Polluting coal plant in Hunterston?

BEFORE CHRISTMAS, Dong Energy, based in Copenhagen, proposed a plan for a 1,600 megawatt, £2bn coal-fired power station at Hunterston. The proposal was included in the Scottish government's national planning framework, published in December. However, Denmark will not permit any such plant to be built on its own soil, and neither will any other nation in the European Union.

Just at the time of the Hunterston proposal, Denmark accepted a European carbon emission limit of 500 grams per kilowatt hour for new power stations. This effectively rules out any plant that relies on burning coal for 70% or more of its operation. Dong admits that the Hunterston plant will rely on coal for at least 86% of its operation. The rest will come from burning biomass such as wood and plants alongside coal.

Dong, Denmark’s largest energy company, with annual revenue of 5.6 billion, claims that the Hunterston plant will be ‘carbon capture ready’, meaning that its pollutants can be trapped and stored. However, environmentalists point out that carbon capture technology is still in its infancy. Without such technology, the plant would hugely increase Scotland’s carbon dioxide emissions, jeopardising the country’s targets to cut air pollution.

Dr Richard Dixon, director of WWF Scotland, said, ‘It is hypocritical and unacceptable for Dong to propose a plant in Scotland that would not win approval in their home country.’ He pointed out that the Danish government strongly backs European parliament standards for power stations, and that these rule out the building of the plant proposed by Dong anywhere in the 27 member countries.

Dong say the refusal of the Danish government to permit such a plant in Denmark is simply due to having enough power production already in place, but a leading Danish MP disputes this. Mette Gjerskov, the climate and energy spokeswoman for the opposition Social Democrats, says, ‘Coal is an energy source of the past, not the future. New power plants will be in use for 50–70 years, and for that time coal should not be used at all.’

Our own government appears to disagree. A spokesman said, ‘As part of a balanced energy mix, new coal-fired power stations have a long-term future in Scotland.’ He stressed that any such station must be ‘ready to incorporate’ carbon capture technology, but made no comment on the question of whether such technology is in fact available, and whether it will protect the Clyde coast from a level of extra pollution that would not be allowed in any other European country.

NORD STAR MAROONED

The crew of the Nord Star found themselves stranded in the shallow waters at Cladach on Tuesday morning. The coaster spent a few hours using its own digger to try and scrape its hull from Brodick’s sandy shore and eventually freed itself with the rising tide by about 1pm. The ship was built in 1978 by Cubhav at Woolwich and was given the original name Ordinance. It is now owned by Hebridean Coastal Services Ltd of Stornoway and is one of only a few coasters owned and operated almost exclusively in Scottish waters. 49.3 metres in length, her deadweight of 723 tonnes makes her handy for carrying small quantities of cargo around the islands and locks of the western seaboard. But she is clearly not designed for fishing trips up the Rosa Burn!

STRUAN AND ADAM TOAST THE BARD

Struan Robertson and Adam Brown toasted the haggis with the Burns Supper. The ‘great chieftain o’ the pudding-race’ was marched around the packed village hall with striking gravitas by Adam Brown, accompanied by the skirl of Ewan Bulger’s piping. Presented with the haggis at the head of the table Struan gave a lively and masterful performance of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ and ‘To a Haggis’, which will likely put the young man high on the invitation list of many Burns Suppers in future years. Sheila Gilmore described the recital as ‘absolutely magnificent, and told an appreciative crowd she thought Adam was ‘just about weighed down under the weight of the haggis.’ Behind the scenes the Shiskine Valley Trust committee were hard at work dishing out the grub for a fitting tribute to the 250th anniversary of the Bard’s birth. Later in the evening, a group recital of Burns’ legendary Tam O’Shanter was performed.
MSPs on Hunterston

COMMENTING ON NEWS that Danish Oil and Natural Gas (DONG) plan to invest up to £2 billion in a 1600 MW carbon capture plant at Hunterston, to open between 2014 and 2018, local MSP Kenneth Gibson said:

'I welcome this proposal and actually raised the possibility of a carbon-capture coal plant at Hunterston last year in meetings with both Energy Minister Jim Mather and Clydeport as a possible alternative to a new Hunterston C.'

'Such a plant, if able to reduce carbon emissions by 90%, will be a vital component in securing a clean, non-nuclear future for Scotland and long-term sustainable development in the area. There is expected to be up to 1,500 jobs in construction and 130 once the plant is operational.'

'As the proposed plant will be capable of generating power from biomass, including forestry and farming, there is a tremendous opportunity for Arran to benefit from this development.'

'However, there are significant local concerns that the existing infrastructure, particularly the road network, may not be able to cope and a full environmental impact assessment carried out. A power plant of the scale suggested must be combined with a bypass to reduce the impact of traffic on Fairlie and West Kilbride.'

Added Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change:

'Any application to build at Hunterston will be treated on its merits and we will take into account the views of local people. Should any upgrade of the local infrastructure, including the road and rail network be required, the cost of this will be met by the developer. Grants to encourage seaborne transport may be made available, which could assist the transport of forestry products from Arran.'

Energy Minister Jim Mather MSP commented:

'As part of a balanced energy mix, in tandem with the continued development of carbon capture technology, new coal fired power stations could extend the life of the Scottish coal field and protect Scottish jobs in energy production and technology.

