

No. 2180 Arran's Weekly Newspaper

Friday 15 May, 2020

www.arranbanner.co.uk

85p



FOUR PAGE FEATURE

Schools in lockdown

Brodick Castle to remain closed as jobs under threat

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Brodick Castle will not open to the public this year.

The National Trust for Scotland confirmed the news to the Banner this week.

However, there is still some hope that the country park will be able to open to the public after the present tight Scottish lockdown restrictions are eased.

The news came as the NTS announced a series of emergency actions designed to ensure the survival of the trust during the pandemic and its aftermath.

As a result, the trust is placing 429 of its permanent workforce, including 16 on Arran, at risk of redundancy and is preparing to launch an emergency fundraising appeal.

The decision not to open the castle this year is a huge blow to the prospect of any tourism on Arran this summer. The castle only reopened last April

after being closed for two years for fire prevention works and a reworking of the collection. Ironically its new interactive exhibits and an extended opening until Christmas saw the castle have one of its best seasons ever.

The decision not to open is a huge blow to any prospect of tourism

Now it will be Easter 2021, at the earliest, before it will reopen, with even that uncertain as only 18 NTS properties are scheduled to reopen next year, but it seems likely the Arran property will be one of them.

The opening of the country park depends on wider decisions from the government about when lockdown is lifted.

Just how important the NTS is to tourism is highlighted in figures released by the charity, which show it delivers more than £300 million of annual

economic gain to Scotland and accounts for 54 per cent of attraction visits in Ayrshire and Arran.

The trust says the magnitude of this year's expected income losses are of a level similar to the trust's current financial reserves and, without taking these actions, it would put the future and wellbeing of some of Scotland's most iconic places, including Brodick Castle and Country Park, at risk.

With no money coming through the gates, and the charity's estate and holiday accommodation closed since March to comply with government instructions, means that its income has been virtually eradicated during what is normally the busiest period for membership recruitment and property visits.

The loss of direct income has been compounded by poor stock market conditions that have depressed the value and

Continued on page two.

Roll out the barrel...



Big Davy Ballantyne is ready for his latest challenge and it involves this 50kg whisky barrel which most of us would struggle to lift. See the full story on page 3. 01_B20cask01

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Lamlash Garage

Arran almost virus clear but danger is not too far away

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk

Arran was this week continuing to escape the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

But figures from just across the water in Ayrshire showed why First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's Stay at Home message appears to be the right one for the island and the rest of Scotland at the moment.

According to the latest statement from Arran Medical Group earlier this week there have been no positive COVID-19 tests on Arran in the last two weeks and the total for the island remains five positive cases, plus a small number in the community that they were unable to test.

AMG also confirmed that there are currently no positive cases in Arran War Memorial



There are no COVID-19 patients in Arran War Memorial Hospital. 01_B42elaine01

Hospital, but says there are still people isolating at home with possible COVID symptoms and that social distancing is reducing possible spread.

On the topic of testing, the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership said: 'We are hopeful that increasing testing capacity will

become available on Arran in the coming one to two weeks and expand in the weeks after. It is very important that a robust system is in place to detect any cases that may arise when lockdown is reduced.'

However the situation is very different just across the water where mainland North

Ayrshire residents have been rated as the most vulnerable to COVID-19 in Scotland.

In a report from the Scottish Public Health Observatory, the area has been ranked as most at risk during the pandemic when considering social, clinical and demographic factors in places such as the Three Towns, Irvine and the Garnock Valley.

Central Ayrshire MP Philippa Whitford said: 'Sadly, we know North Ayrshire is home to some of the most deprived areas in the country and earlier research into COVID-19 has shown that those from lower socio-economic groups are more vulnerable to the virus.'

'This is due to a number of factors, including these groupings being more likely to have underlying health

conditions, to work in the gig economy and be forced to continue working, and live in overcrowded accommodation.'

The SNP politician added: 'It should be noted, however, that in terms of Ayrshire as a whole, this has not been reflected in either the number of cases, admissions to hospitals or, indeed, the number of deaths, which are not as high as other health board areas across the country.'

In mainland North Ayrshire at least 68 people have died after contracting the virus according to figures released by National Records of Scotland last week. A total of 75 people lost their lives in South Ayrshire, while 49 died in East Ayrshire. The victims' death certificates stated that COVID-19 contributed to or caused their loss of life.

On Monday, the Scottish Government confirmed there are now 912 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ayrshire and Arran.

Meanwhile, more than 300 NHS Ayrshire & Arran healthcare workers have tested positive for coronavirus.

Figures released by health board bosses this week show that 302 front line workers have now contracted the deadly bug. This is a rise of 28 from the previous week.

A total of 1,321 tests have been carried out on the key workers and a further 293 tests have been given to family members/ household contacts of members of staff.

Health board chiefs also confirmed that 180 inpatients who had tested positive for COVID-19 have been discharged.

Brodick Castle to remain closed as jobs under threat

Continued from page one.
dividends paid by the charity's investments, as well as a growing number of people giving up their memberships due to the property closures and personal circumstances.

The trust's total charitable income from all sources is forecast to collapse to the tune of £28 million this year, and to fall again in 2021 even if current restrictions are relaxed. This does not include estimated investment losses of £46 million due to stock market conditions.

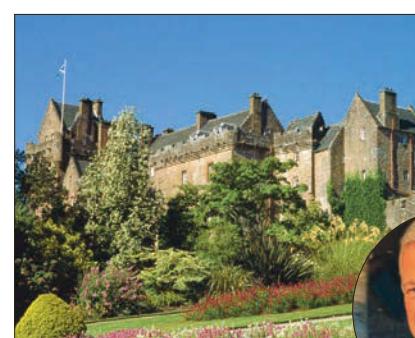
The situation was raised at First Minister's questions on Wednesday by Arran MSP Kenneth Gibson. He said: 'First Minister, 429 of 751 National Trust for Scotland

jobs, including 16 at Brodick Castle in my own constituency, are at immediate risk as the charity struggles during this pandemic.

'Although NTS has acted urgently to sell non-heritage land and property, while seeking support from grant-giving bodies, total losses could run to £74 million this year.'

'What will the Scottish Government do to ensure NTS survives, along with the often beautiful and historic heritage it protects, ranging from the haunting island of St Kilda to Bannockburn and the birthplace of Robert Burns thereby saving jobs and the National Trust's historic legacy for future generations?'

First Minister Nicola



The doors of Brodick Castle will remain closed this year; and below, trust chief executive Simon Skinner.

Sturgeon said the Scottish government would look to do what it can to assist the NTS, given its importance to Scotland.

Earlier this week trust chief executive Simon Skinner had outlined the dire situation the charity was in. He said: 'The extreme and unprecedented

public health emergency has put the charity's future in doubt.

'This is despite us running the trust in a financially prudent way, building up our reserves, and latterly taking critical decisions at the outset of this

crisis, reducing our expenditure to a minimum, foregoing the recruitment of seasonal staff, terminating temporary and fixed-term contracts and furloughing a large proportion of our permanent staff.'

'With some level of restrictions likely to apply post lockdown, and having effectively missed the busiest part of the visitor season, I see little prospect of us being able to return to more normal levels of membership, visitation and income for the rest of this year and beyond.'

'Even after we've done all we can to stave off the worst, it's crystal clear that we need radical action if we are to buy more time that will give the trust space to overcome income

loss and weather depressed economic conditions.'

'Post-lockdown, we plan to scale back our current offering to match the anticipated restrictions that will remain. We propose to initially focus

on the safe, phased reopening of a core of 27 built heritage properties around Scotland, primarily those best able to accommodate social distancing. The remainder will be placed on a care and maintenance basis, with the aim of opening a further 18 sometime next year, and the rest once there is a general upturn in the economy and the trust's fortunes.'

'Our countryside properties will open to welcome people when restrictions are lifted,' he added.

Kenneth J Gibson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Cunningham North Constituency

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, my office remains closed until further notice. However, staff and I continue to work from home full-time.
Should you require any assistance or information, please email me on kenneth.gibson.msp@parliament.scot or call 01294 833687.

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Kenneth Gibson MSP



Roll out barrel for Davy's new challenge

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Big Davy Ballantyne is used to big challenges, but his latest may be the most important of our troubled times.

For he is trying to raise awareness of mental health issues which are an increasing concern as the lockdown in Scotland continues.

Of course being Big Davy there is nothing simple or straightforward as to how he will do it. So for his latest challenge he will walk round Arran's 70-mile coastal way with a 50kg (8st) whisky barrel strapped on his back.

Davy, who will turn 59 during his latest feat, is no stranger to challenges. The Kilmory man famously dragged an anvil up Goatfell four years ago and two years ago dragged 60kg of chains up Ben Nevis. Both feats raising thousands for the JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) charity.

He had originally planning to do the cask walk for the same charity but decided that at this time the Samaritans were the most worthy cause as they are in desperate need of funds during the coronavirus pandemic.

Big Davy, who is now the groundsman at the Lagg Distillery, which has supplied the whisky barrel, said: 'I personally know people myself who are struggling during these trying times and I think it is important to let everyone know that the Samaritans are always there to help them.'

He has not set a cash target for the cask walk since he says the most important is raising awareness but a JustGiving page has been started titled: Big Davy's Barrel Challenge for Samaritans Emergency Appeal.

The challenge will start for Davy on Monday May 18 and finish 10 days later, after he takes the weekend off in the middle to recover.

Photographer Fraser Aitchison will be there with him again to record the event on camera and to give Davy a laugh.

He will start at Kildonnan, the rockiest and most difficult section of the route, and head north to Blackwaterfoot walking anti-clockwise round the island. If you see him be sure to give him a toot or a wave of encouragement.

'We know that these times are financially tough for an awful lot of people and we understand that donating to the Samaritans is not possible for all. Coronavirus is impacting all of our lives. This crisis is the biggest challenge Samaritans has ever faced,' Davy said.

A spokeswoman for the Samaritans Scotland said: 'Before coronavirus hit, 20,000 Samaritans volunteers were answering a call for help every six seconds. This could be someone you know, family or friends in urgent need but unable to talk to anyone in the middle of the night. It is more important than ever for Samaritans to be there 24/7, 365 days a year for those who need us.'

