes on 24-hour bike endurance test

When it comes to mountain bike challenges, they don't come much tougher or more rewarding than the Strathpuffer – the legendary 24-hour mountain bike endurance event held every year in the Highlands in the middle of winter.

This year 11 members of Arran High School mountain bike club, supported by three adult supervisors, took on the challenge with some excellent performances.

The Strathpuffer24 is held at the end of January in Strathpeffer in freez-

ing temperatures, with 17 hours of darkness and miles upon miles of gruelling terrain.

It is brutal mix of ice, wind, hail, mud and snow and this year was the coldest in the 14 years it has been held.

See full report and more photos on page 23

The Arran team at the Strathpuffer24.



Hundreds of participants take part in the event.



The team tries to keep warm round the wood-burning stove.



## LAMLASH GARAGE

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