'Scotland's current energy usage accounts for over a third of our greenhouse gases and we are determined to be at the forefront of clean energy development. Recognising the need for an energy mix that benefits from clean fossil technologies, we have issued guidance for consultation that will require new power stations to incorporate carbon capture technology. The consultation also seeks views on whether other approaches to reduce carbon emissions should be considered. Any investment designed to last decades must be compatible with our ambitious climate change targets.

'Alongside the huge recent investment and growth in renewables and action to develop carbon capture technology, we will make Scotland the green energy capital of Europe.'

Key meter users feel the pinch

PREPAYMENT CUSTOMERS MAY BE SUBJECT OF ‘PRICE DISCRIMINATION’

Local customers of Scottish Hydro-Electric have experienced a big rise in their weekly fuel bills, after a new key meter payment system has been implemented on the island. Coupled with rising costs of energy nationally, the replacement of the old token system in recent months has led to a tough transition to new tariffs for many electricity users.

'It seems that everybody who uses the new keys has been complaining,' said Gary Scott, a store assistant at Main Co-op in Brodick. Gary explained that dozens of people have expressed shock in recent weeks at the cost of their home electric bill. 'Folks are using about £5 to £10 per day. That’s how bad it is.'

BILLS HAVE DOUBLED

Local resident Dawn Burke uses the key payment system and estimates she is spending about £45 per week on her home electric bill. 'My bill has more than doubled in recent months,' Dawn said.

The Arran Voice contacted Scottish Hydro Electric's headquarters in Perth for an explanation. 'We have got a payment throughout the whole of the North of Scotland to replace token meters with key meters,' said Sharon Miller McKenzie, a spokeswoman for Scottish Hydro Electric.

'It's not that there has been a big rise. It's just that some customers have only recently been switched to the new tariff since their transition to the new key meter payment system. And they will be noticing a difference.'

Scottish Hydro Electric said that it does not backdate payments for customers who have been paying electricity on the old tariff. 'If we find that they have been paying less under the old payment system, we do not backdate,' said the company spokeswoman.

PRICE CHANGES PASSED ON

Scottish Hydro Electric insists that the new key meters bring a range of benefits for their customers, explaining that the key offers protection from theft and from running out of electricity during the night, and provides access for payment at a wider range of retail outlets. The company also says that the key system means price changes can be more easily implemented. The old token system required a physical visit from a Scottish Hydro Electric engineer to adjust the tariff, whereas now the unit price is determined at the point of sale.

'In the future when prices do come down, and we all hope that will be the case, we will be able to pass on that price drop,' added the company spokeswoman. Scottish Hydro Electric claims to be the first company to commit to lowering electric tariffs in the event of a ‘sustained drop’ in wholesale energy prices.

But by the same logic, it also means that energy price rises will be more quickly passed on to customers, and some industry analysts predict tough year ahead for many energy consumers despite government targets to eradicate ‘fuel poverty’ by 2016. It is believed that 700,000 households in Scotland spend 10% of their weekly income on all domestic fuel use (the working definition of ‘fuel poverty’).

DISCRIMINATION?

Energy companies have been criticised by market regulator Ofgem in recent months for failing their more vulnerable customers. In a Westminster debate on 16th December 2008, MPs argued that those consumers least likely or able to switch were most likely to be the victims of price-discriminatory practices by the energy companies, for example by charging higher per unit rates to ‘legacy customers’ or those using pre-payment systems. As a result of the ticking-off by Ofgem, the big six energy suppliers have committed to increase their spending social tariffs by a total of £225 million from 2008–2011.

For customers of Scottish Hydro Electric on Arran there is a difference in the unit cost of electricity depending on how customers pay.

• The cost per Kilowatt hour unit if you pay by pre-payment meter: 15.3p
• The cost per Kilowatt hour unit if you pay by quarterly direct debit: 10.8p

If this issue affects you, please get in touch by calling 303 656 or e-mailing: info@arranvoice.com.
**Marine study shows devastation of Clyde**

A RECENT STUDY has revealed the drastic overfishing and devastation of fish stocks in the Firth of Clyde. Ruth Thurstan, a PhD student at the University of York, has researched the decline of the once abundant herring fisheries and documented the rise of trawling for prawns and scallops, enabled by changing fishing fleet technology.

She argues that fisheries must be managed in a more sophisticated way to ensure the sustainability of fish stocks and the marine environment. ‘The Firth of Clyde needs to stop being managed for a few species, and start being managed as the complex ecosystem that it is, where it is recognised that people’s actions have ramifications that extend further than just the target animals,’ reads the study.

‘Marine species need to be protected before our baselines shift again, to an empty desert that people once claimed was able to produce 5-pound cod and the occasional herring.’

**Trawling Damage**

Nephrops (prawns) became the most valuable species landed in Scotland by the 1970s, with the 1972 total Scottish catch valued at £3,854,754. Previously seine nets were used in the Clyde until a local bylaw in 1962 allowed trawling for Nephrops. This opened up 600 square miles of sea which had been closed to trawlers since 1889. The report warns that the Nephrops fishery potentially has a ‘far more damaging effect’ on habitats and the capture of non-target species.

Catches of other fish have declined markedly since the 1970s and the ‘species that were once assumed to be widespread, abundant and inexhaustible are in danger of extinction.’ The author of the study hopes that ‘it will help you appreciate the scale of transformation that has already occurred and encourage you to question why Holyrood is not doing more to protect and regenerate the marine environment.’