'But the Samaritans' helpline is feeling the pressure. They're likely to experience more people struggling to cope or in crisis and they may have less volunteers to help answer calls for help. Their teams are working hard to ensure that we can still be here 24/7, 365 days a year for those who are in crisis. Your donation to Samaritans Emergency Appeal will help them reach those who are struggling to cope. It will help Samaritans recruit more volunteers and work faster on different ways to be there. Change the life of someone who desperately needs them.'

To donate just type Big Davy into the JustGiving search page.

See Davy in 20 years ago this week where he is, of course, helping to raise money for charity.



Big Davy with the 50kg whisky barrel he will carry round Arran.

By staying at home, you're saving lives. Let's not undo it now.

To protect ourselves and our NHS the advice in Scotland is staying very much the same. This is because the evidence is telling us it's too early to make significant changes.

So the only change to the advice in Scotland is that you can now go outside to exercise, near your home, more than once a day. You should continue to stay two metres apart from others outside your household and wash your hands when you get home. You're doing a fantastic job of following the advice.

Let's not undo it now.



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Shiskine shows its shining

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk

While Arran is in lockdown, this has brought to the fore some incredible community spirit around the island, none more so than in Shiskine Valley, where voluntary support rallied holistically before even the lockdown came in to being on March 23.

The local Shiskine and Machrie Senior Citizens Committee sent support messages to all in the district, while local shops have been outstanding in their efforts to help their customers.

The Harbour Shop, The Arran Butcher and A & C Cameron, Post Office and licensed grocer, offered home deliveries from the outset, and where possible these deliveries are collated.

Although the butcher has

Shiskine Valley may be in lockdown, but the community spirit remains unlocked!

taken the decision to close to the public, the Harbour Shop and Post Office remain open, and social distancing is managed at all times.

Within the Post Office, friendly staff ensure only two customers are permitted at any one time, and residents form an orderly, distanced queue outside to get in for groceries or to use the Post Office itself; they have also maintained their full post office service

in Lochranza and Kilmory. George Grassie at Blackwater Bakehouse has built a bread shed where you can buy without contact if necessary.

Blackwaterfoot Lodge and Arran Meals2Go are both offering takeaway food delivered to your door over the weekends.

The surgery at Shiskine has its own dispensary, so to avoid collection of hundreds of prescriptions from the surgery, Blackwaterfoot Post Office receives them in large boxes, and co-ordinates with local

volunteers to distribute as soon as possible. Volunteers can also be seen delivering papers and messages throughout the valley and beyond.

Local residents have put their daily exercise to great use, clearing the playing field, planting shrubs, dredging the burn, and painting and mending benches and fences. Residents have also collected litter as they walk or cycle.

Twice a week, Shiskine has Dancing on the Doorstep, as three popular tunes are played at full volume across the valley

for people to dance to. The music is usually selected by those who are having birthdays, and it has proved very popular, as has Thursday's Clap for Key Workers. Last Thursday saw the Shiskine farmers show their support for the NHS and all front line workers in a superb parade of 20 tractors, festooned with banners and rainbows in a parade around the valley.

Shiskine Valley may be in

lockdown, but the community

spirit has definitely remained

unlocked!



Donald Murchie shows his support for the NHS at the tractor parade.



The bread shed at the Blackwater Bakehouse.

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Left, a smiling Janis Murchie with her 'thank you' poster on her tractor; below, DG Weir brought one his tractor collection to the parade; below centre, a total of 20 tractors took part in the parade seen here parked in the Kilnoch Hotel car park; and bottom, this vintage tractor has a notice which says it all.



Arran in a Day

Pupils at Arran High School will be helping to raise funds for the Arran Foodbank this weekend by taking part in the Arran in a Day challenge.

They will each be walking, running or cycling 6k on average each tomorrow (Saturday) and collectively they will cover 90km – the distance around Arran. They had hoped to raise £100, but have already more than doubled their target.

Organised by Jen Christie and Eileen Gregg, Mrs Christie said: 'Please support Arran's Foodbank by sponsoring these pupils who are taking part in the Arran in a Day challenge. This is a fantastic cause and the pupils, who are covering the distance around Arran in a day, would really appreciate your donation. Thanks from the high school and foodbank. To donate visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/arran-foodbank



The money raised will go to Arran Foodbank.



Join Scotland's new team and help beat coronavirus.



We have a number of roles in our newly established Contact & Trace Team. We are looking for people with a wide range of skills, strengths and talents to help us in the fight against coronavirus. Lives are at risk and time is of the essence, and that's why we need you to register your interest before 22nd May. To find out more about the roles, the competitive NHS pay and benefits, visit careers.nhs.scot/coronavirus-covid-19-recruitment

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LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@arranbanner.co.uk or The Editor, Arran Banner, Brodick, Isle of Arran KA27 8AJ

Virus research

News of interesting research popped into the Banner email inbox this week which I thought worth sharing with you.

During the pandemic I have heard only the odd passing reference to SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – which also started in China and spread to more than 8,000 people worldwide and killed almost 800, 17 years ago. Yet SARS is also a species of coronavirus and it is the virus Sars-CoV-2 which causes COVID-19.

The research is being carried out by the University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research which has been trying to find out if the present virus has mutated into different types.

There have been suggestions that more than one type of SARS-CoV-2 may be circulating in the pandemic, with one strain being more aggressive and causing more serious illness than the other.

However, using analysis of SARS-CoV-2 virus samples from the pandemic, the Glasgow scientists have shown that only one type of the virus is currently circulating and their research has been published in the journal *Virus Evolution*.

Instead, it would appear that viruses, including the one causing COVID-19, naturally accumulate mutations – or changes – in their genetic sequence as they spread through populations. However, most of these changes will have no effect on the virus biology or the aggressiveness of the disease they cause. But tracking these changes can help scientists better understand the virus pandemic and how COVID-19 is spreading in the community.

Thought for the week

'I cried to you for help, O Lord my God, and you healed me; you kept me from the grave.' Psalm 30:2

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Clapping a little louder

Sir,

Adulation and appreciation abounds, and rightly so, for all hospital teams encountering the colossal caring challenges presented by coronavirus. But room must also be found for first-class caring on Arran.

On Wednesday last week my wife developed abdominal pain. By 9pm it had become unbearable and, reluctantly, we pressed our 'alert' button. The ambulances were very busy, we were told, and a helicopter flying overhead proved why, but someone would come shortly.

Within 30 minutes, two standby carers arrived and, having conducted a detailed examination, phoned Arran War Memorial Hospital with details of the situation. The GP on duty would call 'soon', we were told, and soon the duty doctor arrived and, following consultation, called the ambulance.

Within the short time of the carers arriving and the doctor leaving, the ambulance arrived and my wife was soon being attended to in hospital and was back home by 2.15am, completely pain free.

The whole 'operation' had taken a little over five hours and throughout we had experienced from everyone involved an exceptionally cheerful, efficient, patient and professional service.

Next day, Thursday, the morning and evening carers (angels) came as usual and the efficiency of the whole organisation was encapsulated by the unexpected call of the district nurse, just to make sure everything was well.

That evening at 8pm we clapped and banged a little longer and louder to include all Arran carers. Think of them and clap and bang a little louder next Thursday at 8pm.

One last thought – why can't all church bells be heard each week joining in the thanksgiving chorus?

Yours,

Name and address supplied, but withheld on request.

Deforestation woes

Sir,

In the last few months, there has been a noticeable acceleration in deforestation across Arran.

It is shocking to discover iconic walks and famous pathways turned into vast oceans of tree trunks scattered about and left to rot without a care for the beauty of the island.

Walking above Whiting Bay or Brodick used to be a joy of bird songs and the rustle of forests. Now it is the continual sound of chainsaws and

huge timber lorries hurtling along new Forestry Commission roads – relabelled in tourism parlance as new 'cycle ways'.

The ultimate irony is to read the billboard at the foot of Glenashdale Falls proclaiming the rich habitation for red squirrels and yet find within 10 minutes one emerges onto a blasted desert of ruination which will take many, many years of replanting.

Instead of a tree-lined gentle pathway up to Loch Garbad you walk among a sea of the decaying timbers more akin to a battleground from Lord of the Rings. Granted these pines were planted for commercial use but who is answerable for such scarring of a beautiful island at such breakneck pace?

And when the tourism industry is green lit to finally begin again, will the Forestry Commission and other parties be held accountable? Visitors will instead choose other islands where they can replenish their post-coronavirus spirits with landscapes rich in greenery and wildlife rather than the brown and ashen greys now spreading across this island.

Yours,

James Kent, Whiting Bay.

Holidays of bygone days

Sir,

Colin Bowes' series of articles of past holidays on Arran, which ran over three weeks in the Banner last month, brought back some wonderful memories.

Like Colin, my mother rented a house in Hamilton Terrace for a month in July every year. It was some of the happiest times in my childhood. I can still remember packing the big trunk and sending it on. A taxi took us to Ardrossan.

It was a really lovely harbour then with wonderful steam trains.

Those summers were always warm. I thought Arran was the most beautiful place I had ever seen and to this day I still feel the same, even though I have travelled all over the world.

I wonder if Colin remembers the children's special service mission on the beach. We had some great times there. They built a pulpit of sand and sang choruses, all very innocent times. They also held games in Lamlash field and had sausage sizzles. I can remember climbing Dunfion and taking the boat over to Holy Isle. It was so beautiful.

The place to hang out was Lamlash Cafe, a great place. The juke box was the big attraction and I remember playing Martha Reeves and the Vandellas.

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The Editor welcomes letters for publication on this page. The Editor reserves the right to shorten, amend or to refuse to print them. 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. Email editor@arranbanner.co.uk Emailed letters can only be considered if they have a name, full address and phone number.

Last year I was in Hawaii and I met Martha in a club where she was singing. I told her I first heard her songs in a little cafe on a Scottish island called Arran.

She thought that was great. I have so many great memories of Arran and hope to return when this awful crisis is over.

Yours,
Irene Morrison, Woking.

War memories

The VE Day 75th Anniversary commemorations have helped many people remember family connections to the conflict.

I am currently gathering information for a book about the war on Arran and in the Firth of Clyde. I would be very grateful for any help your readers can provide with stories and photographs they might like to see published relating to the island during that period.

If anyone would like to discuss this further please contact me on 01770 860427 or email ctur282388@aol.com.

Yours,
Colin Turbett, Shiskine.

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All in, all together

Stay safe , stay better informed.

The news you can trust

THE VAST majority of the people across the UK have taken the official advice to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

People are hungry for accurate information about how to protect themselves, but following the official advice and ignoring the swirling mass of uninformed conjecture, opinion and speculation is not always easy.

However, there are ways to identify who to trust, and who to ignore.

Similarly, there are ways to identify the small but persistent group of unscrupulous individuals who have decided that they want to use the pandemic to try to make financial gain through fraud.

There have been a lot of examples of false information and attempts at fraud.

For example, holding your breath for 10 seconds is not a test for coronavirus, gargling water for 15 seconds is not a cure and phone masts cannot cause coronavirus.

There have also been comments and suggestions from people claiming to be medical experts who are simply not.

Fraudsters will use any opportunity - including the current

There are so many sources of news and information about coronavirus, but which ones should you trust to help you stay safe, protect the NHS and save lives?

Coronavirus fraud and misinformation are barriers to the nation continuing the progress it

has made toward coming to terms with, and beating, the virus.

We take a look at how you can protect yourself, your friends and your family from being tricked into believing news and information that is not true, or becoming a victim of fraud.



pandemic - to try to trick people out of their money.

There have been examples of fake texts claiming to be sent from the Government alerting people they have received a fine for breaking social distancing rules. Some people and even businesses have been

tricked into paying for protective face masks and hand sanitizers from companies that don't exist

There have also been messages from criminals sending messages to trick people into thinking they are getting genuine offers of financial support from the government.

At the same time hackers are stepping up attempts to access people's networks and steal their log in details and passwords.

However, if you take sensible precautions, you can quickly spot signs of fraud and identify the facts from the fiction.

Sharing the right information could save lives.



TRUSTED SOURCE: Journalists provide accurate information.

How you can spot false information



FALSE FACTS: Check the facts about coronavirus on official websites.

WHEN IT is shared, false information can take on a life of its own and have some serious consequences.

It can lead to health scares, false accusations and potentially damaging hoax stories. Recently there has been a lot of this kind of false information about coronavirus.

It's not always easy to spot, so use this checklist to cut through the chatter.

SOURCE

Rely on official sources for medical and safety information. Check the facts about coronavirus on official websites.

HEADLINE

Headlines don't always tell the full story. Always read to the end before you share articles about coronavirus.

ANALYSE

Analyse the facts. If something sounds unbelievable, it very well might be. Independent fact-checking services are correcting false information about coronavirus every day.

VERIFIED SOURCES

You can visit the following websites for verified, trusted sources of information that will help you stay safe.

Visit the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/
You can also get information via the Public Health England website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england
For other information regarding the coronavirus restrictions on travel and much more, visit the Government website at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

RETCHED

Watch out for misleading pictures and videos in stories about coronavirus. They might be edited, or show an unrelated place or event.

ERRORS

Look out for mistakes. Errors might mean the information is false. Official guidance about coronavirus will have been carefully checked.

Journalists are trained to ask right questions

Regional newspapers such as this one employ fully qualified journalists who are trained to ask the right questions and share accurate information in a simple and understandable way.

They are at the forefront of providing trusted news and helping you stay safe.

The best source of trusted local news from, and about, your community is through this newspaper and its website.

You can find all the local coronavirus news, updates and information on the website and via the newspaper's social media channels.

SHARE CAUTION

Be careful what you share, because things are not always what they seem online.

Protect yourself and your family from misinformation and fraud by taking care when online, and use the website sharechecklist.gov.uk

Checklist to help fight cyber fraud

The Government has a checklist to help people protect themselves from cyber fraud:

Take a breath - a moment - before you part with money or personal information. It sounds simple, but this alone could end up preventing fraud from taking place.

Ensure you are using the latest software, apps and operating systems on your phones, tablets and laptops and update them regularly.

And if you get an unexpected or suspicious email or text message, don't click on the attachment or message.

Don't be afraid to challenge messages and messengers. It's okay to refuse or ignore requests for your money or details if you are suspicious - only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

The police and banks will never ask you to withdraw money or transfer it to a different account. Neither will they ask you to reveal your full banking password or PIN.

You can check that requests are genuine by using a known number or email address to contact organisations directly. And if you think you have fallen victim to a scam, then contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud.

You can report suspicious texts by forwarding the original message to 7726, which spells SPAM on your keypad.

Co-op recruiting a Member Pioneer to help Arran communities

As part of its drive to support communities on Arran, the Co-op is searching for people to work with good causes and vulnerable people.

The successful Member Pioneer will receive full training and support as they help groups and individuals during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond. The new position forms part of a drive to recruit 1,000 Pioneers across the country.

Leading the new nationwide recruitment drive, Russell Gill, head of co-operative and local engagement at the Co-op said: 'We're looking for people who have the passion to bring communities together, believe in the power of co-operation and who hold the well-being of their community at the forefront of their mind. This has never been more important than now.'

To apply to be a Member Pioneer, visit jobs.coop.co.uk/member-pioneers. The role is 16 hours each month. Closing date is Wednesday May 20.

Pandemic sees McLellan Arts Festival postponed

This year's McLellan Arts Festival has been postponed until 2021 to the disappointment of art lovers across the island and beyond.

In a statement, which had not been entirely unexpected, organisers said: 'It is with great sadness we at Arran Theatre and Arts Trust have decided to postpone this year's McLellan Arts Festival. We have been watching the developing situation closely and have concluded it would be risky and irresponsible to hold a festival under the current circumstances.'

We've been working with all our artists and venues to ensure we can present this year's programme at next year's event, a programme which will include a 'Come and Sing Mozart Requiem' and is one we are very much looking forward to sharing with you. Our new dates are Thursday August 26 to Sunday September 5, 2021.

The Wee Mac Arran Children's Book Festival will take place the week following on September 10 and 11.

'We also want to take this opportunity to send a great deal of love to all of those affected by COVID-19 and especially to the amazing people at the NHS and all the essential workers who are keeping the rest of us safe and supplied.'

'Thank you for your continued support. We hope you are all keeping healthy and safe during these times and we are very much looking forward to seeing everyone again when we can.'

In the meantime, as reported in last week's Banner, Arran Theatre and Arts Trust is continuing its work on the establishment of the new Arts Heritage Trail for the island. For more details and information on how you can get involved visit www.arranartsheritagetrail.com



A scene from the Opera Bohemia production of The Merry Widow, one of the highlights of last year's festival.

Nellany
SOLICITORS & CO LLP

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Coronavirus: Advice for individuals and families



Our usual ways of working may have changed but we are still here to help you and your family.

For any advice or assistance regarding legal matters call 01294 464175 or visit our website at nellanysolicitors.com to see our full range of legal services



Michael Nellany



Rhona Nellany



Gordon Ghee

Bored and Stuck at Home?

Given most of us are self-isolating why not use this time to start your research into air source heating and find out if it's suitable for your home.

The Government's Renewable Heat Incentive grant can cover as much as 75% of the total cost.

And the Scottish Government additional funding package has just been renewed for another year.

Arrange a quote from your home in minutes.

To access the survey simply visit our TK Murray Facebook Page and click on the link "Air Source Heat Pump Survey" or email me on Norman.paterson@tkmurray.co.uk and I will send you the link.

Once I have this information I can email you a report for your home within five days. Then if that is of interest to you I can arrange to call round once travel has been deemed safe again.

- 186 systems installed on Arran in the past three years
- Most installations completed within two days.
- Full first hand help and assistance with all the paperwork.

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07912 346360

2 U.P. Road, Kilsyth, Glasgow, G65 0BH.
Telephone: (01236) 730 579
FAX: (01236) 730 579
E-mail: info@tkmurray.co.uk

Waverley boilers fitted but summer season uncertain

Plans to get steamer sailing again under constant review

The Waverley has had two new boilers fitted at a cost of £2.3 million, completing a major refit.

However, when the last seagoing paddle steamer in the world will be seen in waters around Arran remains uncertain.

It had been feared the 72-year-old vessel would never sail again but more than 8,500 people donated to a fundraising appeal, backed by the Scottish government and the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society. Each boiler, weighing 21 tonnes, is in place, but work to complete the steam installation and to rebuild the boiler room is continuing, but at a much-reduced pace due to the many consequences of the COVID-19 restrictions. Electrical installation has paused completely for the same reasons.

The Waverley went into the James Watt Dock in Greenock in March for her annual visit which saw her hull painted and additional work completed as well as the boiler refit.

A spokesman for Waverley

Excursions said: 'The timing of the tightly-managed project to return Waverley to service has now become hard to predict. We understand how the friends, supporters and loyal customers of Waverley have been looking forward to the 2020 sailing programme and just to know Waverley is sailing once more.'

'The uncertainty due to the pandemic, especially around social gathering, means we don't know whether we can welcome passengers on board in 2020. We are keeping plans under constant review and waiting to see how and when government guidance evolves.'

'Everyone is working hard to return Waverley to service and looks forward to welcoming passengers back aboard. As soon as a plan becomes possible or if we get to the point where it is simply not feasible we'll issue further information.'

'What is certain, with her two new boilers, new generators and new switchboards in place and her annual drydocking complete, Waverley will steam again!'



The Waverley's shiny new boilers.



The Waverley in dry dock at Greenock.



The Waverley off Lochranza, but will she sail this summer?
Photograph: Stuart Whiston.

Coronavirus Help is here for those that need it most.

Staying at home stops the spread of coronavirus, and some need extra help.

If you:

- Have received a letter advising you to stay at home for the next 12 weeks
- Are a disabled person
- Receive mental health support
- Have dementia
- Are over 70, pregnant or received the flu vaccine for health reasons

We've created a helpline to assist you with essential things like food deliveries, medication or practical and emotional support.