**FEEDBACK**
The study has been published on the website of the Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network. To view the study, go to The Arran Voice website, (www.arranvoice.com) find this story and click on the link. Any feedback is welcomed and should be directed to contact@ssacn.org. For more information about the Scotland’s first No Take Zone in Lamlash Bay see www.arrancoast.co.uk.

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**First Milk imposes price drop on farmers**

DAIRY FARMERS ACROSS the UK are feeling the pinch after First Milk reduced their farmgate price for milk. First Milk owns the Torrylinn Creamery in Kilmory that produces the island’s popular Isle of Arran cheese range and is supplied by the island’s few remaining dairy farms. The farming co-operative in turn supplies Arran Dairies with liquid milk for its range of food products. But as of 6th January First Milk ‘reluctantly’ cut payments to its members by 1.25p per litre due to major changes in the dairy market.

**Deteriorating Conditions**

Peter Humphreys, chief executive of First Milk, said: ‘The economic environment has changed significantly over the past few months. Likewise conditions in the global dairy markets, which drove UK milk prices upwards in 2007 and 2008, have now deteriorated markedly.’ Milk prices on mainland Europe have declined over the past few months and this is now impacting on the UK, despite a 30 year low in UK milk production. But NFU Scotland’s Milk Committee chairman, Willie Lamont sent out a bleak message to policy-makers. ‘With the milk price now falling, for many the costs associated with producing milk will significantly outweigh the price that some dairy farmers receive for their efforts, forcing them to once again consider their future in milk production.’ He added that ‘some Scottish dairy farmers will be in a position to sit tight and ride out this difficult period and some will feel that enough is enough.’

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**Should mobile phones be permitted in hospital wards?**

A year ago, Scottish Health Boards were given new guidelines to relax the prohibition of mobile phone use in hospital wards, but NHS Ayrshire and Arran is still to complete its review of its rules. Lib Dem MSP Ross Finnie thinks hospital patients in Scotland should be allowed to use their mobile phones in the ward, provided there is no interference caused to hospital equipment.

MR FINNIE SAID: ‘The use of mobile phones in Scottish hospitals would make it easier for patients to communicate with their families. In NHS Ayrshire and Arran patients are currently charged 10p per minute to call friends and relatives from sick beds. This can prove very expensive for long term patients and makes it difficult for some to keep in touch with family. If it is now proved that phones can be used safely in most areas of hospitals then the Health Secretary should follow suit in Scotland.’

Kenneth Gibson takes the opposite view

‘Peace and quiet is hard enough to come by in hospital, as many patients know to their cost, but it seems that silence is never valued any more. Restful sleep is vital to recovery, but how can that be achieved with mobiles going off?’

‘Certainly, hospital pay phones should be less expensive, an issue the Scottish Government has already addressed, but in my view, mobiles are a step too far.

‘Mobiles may make communication easier. However, most people in hospital look forward to visits from friends and loved ones. Visiting, no matter how inconvenient it might be to the visitor on occasion, is important to patient morale and visits would surely decline if mobiles were introduced.’

What do readers think? Should mobiles be allowed in hospital wards or not? Air your view on our website poll this week.
HUNTERSTON

Ever since power stations first started to make their mark, both on the landscape and on the way we live, the public has regarded them with conflicting emotional reactions. On one hand, they are inspirational, bringing light and power and warmth where there was grime and endless manual work, but on the other, the image of belching chimneys and the march of pylons across the landscape has been much hated. During recent decades, the truths urged by the green movement are starting to gain real acceptance, and governments are looking with more care at the way in which power needs and human beings relate.

The Danish proposal at Hunterston is, on the face of it, an enlightened combination of coal and biomass, made acceptable by the ‘carbon capture’ technology that will remove pollutants and CO2. The snag, however, is that the technology is still very new, and far from ready to be put into operation. At the moment, Arran looks across the water at Hunterston with double caution, aware of the power station’s patchy nuclear past and its questionable future.

The campaign against Border Biofuels left battle scars, and readiness to defend Arran against any future threat of exploitative and polluting development is understandable. At the moment, it seems that the European standards offer a trustworthy safeguard, but there is no harm in continuing to keep a watchful eye on all proposals. Looking far enough ahead, we should hope that all new buildings will have self-generation power capacity through simple renewable technology such as ground-source heat pumps and small turbines and solar panels. No matter how new the Dong technology may be, central power generation is already starting to seem just slightly old-fashioned.

‘A city used to its own freedom can be more easily ruled through its own citizens, provided you do not wish to destroy it, than in any other way.’

Niccolò Machiavelli, (1469–1527) in ‘The Prince’, written as a word in the ear to Lorenzo de Medici.

Come back, Niccoló, we need you. Ed.
**News in Brief...**

**Dry clothes in rain to save energy bills**

The energy cost-cutting potential of a special clothes-drying tent will be demonstrated today at Belvedere Guest House. The tent is designed for use in a garden and protects wet clothes from the rain, allowing laundry to dry naturally. Chris Attkins, a member of the increasingly active Transition Arran group, has invited the inventor David Gracie to erect a prototype for any folks on Arran who would like to cut down on their electricity bills by natural drying. The demonstration will be at 2.30pm–3pm today, Thursday 15th January. More information about the ‘Sheiling Drier’ in next week’s *Arran Voice*.