If you can't get this help from family, friends or neighbours, call now on **0800 111 4000** or textphone **0800 111 4114**

Or go to readyscotland.org for more information.

CORONAVIRUS
**STAY HOME
PROTECT
THE NHS
SAVE LIVES**



The challenges of change that

The COVID-19 global pandemic can overwhelm all other topics. Anything discussed is coloured by its current and future impact on social and economic life.

As such, the Arran Economic Group (AEG) had to consider the relevance of its annual 2019/2020 report at this time.

Its conclusion was it is necessary to outline the significant work that has been done over the past year and the work in progress on essential infrastructure and services.

These will be required in any scenario we can envisage on the other side of the crisis. Here chairman Tom Tracey gives a summary of the report.

Arran Economic Group (AEG) was created to optimise planned infrastructure changes and initiate others as required, to support a sustainable island community and economy. This remains our objective.

The plan remains the same; retain and attract the workforce necessary to sustain our island community by creating and/or promoting an environmentally aware and welcoming community that is digitally and physically connected, with affordable accommodation, competitive education and caring and competent health and social care services. Arran is making good progress on most fronts.

An overview of 2019/20 shows reasonable growth in the economy to the turn of the year. Then, a combination of weather, ferry service and COVID-19 caused, first a stall and then a collapse, leaving revenue growth flat, at best, for the last fiscal year. Shortage of affordable housing continues to place a burden on employment in all sectors.

The age demographic continues to place a strain on health and social care services. However, this older age group also provide the core of many voluntary ser-



Chairman Tom Tracey accepts there will be challenges ahead.

vices that hold communities together. Continuing on the positive, Quality of Life on Arran remains within the top 10 per cent of Scottish local authorities and our last population estimate showed a slight increased, reversing a 17-year downward trend.

On affordable housing, North Ayrshire Council houses have started in Brodick - currently suspended - and a £3.6m grant from the Rural and Island Housing Fund to support the

development of another 43 affordable houses will further increase the supply. However, the current crisis has caused delays in private financing and we are taking longer to secure funding, although we will.

Our Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has passed the latest hurdles in integrating organisation and infrastructure. More to be done but very much on track. Clearly this is the service we are depending on most at the current time and we pay tribute to their dedication, care and competence.

Arran's communities are largely held together by volunteers, as highlighted in last week's Banner. Arran Community and Volunteer Service (ACVS) fulfils the essential role of supporting these groups from the very young to the not so young. Continued integration with HSCP activities and plans provides added focus and resource to the area most needing it.

Superfast Broadband uptake continues to expand to 70 per cent of Arran households, the second highest uptake in the Highlands and Islands. We also have two sites providing 4G plus Scottish Futures Trust providing a service to Kilmory. In addition, a significant number of locations have direct fibre to the premises, with more to follow.

The environment has always had many champions on Arran but it is worth mentioning two of them.

The work of COAST in setting up the Marine Protection Area (MPA) in Lamlash was again scientifically vindicated last year with the research

Eco Savvy will play a major part in helping Arran define its environmental future. Here we see shop manager Val Waite and project co-ordinator Ruth McLaren at one of the group's events last year.



showing increased quantity and variety of marine species within the MPA and the immediate surrounding areas. This is game changing work that puts Arran at the forefront of marine environmental protection and regeneration.

On the land, Eco Savvy has been instrumental in driving several key initiatives on waste, travel, energy, food and general understanding. These initiatives have had a measurable difference by highlighting the problem and promoting the solutions. They will play a major part in helping us define our environmental future.

Physical connectivity to the island remains a serious problem with no clear timetabled solution. It was hard to imagine at the beginning of this, when we had a collapsing pier, zero Superfast Broadband and limited mobile connectivity. As well as no plans for additional affordable housing and a sub optimal HSCP, that a ferry service, with more than 150 years of history, would be the hardest problem to solve.

However, that is the case. Arran Ferry Committee is working tirelessly at all levels, including ministerial. The results suggest the governmental and quasi-independent structures that provide our service, operate independently and sub optimally on problems and decisions that affect our service, making them unfit for purpose. This is now a real risk

'We need to ensure we have the right plans, processes and governance in place as we exit this period to ensure Arran is in control of defining and managing priorities'

to community cohesion and business development. Further work is required to match the seriousness of the situation and we should do this together.

Lastly, using historic data, we projected the potential economic landscape of Arran in 2030 which showed an annual increase of 100,000 more visitors spending an additional £20m with 50,000 more traffic movements. The expanded group identified 10 programmes to match these challenges.

Granted, the current crisis will affect these estimates, with a worst case 80 per cent reduction in tourist income this year, assuming restrictions of some kind remain in place till the autumn. However, it is unclear what effect the current crisis will have in the longer-term attractiveness of Arran.

It is reasonable to assume, as people lose their fear of human proximity, they will revert in even greater number to an en-

vironment that is clear, clean, open and welcoming. As such, the Arran community needs to be part of the decision on when and how this happens.

In conclusion, with the public sector at full stretch and much of the private sector on furlough, there is no clear way through this without significant cost, by every measure. We need to take care of our self, our community and our businesses. In tackling the last two, the current crisis colours everything, the work done and the work to be done. However, in most cases, it validates both.

We need to ensure we have the right plans, processes and governance in place as we exit this period to ensure Arran is in control of defining and managing priorities. We started this work in the public meeting in January and it is something we can and will continue to work on, with your help.

As we move through this period and everything appears to change, the fundamentals remain the same. We have an excellent environment, community and infrastructure and we are fortunate. The challenge will be deciding the changes we want to embrace, while retaining Arran as this special place to live, work and visit.



An Openreach van at the No 1 superfast broadband box in Brodick. 01_B12openreach01

SUBSCRIBE
www.arranbanner.co.uk/subscriptions

It lie ahead for Arran



Work was suspended, shortly after starting, on the 34 new affordable council houses at Brathwic Terrace in Brodick.



Signs of recovery thanks to the work of COAST as researcher Éilís Crimmins holds the largest Arran lobster recorded – 141mm male in the Lamlash No Take Zone. Copyright COAST.

IF IT'S URGENT, IT'S URGENT

GP surgeries and hospitals are still here for you.

If you have an urgent, non-coronavirus health concern, please don't wait.
Promptly seek help for emergencies, present possible cancer signs and
attend immunisation appointments.



Memories of the hunt for 'Baldie's Stanes'

The Druid Stone at Auchancar on the island's west coast.

Are you a current or former Postmaster?

If you held a contract with Post Office and experienced shortfalls which you believe were caused by previous versions of Horizon, you may be eligible to make a claim.

If you wish to register a claim, the Historical Shortfall Scheme is open until 14 August 2020.

Cases will be assessed by an independent advisory panel.

For details and to submit a claim please visit
onepostoffice.co.uk/scheme

POST
OFFICE

Our recent feature on how the Monument Monitor project was looking for old photographs to help monitor Machrie Moor prompted reader Elizabeth Kerr Dale to share her memories of the Machrie Stones, in particular, the Druid Stone at Auchancar.

Brought up in Auchancar (Achedh a' Charragh – Field of the Standing Stone) in Machrie at Druid Farm, thus called, if maybe a wee bit inaccurately, for the towing Neolithic 3,000 year old granite monolith, reputedly second tallest in Scotland, is close to the farmhouse.

As children, we played around its base beside its fallen, broken companion (More than an ancient 'oops' moment, seeing the impressive tonnage toppling and splitting after the huge operation of getting it there?).

With a more adult outlook, we speculated, along with our dad, on the purpose of such a major project and concluded it must have come a considerable distance as the nearest natural source of solid granite stone was high on Ben Nuis, central to the island.

One day my father, Donald Craig, and his brother Baldie (Archibald) of The Glaic, headed off on the long trek to that area to gather outlying sheep and got caught up in thick mist, causing Baldie to stray from his usual route with the need to stop until it cleared. Sitting looking at his immediate surroundings, he recognised those particular rocks and boulders were very different, having sharply angled edges along their considerable lengths, unlike the rounded glaciation hewn mass of the rest of the area. It occurred to him, at once, he had stumbled on the source of the Druid Stone material.

Word of the find went round and reached Professor Archie Roy of Glasgow University, parapsychology and paranormal and frequent visitor to Machrie, who immediately expressed a wish to see the stones and, with Baldie as the guide, set off for the heights but, alas, in the vastness of the boulder field, he could not relocate them.

Meantime, word had also reached the late Stewart Lambie MBE of Glen Sherraig, long-time leader of the mountain rescue team and with great knowledge of the crags. He was determined to

keep an eye open and, indeed, was eventually successful in finding the elusive stones only to, temporarily, 'lose' them again but did, finally, fix the location and underlined future recognition by spraying red sheep marker on them.

Meanwhile, in conversation with the late Dr Hugh McKerral of Lochranza Field Study Centre and a keen archaeologist, I mentioned the Druid Stone which inspired him to visit and, thereafter, telephoned in excitement to say the bearings he took closely aligned the tip with the top Tor Righ Mor overlooking the Machrie Stone Circles and, moreover, he was convinced it was hand-hewn and, in his opinion, he could clearly discern the stone axe marks.

With keen anticipation, Alex and I accepted Stewart's invitation and set off on the long tramp up to the site – and what an interesting day it proved to be for us all. On reaching the spot, Stewart announced: 'I think we will just call them 'Baldie's Stanes' and as we studied the various groups, he remarked at one lot. 'Do you think this would be the showroom?' as Alex feigned lifting a large slab and, indeed, it is hard to resist the theory of connections between the mountain and the low ground sites and, so, it seems likely that after about 3,000 years, one of the Druid Stone's secrets has been uncovered, but what of the rest?

How did they transport the massive stone over such a long arduous route? Log rollers or expendable mass manpower? What engineering skills went into the erection to ensure its continuing vertical status over the millennia? And most intriguing: Why? Why? Why? What was its role in what seems to have been quite a busy place, judging by the plethora of flint chippings and actual ancient arrowheads culled during the cultivation, so possibly of ritualistic importance.

But it seems it is not quite ready to yield any more information meantime, as it continues to stand implacable overlooking Machrie Bay.

Arran farmers' key role in carbon-footprint reduction

Arran could help serve as a blueprint for Scottish agriculture to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Farmers on the island are working together to try to reduce their carbon footprint using AgreCalc – an SAC Consulting tool to benchmark and measure methane, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions.

The Soil Association Scotland-led Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) group of 15 farmers and affiliates is backed by Alexander Pirie of SAC Consulting, part of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

Mr Pirie and one of Net Zero Arran's farmers, David Henderson, will be among the speakers in a free online RISS workshop – Futureproof your Farm – on Wednesday May 20. The workshop is designed to help farmers develop business



David Henderson of Kilpatrick Farm will speak at online workshop.

ideas in response to COVID-19 and climate change.

Arran features a broad range of diverse farmland, including

rolling hills, rugged moorland and quality in-bye for grassland and cereal production. At

166 square miles, it is also host

'My hope is we can reduce the carbon footprint of the island if we can quantify it and that by identifying common areas for improvement, we can take a collaborative approach.'

to many facets of the broader Scottish agricultural industry, including beef and sheep farming, cropping, dairying, forestry and a collection of small-scale fruit and vegetable units.

Mr Henderson farms beef and sheep at Kilpatrick Farm. He said: 'I have done our carbon audits and our emissions were good partly due to our

stocking rates. But I'm in the group to learn. We know future farm programmes will be based around carbon footprints, whether we like it or not, so the question is, how do we adapt? Farmers need to work together more, and be more open about the good and the bad.'

Mr Pirie said: 'My hope is we can reduce the carbon footprint of the island if we can quantify it and that by identifying common areas for improvement, we can take a collaborative approach.'

'By tackling issues around farm efficiency and best practice as well as the environment and climate change, with an emphasis on building strong local community engagement, Arran could contribute in some small way to the solution for Scotland.'

'This is a broad project, building and expanding on

data and processes from the Beef Efficiency Scheme and the Farming for a Better Climate Initiative and gives us scope to involve Taste of Arran or the local Eco Savvy, for example. We're also looking at the link between farm businesses, processors and retailers. RISS has given me the scope to get everyone in the room.'

As well as Net Zero Arran, the online workshop will hear from Scottish Apples' Roger Howison, with facilitator Amanda Brown of the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society and Colleen McCulloch of RISS.

The online workshop, Futureproof your Farm: How to adapt your farm business to the COVID-19 and climate change crises, takes place on Wednesday May 20 from 9.30am to 11.30am. Register at <https://bit.ly/FutureproofYourFarm>

LOOKING FOR HELP DURING CORONAVIRUS?

Please cut out and keep this page of useful contacts for use when you may need them.

National Assistance Helpline
(Open office hours Monday to Friday)
Call: 0800 111 4000
Text phone service: 0800 111 4114

To help people at increased risk access essential help if they do not have family or other support.

Health
www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
0800 028 2816 for general information only

NHS 24: Call 111 if symptoms worsen or if fever for 7+ days

Shielding local support:
www.gov.scot/covid-shielding-contacts

Feeling anxious or depressed?
NHS Inform:
www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus-mental-wellbeing

NHS 24: Call 111
www.clearyourhead.scot

Breathing Space:
www.breathingspace.scot
0800 83 85 87

SAMH:
0344 800 0550
Samaritans Scotland Helpline:
116 123 / jo@samaritans.org
Advice for pregnant women
www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby or contact your midwife if concerned.

Social welfare and financial help
Citizens Advice Scotland:
www.cas.org.uk
0800 028 1456
Struggling with energy bills?
Home Energy Scotland:
0808 808 2282
Consumer issues
Advice Direct Scotland:
www.coronavirusadvice.scot
0808 800 9060

Employment rights advice

www.acas.org.uk
Helpline: 0300 123 1100

Your rights at work

www.stuc.org.uk
0141 337 8100

For business support

www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot
Helpline: 0300 303 0660

Advice for parents

www.parentclub.scot/coronavirus

Parentline Scotland:

08000 28 22 33

The Money Talk Team:

0800 085 7145

Information for young people

www.young.scot/coronavirus

Information for older people

www.agescotland.org.uk
0800 12 44 222

Dementia – Alzheimer Scotland

www.alzscot.org
Helpline: 0808 808 3000

Scottish Autism Advice Line

www.scottishautism.org
01259 222022

Domestic Abuse Helpline

www.safer.scot
Helpline: 0800 027 1234

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk
Helpline: 08088 01 03 02

 **Healthier Scotland**
Scottish Government

 **NHS**
SCOTLAND

We're here to help on Arran

This list of business services has been compiled by the Arran Community and Voluntary Service (ACVS) to assist everyone who is self-isolating or unwell. There are a range of food delivery services and other resources to keep you busy while staying at home. Please bear in mind that although most of the deliveries are free, the businesses are doing this by goodwill and if you are placing an order be considerate of volume vs cost. Thanks to all concerned for providing information and adapting what they do in these challenging times. Shop local, support your community!

Scotland's Citizen's Advice Helpline will provide advice to the whole of Scotland. Tel: 0800 028 1456.

Message from pharmacy

Please do not hand in repeat prescriptions at this time. Instead telephone the surgery order line on 01770 600516. Order all items on your repeat and collect from here in no less than four working days

FOOD:

Lochranza Centre

Hot meal orders delivered between the hours of 5pm and 7pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday (please do not go to the centre, phone on 01770 830637/615). Payment should be made through their just giving page. Phone for details. They can pick up shopping for people from Pirnmill Stores or the Co-op if you phone the stores direct and place the order. For any other assistance anyone in Pirnmill /Lochranza /Catacol can phone the centre and they will try to help.

Pirnmill Shop

Grocery provision orders to be picked up or delivered via the following means: Order via telephone: 850235 or email: pirnmillpo@gmail.com – Facebook message: www.facebook.com/pirnmillvillagestore/ Payments by card over the phone or by bank transfer, the bank details for this are as follows Name: Pirnmill Village Store – sort code: 83-23-13, account no: 00601644.

Woolleys of Arran Bakery Shop, Brodick

Shops are now closed to public. Fresh bread, rolls, potato scone and frozen pies and quiche can be ordered and delivered to Brodick and Lamlash. Order via telephone – 302280 by 11am for next day delivery or contact via Facebook messenger.

Co-op, Brodick

Groceries for home delivery, call the store to order. For vulnerable and self-isolating residents. Order via telephone – 302515 or email elizabeth.mclean@coop.co.uk (preferred) including your name, address, telephone number and membership details – it may take up to one day to be called back. Delivery schedule: Monday: Corrie, Sannox, Glen Estate, Brodick. Tuesday: Lamlash, Cordon, Whiting Bay. Wednesday: from Whiting Bay to Blackwaterfoot. Thursday: Lochranza, Pirnmill, Machrie. Friday: Brodick and surrounding areas.

Foodshare at the Co-op, Brodick and Lamlash

Short-life orange label food (use by and best before) will be available for the public to collect for free every evening at 6.15pm from the foodshare table within the big Co-op in Brodick and Co-op, Lamlash. This scheme is open to all, help yourself to stop food from going to landfill. Please adhere to the 'touch it and take it' policy.

Bay Kitchen and Stores, Whiting Bay

Drive thru groceries – call ahead – we will bag and bring your shopping (even if just your paper) out to you. Delivery service, suggested spend no less than £10 for Whiting Bay and £20 if further away please, free contactless payment. Order via telephone – 700229 Mon-Sat 9am-4pm, Sunday noon- 3pm, deliveries and kerb side pickups.

The seating area is now closed, however takeaway coffees/teas and pastries still available. Free hot drinks to any NHS and Coastguard/helicoptering staff/any front line staff and their spouses who all deserve medals too. Deliveries are not only for self-isolators but for any front line staff who need a break.

The Shore, Whiting Bay

Frozen meals available for collection and will come complete with easy to follow instructions for heating in your oven at home. No need to preorder. visit www.theshorearran.co.uk – seven days a week, 3pm-6pm, 700161.

A & C Camerons, Blackwaterfoot

Home delivery from the shop as normal for those distancing, or lambing! Home deliveries cover the whole Shiskine Valley, Machrie and as far as Lochranza and Kildonnan on specific days. Order via telephone – 01770 860 220 or email blackwaterfoot-po@live.co.uk.

Blackwaterfoot Bakehouse

Opening times Tuesday-Saturday weekly, please see Facebook page for developments. www.facebook.com/bakehouseblackwater/ Their bread will also be available at their usual locations elsewhere on the island.

Arran Meals 2 Go, Shiskine

Shiskine/Machrie and Brodick Kebab and Pizza deliveries available Friday and Saturday Nights. Pre-order anytime before 5pm or call between 5pm and 7.30pm. £8 a pizza, toppings: Buffalo Chicken, Pepperoni, Ham, Mushrooms, Pineapple, Sweetcorn, Red Onion, Jalapenos. Free delivery and online payments available. Social distancing rules adhered to, we will leave them on your doorstep knock the door and run away Call 860572.

Kilmory Hall and Community Centre

Groceries available as previously at the little community shop for those



who need to use it. A review will be made at the end of April. Contact us please email kilmory.hall@btinternet.com.

Arran Cheese Shop

Open 9am until 4pm for collection of orders safely at the door. Orders can be phoned in on 302788. Also delivering to Shiskine Valley most days and island wide on a Friday. Loads of deals on cheese, deli and ice cream – see our Facebook page, or website www.arrancheese.com, or call and ask. Also deliveries to the mainland via Parcelforce – send your loved ones an Arran treat.

Arran Butchers, Blackwaterfoot

Still trading, shop closed to public. Orders can be placed by phoning the shop to arrange a non-contact delivery anywhere on the island – pay for by card. A full range of stock remains at all three Co-ops and at Bay Stores. Order via telephone on 860354.

Blackwaterfoot Lodge (Hotel)

Take our meals for drive thru collection or home deliveries available Friday and Saturday nights from 5pm-8pm. Delivery in Shiskine Valley area. Weekly menu available on Facebook page or phone 860202.

Wiltshire Farm Foods

Frozen meal deliveries to Arran are every two weeks to order you can either call 01294 551734 or via website <http://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com>/If you require to be put on the referral list please contact Social Service on 600 742 for a brochure. For any further enquiries you can also contact Chris on 830252.