**Council office closed for long weekend**

The local Council offices in Lamlash will close early next Friday lunchtime at 12.30pm as contractors undertake some minor refurbishment in the building. ‘We need to clear the whole area for what the contractor does,’ explained Island Officer Gus MacLeod. The installation of new floor coverings means that everything, including the IT systems, needs to be moved to allow access for the work. The office will reopen on Monday 26th January at lunchtime for business as usual.

**Corrie And Sannox SWRI**

On 8th January members celebrated ‘Auld Year’s Night,’ an annual event looked forward to by the members, and no one would have been disappointed. There was a hot and cold buffet and what a wonderful variety of dishes there was! We enjoyed the return of *The Three Amigos*, now known as *The Cat Stone Collective*, a group of Island musicians formed as part of a successful pressure group to keep Corrie Primary School open. The original three musicians, Ian McLaren, Mike Bailey and James Shankie were ably assisted by young Jamie McLaren, obviously enjoying his role on stage. A vote of thanks to the musicians for the lively music was proposed by Stevie, who also thanked the men who came along as guests and the rural ladies for the delicious buffet. The next meeting is in the afternoon at 2pm, on Thursday 12th Feb when Elma Stevenson & Vicky will demonstrate crafts.

**Public meeting to save rural communities in crisis**

A meeting about the future of Scotland’s most fragile rural communities will be held in Oban next Monday. The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and Argyll and Bute Council want to meet with residents to discuss the findings of the RSE’s recent Inquiry into Scotland’s Hills and Islands, which found that there was a critical need to integrate social, economic and environmental measures for rural areas and empower communities to act within an overall national strategy.

The Inquiry’s secretary Professor Roger Crofts said the purpose of the visit is to address a wide range of issues such as the future of the land, the economy and the role of government. Councillor Robert MacIntyre, Depute Leader of Argyll and Bute Council, said the meeting will take place at a time when Hill and Island agriculture in the west and north of the country is in a ‘state of crisis.’ As he put it, ‘Lack of profit combined with our geographical disadvantage means that factors like isolation, a hundred inches of rainfall in some areas, very high input and output costs plus political decisions have all contributed to our demise.’ The meeting will take place at the Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban on Monday 19th January at 12.30pm. Attendance is free and open to all.

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**Recycling...**

**are you still getting it sorted?**

Reduce Reuse Recycle

To celebrate Homecoming Scotland 2009 the pupils at Shiskine Primary School would like to invite any former pupils and staff to join us for the celebrations.

We would appreciate a loan of any photographs etc., and to learn of any anecdotes about the school. Please contact us by email with any questions or information as this is the easiest way for pupils to play a full part in our endeavours.

The school email address is contactus@shiskine.n-ayrshire.sch.uk
Christmas Colouring Competition

Our winning entry by Cami Corbett from Busby, Glasgow.

Shiskine Primary's Homecoming

TO CELEBRATE Homecoming Scotland 2009 the pupils at Shiskine Primary School would appreciate a loan of any photographs etc. and to learn of any anecdotes about the school. Please e-mail us with any questions or information on contactus@shiskine.n-ayrshire.sch.uk

Our first public event will be a charity coffee afternoon held in the School on Friday 30th January 2009 when visitors can view a whole school project on Scotland, covering times past and present through music, art, dance and science. The money raised will be set to the RNLI.

How to spend £10,000 and unite an island

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SEeks A PROJECT THAT ‘SERVES THE WHOLE COMMUNITY’

It’s not quite fiscal independence, but Arran is currently the first community in the country to take part in perhaps Scotland’s first step towards decentralisation. In a pilot project designed to showcase the SNP Government’s agenda for devolved decision-making, Arran’s Community Council (ACC) is deciding how to spend £10,000 gifted by the Scottish Government for the community benefit.

Earlier this week, Arran’s Community Councillors met to discuss a range of options. Since the ACC asked for ideas through the local press in October last year, over 20 suggestions have been submitted. The ideas range from a community allotment to the development of youth facilities to kitting out a mobile first-aid van that would attend village events.

LITMUS TEST FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

‘The main thing is to settle on a project that would serve the whole community,’ explained ACC chairman Campbell Laing before the meeting. ‘It’s difficult to find something that could benefit everyone.’ Arran — along with one of the urban Glasgow districts also involved in the pilot — is tackling the thorny issues that will inevitably surround changes to the existing structures of local democracy. It may be argued that some proposed uses of the £10,000 should already be delivered by the local authority or the National Health Service. It also tests the very feasibility of choosing a project that benefits all.

‘The Scottish Government picked Arran because we are unique in that we have a single community council that serves the whole island,’ Campbell told The Arran Voice. ‘Some of the difficulties we are finding here might not be encountered by other community councils that represent a single town. We represent a large island with many different villages. But we’ll do our very best as village representatives to use the money in everyone’s interest.’

Late news — It was agreed at the meeting that a good solution would be to set up an Arran Community Council website, fully interactive so that it would be a useful means of communication for the whole island.
Great gift to Riding for the Disabled

Photos by Arran Photography

WHAT STARTED OUT as an idea from the church parishioners of Whiting Bay and Kildonan to raise money for charity culminated today in the presentation of a cheque for £855 to Barbara Tinto on behalf of Riding for the Disabled. The innovative plan was that the children of the Parish would design a Christmas card that all the parishioners would sign and then make a donation in lieu of sending cards themselves. This raised £240, and along with a generous donation of £240 from a parishioner and the collection of £375 from the Christmas Church services totalled an amazing £855.