CLOTHING:

Bells Boutique, Brodick

Most of the clothing stock can be viewed with prices on Facebook and Instagram, some photos of stock is also available on Google page Bell's of Arran. Contact Elizabeth via email bellsfarran@gmail.com Call 01770 860597 (Bridgend Campsite) – WhatsApp 07881 400064 (no phone signal at home) / via Facebook bellsofarran.

Arran Active

Any kind of stock requirements can be delivered for free or can be picked up from outside the store. Payment taken over the phone. Order via telephone – call Andrew on 700508 to arrange.

Chameleon Arran

Basics (t-shirts, underwear etc) and spring clothing. Full e-commerce store online – www.chameleonarran.com/shop. Free delivery island-wide. Email lynn@chameleonarran.com. Messages may be left on 07740 866522.

Old Byre Showroom

Although the doors are closed we are happy to deliver. Online sales receive a 10% discount, use MAYUBESAFE at checkout. www.oldbyre.co.uk/ you can also contact on Facebook or telephone 01770 840227.

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Home & Garden, Brodick

Household items or essentials can be delivered free by arrangement or left outside for collection. Order via telephone – 302648 – card payment via phone contact.

The Shiphouse, Lamlash

Newsagent, pet supplies and hardware store. Open 8am to 1pm Monday to Saturday. Deliveries available – please call 600231.

Arran Haulage Service/Armitage, Brodick

Continue to deliver all items as usual adhering strictly to all preventative measures and national guidelines. Armitage is providing regular services and Arran Haulage are still delivering goods, animal feed, coal and gas as normal, island wide. Order via telephone – 302777 – Can be paid online.

Albion Gas

Free delivery on bottled gas, 01770 600113/07884258837.

Arran Heat Pumps

Quality heat pumps supplied and installed. Service and repair, 24 hours call out island wide. Please call for a free estimate 07385 215 140 01770 601214 or email arranheatpumps@btinternet.com.

MBS Building and Timber Supplies

Our click and collect service continues to be very popular, however due to the continuing lockdown and for safety reasons we are now only operating Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Fuel will be available between 8am-9am on these days and in store orders, 8am-noon, which can be phoned in 01770 700202 or by email at mbsbuild@yahoo.co.uk. Items can be collected from

the shop forecourt by arrangement and the home delivery service for orders over £25 is still available to customers with transportation problems.

Sliddery Supplies

Deliveries on Tuesday and Friday. Phone or email your orders as early as possible to allow us to collate orders and plan delivery times. Order via telephone – 870225/348 – or email slidderysupplies@yahoo.com

Brendarran Electricals

Carrying out repairs on appliances but only essential appliances like cookers, washing machines, fridges and freezers. Non-essential repairs will only be carried out when the lockdown has been lifted. Taking all necessary precautionary measures as outlined in government guidelines. Telephone – 07956 324546.

Bay Petrol, Brodick

Monday, Tuesday 9am-1pm, Wednesday closed, Thursday 9am-1pm, Friday –1pm-5pm, Saturday 9am-1pm. Sunday closed.

Lamlash Garage – John Thomson Engineering

Open 8am –5pm for vehicle repairs and MOT's. Please call first on 600328 as restrictions apply.

Thomson Construction Ltd

The yard at Lamlash will be open for fuel and building materials as follows: Materials 8am-8.30am Mon-Fri. Fuel 4pm-4.30pm Mon-Fri.

Strict social distancing measures apply. Card payments only. Please note our main office is still closed so if you require a VAT invoice for materials this can be posted out upon request.

Whiting Bay Garage

Open 12-2pm Monday-Saturday for petrol, diesel, Calorgas, logs, kindling, also some repair work.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE/ESTATE AGENTS:

Jas. Campbell & Co, Brodick

Solicitors, financial advisers, estate agents. Normal services but appointments will be by phone rather than face to face. Telephone: 302027

Arran Estate Agents, Brodick

Normal services but by phone or email rather than face to face. Telephone – 302310 or email: sales@arranestateagents.co.uk

CRAFT SUPPLIES AND OTHER ITEMS:

Book and Card Centre/ Brodick Post Office

Newspaper delivery. Books, puzzles, batteries, stationary etc can be delivered too - in Brodick only at moment. Payment over the phone - Order via telephone - call Tom on 302288

The Harbour Shop, Blackwaterfoot

Opening hours are Monday to Saturday, 10am-2pm. Sunday CLOSED. We are also delivering newspapers and any other items required. Phone 860215.

Bay Wool & Crafts

Wool, haberdashery and craft supplies. To purchase anything from any of our makers and crafters, please contact them direct first - these can also be delivered from the shop. Also operating a delivery service. Orders via Telephone: call Kat and Steve Sparshott on 600110 or Linda MacCallum on 302875 with requirements.

Arran Vets

We are currently open 9am-2pm Monday-Friday, 9.30-11.30am Saturday. Everyone must phone first before travelling to the surgery and inform us if they are self-isolating or have symptoms. Call 01770 302511 for all enquiries and emergencies.

Bay Pet Care

Dog walking, veterinary transportation, waits with dog and returns. Cover from Brodick to Kildonan. Uses own leads. An element of paperwork will be required, possibly online. Julie is police checked and insured and hasn't been off the island since Christmas. To arrange dog walking call 700541.

Bogarie Kennels

We have lots of customers that purchase dog food from us and at this time we can still possibly deliver. We are asking for email communication and bank transfers to ensure safety. Bogariekennels@mail.com - we are on the Ross Road.

Muddy Paws Arran

We are able to walk dogs of vulnerable or isolated people in accordance with the government policy. We only cover Corrie, Brodick, Lamlash and Whiting Bay. If you are vulnerable or isolated there is no charge for this service. Tel 01770 302054 or 07789 730548 or email info@mudypawsarran.co.uk

Arran Foodbank

If in crisis, Brodick Church Building remains open and the foodbank is still operating just inside the front doors for anyone who needs this service. If deliveries are required due to self isolation or otherwise please contact Susan Dobson 01770 302365. Food and other donations for the foodbank would be greatly appreciated, especially during this difficult time, and can be dropped off at the church or big co-op or can be collected by contacting Susan.

Arran CVS Office – hearing aid batteries

Hearing aid batteries can be ordered via telephone on 600611 or via email fo@arrancvs.org.uk and will be posted out.

Hear to Help

To order hearing aid batteries or get support for your hearing aid telephone 07391 017781 or email: hearthohelp.ayrshire@hearingloss.org.uk

Talking Arran Banner

Enjoy your favourite local paper in audio format. Equipment is available for those with sight impairment. For more information call 07743 367866 or 302158.



HM Government

NHS



Coronavirus Got symptoms – even mild ones?

DO NOT leave the house at all for 7 days.

Still have symptoms after 7 days?

DO NOT leave the house until they go.

**EVERYONE else in your household must
not leave the house for 14 days.**

Do not go out even to buy food or essentials.

Stay at home to exercise.

nhsinform.scot/coronavirus

STAY HOME ➤ PROTECT THE NHS ➤ SAVE LIVES



Work completed by an early years pupil at Kilmory.

Schools are out but...

All across the island, boys and girls continue with their home learning. This is different from home schooling, which is a choice some parents make.

Schools have been put in this new learning situation with very little notice. All the schools had prepared a home education pack, with activities, books, jotters, pencils and rubbers, which were issued on Friday March 20, the day schools closed. For those not at school, these were delivered to their homes.

Luckily, we were already using a home communication medium called Seesaw, which we have quickly adapted as our learning platform.

Teachers had to speedily adjust their use of this and many spent hours training and upskilling to become Seesaw pioneers and ambassadors. They are planning, marking, creating, researching and modifying, whilst taking care of their own families, often with their own young children at home.

Schools may be out but that doesn't mean teaching is not going on for children across the island during lockdown. Here Arran's primary and early years head teacher Shirley MacLachlan gives an overview of everything that is happening.

The teachers put up activities on their class pages on Seesaw which the children can then work their way through at a time and pace that suits their family and the weather.

There are a wide variety of activities – some online, some from their HEP, outdoor activities, storytelling, personal projects, challenges, as well as working in partnership with the fabulous activities created at home.

Daily exercise is important and there have been assault courses, lava challenges, zip wires, tree climbing, dens and marshmallow-toasting going

and rainbow making, to name a few.

The Hub at Arran High School is open daily for the children of key workers, with staff volunteering, often on their non-working days, to provide childcare and learning, to allow parents to provide their critical skills to our community. Young children and social distancing are not an ideal match!

School staff are missing the children very much and, as well as these learning activities, are trying to maintain some sense of normality and personal support for the children during these times. We all, very much, look forward to being back together again.

Schools continue to support families and parents in other ways. We understand many parents are working from home, supporting their children with activities, as well as the million other jobs required, all in the middle of these scary times. We thank them all for their wonderful support.