Riding for the Disabled on Arran provides a valuable resource for adults, who ride once a week and children, who ride once a fortnight. Prior to each lesson the riders have to ‘groom and tack up’ their steeds. Barbara has a devoted team of volunteers to help with all aspects of running and maintaining this valuable Island asset but says she is desperate for more help. If you feel you would like to enrich the lives of others and get some enjoyment from helping out please contact Barbara Tinto on 600 517.

Venison on show at Scottish Parliament

MSP KENNETH GIBSON sponsored a venison promotion event at the Scottish Parliament last week. The very popular reception aimed to tell the venison story 'from hill to plate', covering both wild and farmed venison, and provided an opportunity for MSPs to meet those who work in the industry — stalkers, deer farmers, processors, and land managers. More than 40 MSPs and their staff attended the reception, and acclaimed venison chef Nichola Fletcher gave cookery demonstrations in the Holyrood Garden Lobby, while a display of butchery and jointing was given by Bruce Brymer. Venison was also available in the Parliament Restaurant all week.

Introducing the event, Mr Gibson said: 'Venison contributed more than £70.4 million last year to the Scottish economy, and supports 966 full-time jobs directly and 1,544 indirectly through stalking, venison sales, tourism, hotels etc.' He emphasised the health value of this natural meat, and pointed out that 'With exports increasing year on year, venison is of significant and growing value to the Scottish economy and rural and island Scotland.'

Professor John Milne, Chairman, Deer Commission for Scotland, commented: 'Wild deer are a significant natural resource for Scotland. The health benefits and sheer tastiness of the venison produced in our hills, woodlands and fields should be more widely shared. The inclusion of venison on school and hospital menus throughout Scotland should be our next step.'

The red deer was voted by the public recently as Scotland’s most iconic species.

Stephen Gibbs of Dougarie Estates is Chairman of the Scottish Venison Working Group, the organisers of the event, and his enthusiasm for its potential was very evident. As he remarked, 'There is so much to say about venison — not least about where it comes from and how. It is so much a part of Scottish tradition and culture and its availability is steadily increasing. This initiative sees our industry joining together to promote venison's benefits to a far wider audience — and that has to be good for rural and island Scotland.'

DID YOU KNOW...?

- Scottish venison is the main product from four deer species — red, roe, sika, and fallow, and from farmed red deer
- The red deer is the largest land mammal in the UK
- The annual cull is around 107,000 deer. This produces around 3,500 tonnes of venison for human consumption
- Arran has around 2,000 deer
- Venison is of significant and growing value to the Scottish economy and rural and island Scotland, including Arran.

The health benefits of venison are greater than almost any other meat:

- Lower in fat than skinned chicken breast
- Higher in iron than any other red meat
- Rich in omega 3
- Low in cholesterol
- Free of antibiotics and growth promoter
Do you have an island-based event you want to promote? Add it to ArranOnline.com free of charge, and it will automatically appear in these listings (subject to space and suitability).

Alternatively, send details of your event to:
The Arran Voice Ltd, Pier Buildings, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8AX
THE UK GOVERNMENT is proposing to charge up to 28% interest on emergency loans from its Social Fund. These currently interest-free Social Fund loans are made available through Credit Unions to help less well-off households with the costs of such crises as funeral payments, maternity grants and cold weather payments. The Department for Work and Pensions now proposes to charge maximum interest rates on such payments.

Kenneth Gibson MSP said: “The social fund is a vital service for people on low incomes and benefits — including many of my Arran constituents. With rates at this level the UK Government is behaving as badly as some of the financial institutions that have contributed to the Credit Crunch.” Mr Gibson finds it ironic that the UK Government acknowledges the importance of the Social Fund in protecting people from loan sharks and yet proposes to become one itself, charging 26.8% APR. He points out that bank interest rates are down to 1.5% and calls the move ‘an outrageous proposal.’ He said this week, ‘The UK Labour Government should be ashamed of itself.’

1. James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, states in the Impact Assessment that the interest rate proposed would be ‘at the maximum charged by Credit Unions of 2% per month (26.8% APR).’
2. The average Store Card interest rate is between 25 and 30%.
3. Credit Card rates are at an average of 17.5%.
4. The UK is the only EU country without an interest rate cap on loans. Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland all have caps at 22% or less.

SIXTY PEOPLE IN Brodick Hall last Saturday were enchanted by the playing and singing of a group called Fires of Love. The four performers were Frances Cooper, soprano, whom we last heard on Arran with the delectable Dunedin Consort, Marcus Claridge, percussion, Gordon Ferries on lute and 4-course guitar, and Jonathan Hugh-Jones, who played lute and recorders and contributed a fine baritone voice.

Fires of Love specialise in the songs and dances of the 16th century, and Saturday’s programme centred round the French music that brought people some joy and relief in Paris during that terrible time of religious conflict. The Massacre of St Bartholomew occurred in 1572, when an unbelievable number of Huguenot Protestants were butchered. By the end of the century almost a quarter of the French population had died in the persecution that followed — and yet, despite the turbulence of the time when it was written, today’s listeners commented on the peace and simplicity of the music. At the far extreme from today’s often over-amplified volume, the instruments were quiet, with the beat of a hand-drum carefully scaled down to stay within the level and keep the balance right.

There was much street-theatre at the time, and one piece brought to life a narration interspersed with song that featured a sob-like little catch of the voice that was deeply affecting. Others had people tapping their feet to dancing rhythms. Intricate solos by Gordon Ferries on the small, multi-stringed guitar shaped like a ukulele featured impossibly high harmonics like the ringing of tiny bells and in one piece included a finger tap on the wood of the instrument, a little reminiscent of Spanish flamenco. The combination of soprano voice with bass recorder (which looks like the smaller grandfather of the bassoon but has none of its double-reed astringency) was particularly beautiful.

Frances Cooper sings with angelic freedom, and Jonathan Hugh-Jones is a true, multi-talented troubadour, turning with ease from song to playing and from one instrument to another. All the performers took a turn at introducing the next piece and filling in the historic background, and at the end, the audience applauded with an enthusiasm that could not have been bettered five centuries ago.
**For more news, this week and every week, register FREE at www.arranvoice.com / 15th January 2009**

**Marine News**

**By John Kinsman, Fishing Correspondent**

**GANNET RESCUE CHOPPER RESCUES GANNET**

LAST WEDNESDAY, HMS Gannet gave a helping hand (or rotor) to a baby gannet that needed to fly south for the winter. The wee gannet, named Maximus by his rescuers, was abandoned by his parents on the Bass Rock, about 12 miles off shore from St Monans in the Firth of Forth just before Christmas. He was just eight weeks old, too small to tackle the long migration flight on his own.

Staff at the Scottish Seabird Centre at North Berwick looked after him before deciding he was ready to take to the skies, but rather than release him on the North sea, where he would probably have died, the centre arranged for him to hitch a ride to warmer climes with the Royal Navy.

The crew of the suitably named HMS Gannet, a Sea King Rescue Helicopter from Prestwick, were called on to carry out this unusual airlift, and Maximus left on board a Sea King rescue helicopter (rescue 177) destined for Cornwall at midday 7 January.

Pilot Lt Commander Martin Lannie said: 'We had an aircraft going down to Cornwall, so we were happy to help out. This has to rate as one of the more unusual cargoes. We’d like to have offered him a VIP trip but he had to enjoy a cardboard box in the back of the helicopter.’

Maggie Sneddan (pictured), a volunteer worker at the seabird Centre, took Maximus to the base. She said: ‘He had a much more chance of survival if we took him south. If we took him out over the North sea it is so turbulent that he would have struggled.’

In Cornwall Maximus spent 24 hours in a bird centre and then he was ferried out to sea by a local fisherman, to be released off the Cornish coast.

The Bass rock colony is home to about 150,000 nesting gannets at the height of the season, but all this year’s chicks departed in October on their journey down to the Bay of Biscay or the west coast of Africa. Gannets can live for about 40 years and return to the same nesting site each year. Maximus must have been hatched too late to go with the others.

Let's hope he manages to meet up with the rest of the gannet colony, and perhaps returns to the Bass Rock next summer to raise his own family.
Stef's stab at the weather

By Stef Holmer
Amateur Meteorologist

Summary of last week’s forecast:

What a horrible weekend we had. Unfortunately the rain very obviously arrived, but it was very patchy. We played golf in a howling gale at Whiting Bay and although it did rain for a wee while it was fairly light, albeit horizontal! Then we spoke to someone just back from Lamlash, who was drenched in a very heavy downpour. Ah, the vagaries of our beloved weather. And it looks like we are entering an extremely unsettled period, so watch out. Stay put and batten down the hatches.

General Summary for 15th January to 19th January:

A very deep low pressure area developed just west of Ireland on Wednesday, tracking northwest towards the Western Isles on Thursday, and then up towards the Arctic on Friday. The tightly packed isobars and a cold front moving across from the west will bring some very strong winds and rain on Thursday. Things will settle down a bit on Friday and Saturday morning, but another intensive low is sweeping across the Atlantic. This will bring some really nasty weather again through Saturday and into Sunday.

Thursday
Looks like strong to gale force winds, mainly from the south or south east, on Thursday morning and it will be bucketing throughout the day. The winds should ease as the day goes on, down to 20mph by the afternoon. It will feel very cold at 8°C, but no frost.

Friday
The winds will continue to ease in the morning before picking up again to around 25mph or more in the afternoon, again from the south, then easing a bit again by evening. It will feel cold at 7°C and colder in that wind.

Saturday
Another rather cold day of wind and rain. It will be fairly light in the morning, but watch out in the afternoon and evening. I am looking at a forecast of 40 and 50mph southerly winds along with torrential rain. I would not consider a day trip to the mainland today.

Sunday
It will get much colder at 5°C and the winds still very strong (25mph or more), swinging round to the west with gale force gusts. We may see more glimpses of the sun but it will be mainly cloudy with the chance of some heavy sleet and snow falls which, in the strong winds, could cause drifting in some places.

Monday
Still becoming colder and no let up in the sleet and snow. In fact we will probably get more of the stuff. The winds from the west stay very strong. Oh, to be in Tenerife where the sun will be shining in temperatures of 20°C!

Outlook (Very long-range stuff)
Remaining quite windy for the rest of the week, but rainfall diminishing after Tuesday... still with us though. It will stay cold.

Ferry Notes
What can I say? Even this old sea dog finds it difficult to predict. On Thursday morning, the strong to gale force winds will be coming from a south easterly direction, and this would probably not affect the Caley Isles. However we now have the Clansman, and in my experience, she finds the entrance to Ardrossan more difficult. It is a similar picture in the afternoon, although the winds may drop a little.