'Schools have been put in this new learning situation with very little notice'

on. Outdoor star gazing, bird watching, leaf discoveries, gardening as well as lots and lots of baking continue. Many new skills are being passed on. Our Early Years Classes are also embracing the many activities they have on a daily basis. We have seen teddy bears picnics, Easter Egg hunts, painting rocks, cutting

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Whiting Bay



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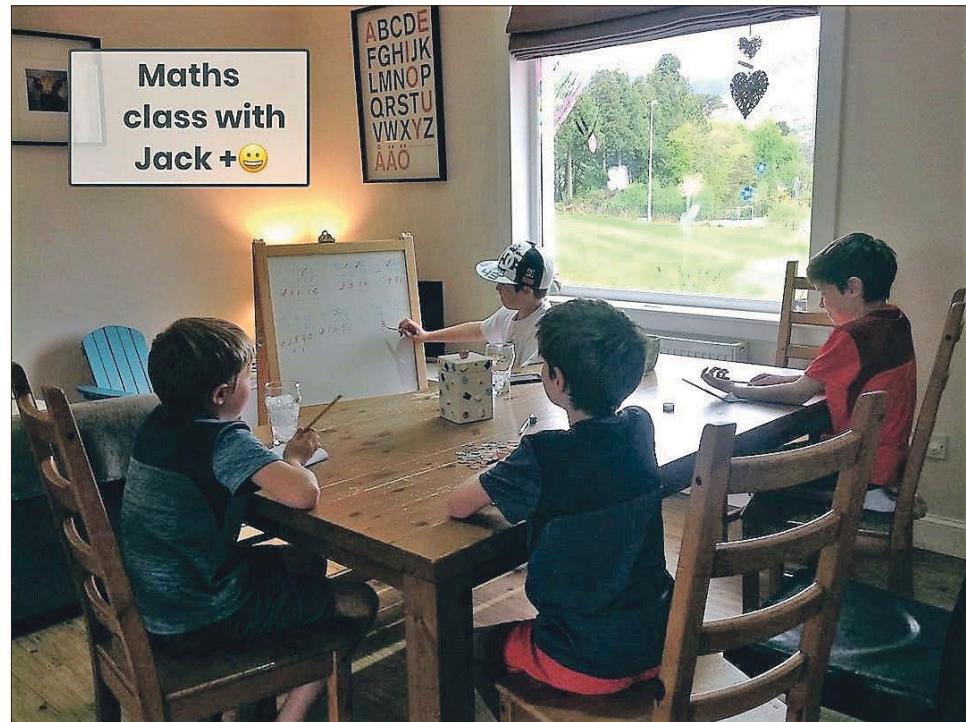
Whiting Bay pupils thank the council binmen.

Some of the great things about being at home is...

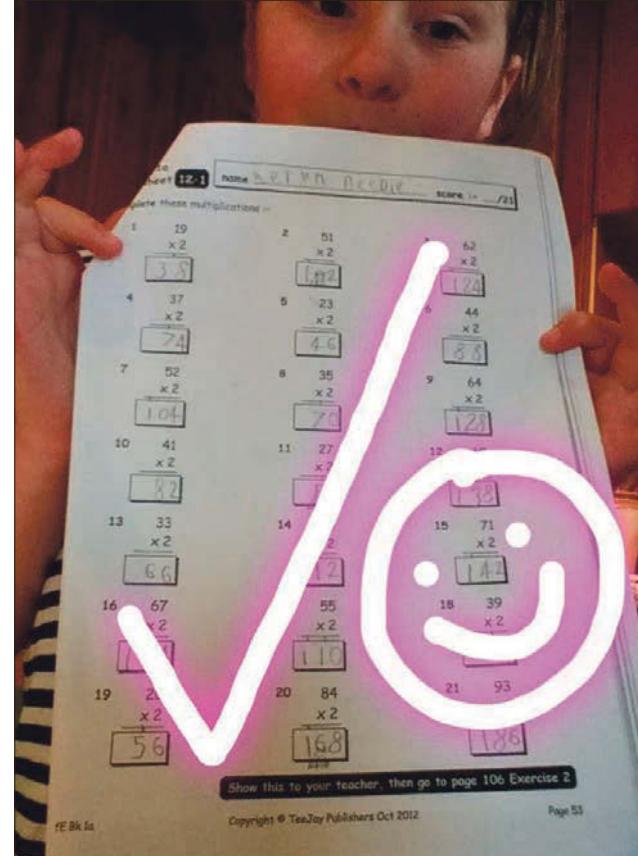
 I can do it in my work pyjamas.	 I get to see my family more.	 I don't have to worry about missing the bus.
 I get to go on more walks.	 I get to see my cat and dog more.	

A Brodick pupil completes another assignment.

It children are still learning



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More photographs on pages 18 and 19

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Every day still a school day



Literacy 30/4/20

Today we are going to work on some punctuation - commas. When reading, full stops tell us to stop. Question marks tell us a question is being asked. Exclamation marks tell us something shocking or exciting has happened!

Commas, tell us to pause before reading on. They are used to separate things in a list.

Look at the next few pages to see some examples.



MAY ISSUE

SCOTTISH FIELD

Shetland & Orkney
Life in the idyllic Northern Isles

Aldo Kane
In love with the great outdoors

SCOTLAND'S SKIES AT NIGHT
EDINBURGH'S MAGNIFICENT 7 CONVERTING A HIGHLAND KIRK HEDGEHOG HOSPITAL

THE REAL TILDA SWINTON
The inside story of the rise of an iconic Scottish actor

Country news Interiors Antiques Motoring Gardens Wildlife Interviews Whisky

OUT NOW!



The Shopping List

Read the words. Look for the objects in the picture and write over the words when you have found them.

belt	lamp	bag	box	doll
dog bed	fish tank	milk	hat	

Well Done! 10 Well Done!

Read the page again to check your work.

A Kilmory pupil is organised at home.

Superpowers

In the novel Matilda, we find out in Chapter 15 that a glass over by just looking at it. If you had a superpower, what would it be? Draw your superpower. You may want to add a special set of glasses to be able to see through walls.

- Flying
- Super speed
- Sonic hearing
- Fire breathing
- Time travel
- Inkink

A Brodick pupil invents a superpower.

on Arran



CONTACT US

email us at editor@arranbanner.co.uk
telephone 01631 568000



A Pirnmill youngster takes on a Lego challenge to build a monument.



A Corrie pupil's completed worksheet.

she has a super power. She is able to push
yourself in the box below showing you and
feature to showcase your new power, like a

Mind-reading
Strength
Invisibility
Ice breathing
Teleportation

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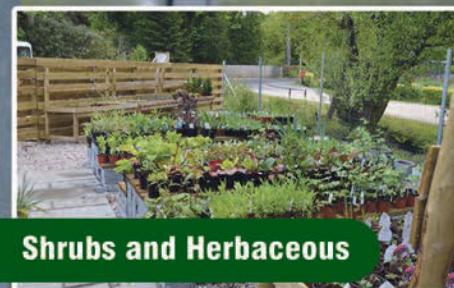


A Pirnmill pupil learns how to bake.



Dipping her feet in a stream in Glen Catacol is a treat for this Pirnmill cyclist.

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Summer Bedding

Tens of thousands of birds on the move across Arran

April is the month when spring migration gets under way, with arrivals and departures of birds all seeking their best breeding territories.

This April was very dry with no significant rain for more than 20 consecutive days. Like the previous two Aprils, there was a lot of easterly winds. The impact on migrating birds of the weather here and throughout their route is difficult to know, but even by the end of the month the bulk of the migrants had still to arrive.

By the end of March, the first chiffchaff, wheatear and white wagtail had been reported.

Here are April 'firsts' with the 2019 arrival date in brackets for comparison: house martin 4th (4th); sand martin 5th (31st March); swallow 5th (6th); willow warbler 5th (10th); sandwich tern 6th (2nd); common sandpiper 10th (14th); cuckoo 14th (19th); garden warbler 15th (24th May); sedge warbler 16th (20th); tree

Bird notes

by Jim Cassels

pipit 18th (20th); grasshopper warbler 19th (19th); whinchat 22nd (18th); whitethroat 23rd (20th) and manx shearwater 28th (4th).

In April, some wintering birds were still around including 20 whooper swan at Clachaig on 2nd, two rook in Sliddery on 5th, nine redwing in Sliddery on 7th, two greylag geese at Cosyden on 17th, four wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 18th and four fieldfare on Corrievarie Moor on 22nd.

The last report of pink-footed geese was 100 flying north over Porta Buidhe on migration on 7th.

April is an ideal time for

watching migration. These are a few examples: 80 golden plover at Machriewaterfoot on 1st; 38 common scoter off Cosyden on 8th; five great northern diver off Imachar on 10th; one bar-tailed godwit at Cosyden on 23rd; three dunlin on Blackwaterfoot shore on 24th and 20 turnstone at Catacol on 26th.

There was a much-reported passage of sandwich tern, including nine at Porta Buidhe on 11th, and whimbrel, including 14 at Auchenthe Bay on 27th.

One whimbrel which had been ringed on a southern Arran shore three years ago was reported yet again almost on the same shore, for the third year in a row, having again spent the winter in Africa.

Migration was also in evidence from the widespread reports received of goldfinch and siskin moving through people's gardens throughout the month. Larger garden

numbers reported included 10 siskin in Machrie on 15th and 11 goldfinch in Lagg on 27th.

Tens of thousands of birds seem to be moving through the island at this time of year.

In April, there were 109 species recorded on Arran.

Here is a further small selection from this list: 17 shelduck at Cosyden on 3rd; 18 roosting wren at Sandbraes, also on 3rd; one moorhen and one male scaup at Mossend Pond on 13th; one snipe at Fisherman's Walk on 16th; 30 gannet feeding close in shore in Brodick Bay on 19th; three goosander at Iorsa mouth on 20th and two woodcock roding over the Lakin on 21st.

The highlight in April was the Hoopoe seen at Levencorrach on 8th, which recently featured in the Arran Banner bird notes.

Thanks go to the many people who have been in touch to share their sightings in what has been a remarkable month.

As a result of measures to control the spread of the coronavirus, the island has been in lockdown throughout the month. In this situation, I have appreciated the many people who have continued to make the effort to share their bird sightings with me.

May should be an equally interesting month with the arrival of more summer visitors including lesser whitethroat, wood warbler, swift, common tern and, hopefully, corncrake and nightjar.

Spring is a great time to be birding, as most birds are getting on with the business of breeding. This involves attracting a mate by song,



Hoopoe last recorded 14 years ago. Photograph: Dennis Morrison

courtship display and ritual, defining a territory, nest building and generally establishing relationships.

Please take a moment to report any signs of breeding birds to me. Already there have been reports of blue tits nest building, robins feeding young, blackbirds carrying food, grey heron with young in the nest, dipper carrying food and song thrush with young out of the nest.

Please remember that under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while

it is being built or used. Take particular care on shores and beaches and please keep your dogs on a lead.