Friday is looking OK, but on Saturday, while the morning sailings may be without too many problems, late afternoon and evening look horrendous! The wind (gale) will be more from the south, then swinging west on Sunday albeit dropping very slightly. Aaaaargh!

Arran Pipe Band calls for new recruits

WITH THE LOSS of two drummers in recent months, the Arran Pipe Band is on the lookout for new players to join its ranks. And, as people think about New Year resolutions, Pipe Band Major Malcolm Wheeler believes it is a good time for people to join the band.

‘We are always recruiting and it doesn’t matter what level you are at,’ says Malcolm. The band currently has twelve pipers and four drummers, but both Alan Stout and Drum Sergeant Grant Irving have recently retired from the band.

‘It’s a long, but rewarding process learning to play the pipes,’ says Malcolm. The band has some experienced teachers in the shape of Angus Adamson and Lindsay Proudfoot who teach the pipes and Ian Grant who teaches the drums. Players of all ages and ability are welcome.

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INSPIRATION

For anyone wanting a bit of inspiration, all you have to do is walk by Brodick village hall on a Friday evening and listen to the stirring skirl of pipes that fills the air. Last Friday was no exception as the Arran Pipe Band gathered for their first practice night of 2009. Malcolm said he looked forward to seeing the drummers on board next week after their ‘extended’ New Year absence from band practice!

Arran’s pipers are in hot demand at this time of the year to play at the Burns Suppers taking place around the island. The band performs at many of the island’s major events and is probably best known for its feisty performance at the Brodick Highland Games in August. For many, their rousing send-off to visitors leaving on the 7.20pm ferry is the highlight of the Games. The march along Brodick’s main street is led by Rosie Cook who adds a special touch of glamour to the occasion. ‘Rosie is our official mascot,’ explains Malcolm.

Ferry Notes
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For more news, this week and every week, register FREE at www.arranvoice.com / 15th January 2009

A year in pictures 2008

Duncan Mulholland demonstrated Arran Woodfuel's new woodchipping machine to Energy Minister Jim Mather in July. The MSP came to see plans by the Taste of Arran for a food production facility at Cladach. ‘It’s beginning to happen. Necessity is the healthier driver. People do what’s needed and that’s begun to happen here.’

Ewan McKinnon and Dougie MacFarlane meet on the 19th hole. There is another action-packed schedule of Association golf lined up for 2009. Ewan pipped Dougie to the pin on the 19th hole. There is another action-packed schedule of Association golf lined up for 2009. Ewan pipped Dougie to the pin on the 19th hole.

Campbell Sinclair and Janie McIntyre star with stunning attendence at the Arran Music and Drama Club’s production of ‘Annie Get Your Gun’ at the end of May. This club is now in the throes of rehearsals for this year’s musical ‘The Best Little Whimseas in Texas.’

Wullie Stevenson shows his skills at the 13th annual Tom Sorbie boat race. Ian MacLean steered ‘Nellie’ to first place in the 13th annual Tom Sorbie boat race. He steered ‘Nellie’ to first place.

Rosa Burn burst its banks turned camping mats into waterbeds. As the river levels rose one camper David McAllister was bitten by a watervole when he tried to rescue the rodent from the rising waters. Another camper in the final of the Champion of Champions golf competition for the third year running on Friday 22nd August. Ewan pipped Dougie to the pin on the 19th hole. There is another action-packed schedule of Association golf lined up for 2009.

Heavy rain in July meant Arran rescue services were involved in a dramatic airlift when campers in Glen Sannox were forced to close the Corrie shop at the end of September due to lack of demand. They have now re-opened to attract shoppers to the mainland.

Peter Stark was also caught in the flood: ‘The water was that bad that it was up to my neck, and I’m the biggest out of the lot. My missus cannae swim and I had to cokie-back my lassie all the way across.’

‘Subscriptions’, Voice for Arran, Pier Buildings, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8AX.

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Prices include postage and VAT where applicable. You can also order online at www.arranvoice.com.
GETTING TO KNOW

NINNA CRISP

By Alison Prince

NINNA CRISP AND her husband Maurice live in Murray Place, Lamlash. You can easily see which house is theirs — it has a wooden Wendy house in the front garden, and a wee red-and-white Danish flag can be seen inside the front room window. No prizes, then, for guessing that Ninna comes from Denmark, though you might need to explore further to discover that she is a highly qualified and experienced childminder. Framed certificates hang inside the front door, but much more important is the feeling of quiet, busy happiness in the front room, where there is nothing that could be broken or spoiled. Instead, a pleasantly open floor space and a capacious, comfy sofa provide an ideal place for young children to play and talk and explore.

Shortly before Christmas, an in-depth study of pre-school child-care was published — and it concluded that childminding was the best way for under-fives to be looked after if their parents had to go out to work. Child-minding at its best provides a warm, home-like atmosphere and has none of the stress that a young child may feel in the much bigger numbers attending a nursery. At present, Ninna looks after just three children, from 7.30am to 5.00pm, and provides them with their mid-day dinner. Three-year-old Jake McAllister was the only child present on the morning when I arrived, and he seemed wonderfully contented and happy. He came to greet the unexpected visitor, but after some conversation he became cheerful. he came to greet the unexpected — but Ninna feels that adult worries should not impinge on children. As she says, ‘If there is pressure at three years old, what will they be like at fifteen?’