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

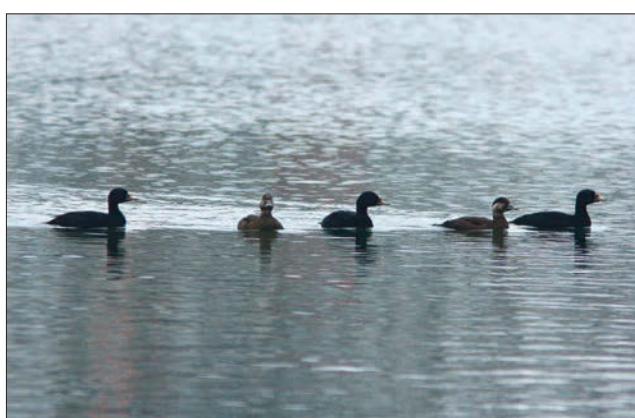
I look forward to hearing from you. For more information on birding on Arran purchase the Arran Bird Report, The First 40 Years, which includes the annual report for 2019 and visit www.arranbirding.co.uk



Grey heron doing home improvements. Photograph: David Russell.



Cuckoo, the sound of approaching summer. Photograph: Charlotte Clough.



Common scoter, the largest gathering for many years.

Photograph: Robert Lambie.



Whimbrel A2 seen again on Arran. Photograph: Joan Thomson.



Sedge warbler another summer songster. Photograph: David Russell.

THE ARRAN BANNER 20 YEARS AGO

Saturday May 20, 2000



Mandy is filmed on Arran during her blind date.

01_B20tweY01



Last Saturday, at the Shurig in Whiting Bay, Michael Lindsay, Neil McKechnie, Peter McCabe, George Cooper and Jaff agreed to have their heads shaved in aid of charity. Wielding the scissors and clippers were Davy Ballantyne, Samantha Ferguson and Anne Collins. 01_B20tweY03

Blind Date filmed on Arran

Filming for Cilla Black's Blind Date TV programme has been taking place on Arran this week.

Mandy from Southampton and Desmond from Watford

visited the island this week for their date and, after filming on the ferry, first stop was a cycle to Corrie.

The cameras then followed them to Duchess Court where they helped make cheese and saw a fish being smoked at Creelers Smokehouse, where they later enjoyed a romantic

meal. After an overnight stay at Auchrannie, it was over the String to Cairnhouse Stables and a short ride along Blackwaterfoot Beach, before heading up the Machrie and a walk to the standing stones.

The couple's Blind Date will be shown on national television around Christmas.

Milestone find

Ruth and Alan Thompson, who earlier this year published their book Milestones of Arran, were tidying up around Milestone 10 on the Ross Road

when they came across a bottle containing a message.

It turned out to be a handwritten account of a visit to Glenscorrodale by the 1st Chesterford Scouts from Cambridgeshire in August 1985. This week they showed their find to Frances Sanctuary who, along with husband Anthony, wrote the original Courier book in the mid-70s about Arran's milestones who was fascinated by the find. Frances, who now lives in Dorset, is still an annual visitor to the Lagg Hotel.



Ruth and Alan Thompson show Frances Sanctuary, centre, their milestone find. 01_B20tweY04



A new disabled buggy, costing £9,000, has gone into service at Brodick Castle. It will be operated by the Friends of Brodick Castle, seen here waving off the first customers. 01_B20tweY02



Action from the final of the Arran Haulage Cup on Saturday where Lamlash beat Shiskine 3-1 in front of a decent crowd at Ormidale Park. 01_B20tweY05

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- All hurdles are 8 railed x 970mm high
- All hot-dipped galvanised finish
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- Includes all joining pins/stakes

OPTION 1

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Comes with aN 80-feet holding pen and 10-feet race, 2x 2 feet swing gates and all joining pins/stakes included. Our system will safely hold 100 fully grown sheep (approx.)

PARTS LIST:

- 10 x 3m (8 railed) sheep hurdles
- 12 x Joining pins/stakes
- 2 x 2 feet swing gates



OPTION 2

20-feet race, 100-feet holding pen
£1795.00 + VAT

Comes with a 100-feet holding pen and 20-feet race, 2 x 2-feet swing gates and all joining pins/stakes included. Our system will safely hold 150 fully grown sheep (approx)

PARTS LIST:

- 14 x 3m (8 railed) sheep hurdles
- 12 x joining pins/stakes
- 2 x 2-feet swing gates



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MAIN FEATURES:

- Made from high-tensile steel
- All hurdles are 6 railed x 1.75m high
- A funnel is incorporated into the race-way
- All hot-dipped galvanised finish
- 3000mm (3m) long
- 20-feet race
- 60-feet holding pen. Includes all joining pins/stakes
- Total 200-feet of penning

PARTS LIST:

- 10 x 3m (6 railed) cattle hurdles
- 12 x joining pins/stakes
- 1 x sliding gate

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PUBLIC NOTICES



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jamie Greene MSP

Member of Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

Jamie Greene MSP – Coronavirus Update
Whilst I've had to take the difficult decision to temporarily close the regional office and suspend surgeries, my team and I are still available to help.

If you want to get in touch or have any questions, please email: jamie.greene.msp@parliment.scot.

Many people will have concerns during these difficult times, please go to
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
 or
<https://north-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/Coronavirus.aspx>
 for official guidance on COVID-19

The cost of this publication has been met from parliamentary resources. The SPCB is not responsible for the content of external websites.

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CHURCH NOTICES

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**ALL CHURCH SERVICES ARE CANCELLED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Parishes of North Arran, Brodick, Corrie,
Lochranza, Pirnmill and Shiskine

Although the Church is still closed an internet service at 11am Sunday morning and over the rest of the week can be received at www.brodickchurch.com or www.stmoliosskine.org.uk

Please note that Brodick Church is still accessible for the Food bank.

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Bishop Brian McGee, of the Catholic Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, will celebrate Mass daily at 10am from his Oratory at Bishop's House, Oban.

You can access these Masses and other services, live or recorded, via the diocesan website www.rcdai.org.uk

If you are not receiving a weekly Parish Bulletin but would like to do so please email peterdwilko@gmail.com.

*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*

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

(Part of the Worldwide Anglican Church)

St. Margaret's, Whiting Bay

During the shutdown

Revd Canon Simon

Mackenzie will conduct

Sunday Eucharist at 11 a.m.

online @

ChristchurchLochgilphead

All are welcome to join

DEATH

COOK - On May 11, 2020, peacefully at home with his family, Neill Ford Ferguson, beloved husband of Sandra, much loved father to Fiona and Jackie and father-in-law to Ross and Scott, and adored and loving Papa to Lewis, Ellie, Amy and Lily. Loved brother to Malcolm and the late John. Private funeral, due to current circumstances, on Wednesday, May 20 at 12 noon. The family hopes to have a service to celebrate Neill's life at a later date.

WHAT'S ON

EVERY DAY

Eco Savvy & Co-op Food
Share Big Co, Brodick. 6.15pm

TUESDAYS

Savvy Film Club | Online--through Eco Savvy Facebook Events | 7pm

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£3.30



Two mountain festival walkers on the south ridge of Goatfell. Photograph: Alastair Howe.



A group take a well-earned rest at the Witches Step. Photograph:
Alastair Howe.



Taking in the view of Beinn Tarsuinn in the sunshine. Photograph:
Alastair Howe.

Kayak trip takes in Arran



Jack and Raf after completing the London to Land's End event in 2018.

A kayaker has included Arran as part of his Scottish Kayak Tour to raise money for charity.

Later this summer, assuming lockdown restrictions are eased by then, Jack Gatacre is planning to kayak almost 700 miles around the southern half of Scotland in a fortnight in a Taran 18 kayak.

The journey will start and finish in the fishing village of Pittenweem, Fife, and take him as far north as Elgin and as far south as Campbeltown, where he will cross to from Pirnmill on Arran.

Jack is raising money for The Fishermen's Mission in honour of his girlfriend's father who retired after 50 years of fishing at Pittenweem, where he still lives.

While fishing is a great and noble trade, culture and way of life it can also be difficult and dangerous for fishermen and their families.

This year has also been particularly difficult for fishermen financially as COVID-19 has reduced the value of their

catch to such an extent that it is currently not economical to leave the harbour.

The Fishermen's Mission aims to help by providing financial assistance, support

and life saving during storms. Jack said: 'I would aim to kayak about 50 miles a day between dusk and dawn to capture the landscape in different light and weather, sleeping in a tent by

night. I have done something similar two years ago, but was a less experienced kayaker with a slower kayak and was not sponsored, but gained a large amount of attention and publicity for the MS Society.'

'In June 2018, I canoeed unsupported with friend Raf from London to Land's End in two weeks and raised £4,000 for the MS society inspired by my colleague who suffers from this condition.'

'Long term, I hope to canoe from London to Istanbul and southern Turkey over a few months, but consider a trip around southern Scotland to be a step up from my trip to Cornwall and a practice for that journey.'

'I have been training since 2017 for these adventures and live on the Sussex coast, so get many opportunities to practice.'

'Anyone wishing to support Jack should visit his just-giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jack-gatacre1>

Continued from page 24.

local businesses supporting the festival have kindly carried forward their sponsorship to 2021.

In the meantime, everyone must continue to heed the advice of Scottish Mountain Rescue - see www.scottishmountainrescue.org/ for the latest - and not venture into the high hills, so as not to put mountain rescue volunteers and other emergency services at risk.

The mountains will still be there when coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Find out more about the Arran Mountain Festival by visiting www.arranmountainfestival.co.uk, and follow the event on Facebook and Instagram.

Spotlight switches to next year's mountain festival

Organisers busy setting dates and preparing 2021 programme



A mountain festival group on Beinn a'Chliabhaein.

Photograph: Robin Barnden.

This weekend the island should have been alive with the buzz of walkers flocking to the Arran hills for the community-run annual Arran Mountain Festival.

Despite its forced cancellation, previously reported in the Banner, festival organisers have been busy.

The dates for next year's event have been set for May 14 to 17, 2021 and the festival programme will be published this weekend, with bookings opening later this year. On the event's social media channels, would-be festival goers have been provided with a virtual mountain fix with images of the Arran mountains from the archives and some of the organisers' local low-level walks.

The festival is grateful for the patience and generosity of the people who had booked for this year's event, many of which have donated their walk fees to the not-for-profit event, supporting its future, as well as Arran Mountain Rescue Team and Arran Trust. Similarly, the

Continued on page 23.



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