GOING OUT

Ninna’s own two children are at Primary school now, and she takes a very creative approach to the hours spent with the wee group she looks after. She takes them outside as often as possible, because there’s a ‘different kind of imagination’ in the world of plants and earth and trees. ‘They need to find out what the world is like. They have to touch and feel and explore.’ Her own son, Jack, became fascinated by earthworms. He loved the look and feel of them and established a ‘wormery’ for them to live in — but the outdoor world often takes Ninna and her charges further afield. They go to the adventure playground at the Castle, or for walks into the Forestry at the Dyemill, and when the weather keeps them indoors, there are biscuits to bake and songs to sing, music to dance to and rhymes to join in with. ‘Kids need to use their brains,’ Ninna says firmly. 

As we talk, silent pictures of landscapes and trees are appearing on a computer screen, and sometimes wee Jake pauses to stare at them with interest — but Ninna only uses television as an occasional event. ‘Sometimes we have a ‘movie day’ she explains. ‘We draw the curtains and sell tickets, and watch a video, like going to the cinema.’ She feels that a constant TV background loses any comforting effect and becomes a half-ignored source of noise and distraction. ‘It’s important to talk to children,’ she says. ‘They need to build a vocabulary before they start school.’

Ninna was 18 years old when she came to Scotland to be a nanny. After working with a family in Newton Mearns, she was in central Glasgow for a while, with children whose parents brought them (and Ninna) to the Youth Hostel on Arran for holidays. She abandoned a plan to go to the Highlands and work in the ski-ing industry. Instead, she found a job at the Corrie Hotel, which she loved, and it was there that she met Maurice, who became her husband. Five years of working at the Co-op followed, which she enjoyed very much, and appreciated their generous allowance of a whole year of maternity leave when first Anna then Jack were born. As her children grew a little older, Ninna started looking for an occupation that would let her be at home with them. Child minding was the natural answer, and as a first step in her long series of qualifications, she did the North Ayrshire Council pre-registration training course, which she describes as ‘fantastic’. She also praises the Ayrshire Baby Book for its wealth of songs and poems and things to do.

For Ninna, life itself remains fantastic. Having visited countries where families live in terrible conditions of hardship and persecution, she is constantly aware of how lucky we are. ‘It’s so easy here,’ she says. ‘We have everything we really need, and we are free to go to what church we choose, all faiths are OK.’ Though a committed Christian, she is happy to celebrate the festivals of other faiths. ‘Soon it will be Chinese New Year,’ she says, ‘it’s early this year. Time for wee red envelopes with a coin and a good wish inside.

Jake cuddles on her lap for a photo and laughs at the flash, then goes back to his playing. Ninna’s gift to the future, in the form of happy, secure children who will with any luck become balanced and likeable adults, is incalculable.

Bangs, Snowboards and Sushi

By Christian Pomeroy

YOU ARE PROBABLY all too completely bored with hearing about my holidays (eg London) to read this article, but if you read on, BE WARNED; these articles contain much ranting at lack of hills, and the surfeit of water. They also contain handheld fireworks, thick and thin ice, mobile reception and a small see-through fish. OK, first the journey there (obviously).

We left two days after school broke up, packed our stuff, drove on the boat, drove off the boat, drove to my grandma’s house, and drove me completely mad.

The day after that just happened to be Christmas, so we opened our presents (mine was an iPod Docking Station) and then me, my sister, my cousin, my other cousin, and my other cousin’s girlfriend went snowboarding. It was an artificial slope, with proper artificial snow, and was so big there was an indoor ski-lift! I took some time, and the skin off my knees, (they said the snow was soft, but it wasn’t) to be able to stand up on the board, so after crashing into one of my cousins (or was it my cousin’s girlfriend?) at near-terminal velocity, we went off the practice slope, up the ski-lift and onto the large slope. I managed to stay on for about 4 minutes! Unfortunately, I also managed to stay off (or at least not standing up) for about 10. Sadly, and for some thankfully, that is all I can fit in the Wee Voice column this week, but for anyone who wants to read the rest, I will send the other half in next week.

This week’s Wee Voice is by Christian Pomeroy, who LOVES snowboarding!
Records and Rock

By Andrew Keeling

Andrew Keeling, the composer who wrote the music of 'Balloons', sends us this piece on his favourite records. His enthusiasms are different from those of Douglas Hamilton, who contributed our last series on classical recordings, but music comes in countless forms, and each one is special.

A RECORD COLLECTION is a personal thing as well being a reflection of the collector's tastes. When I arrived as a new boy at Oakham School in 1969 I found myself surrounded by the musical sounds of the period; the later Beatles releases such as Abbey Road and Let It Be, Cream with Goodbye Cream, Led Zeppelin, the Moody Blues and their memorable On the Threshold of a Dream and so on. But one evening in December of that same year I was introduced to In the Court of the Crimson King by King Crimson. It was a life changing event. From that moment onwards, becoming conscious of the counter-culture shaping the world, and realising that music was its mouthpiece, I set out to explore just about every album I could lay my hands on.

Each major label had its own subsidiary which looked after the so-called Progressive Rock bands. Periodically they released sampler albums, such as Nice Enough to Eat from Island Records. These normally included one song from each band. Nice Enough to Eat retailed at 7/6 (35p) and included songs from Nick Drake, Free, Mott the Hoople and others. The Harvest Records sampler release, Picnic, included tracks from Barclay James Harvest, Bakerloo, Pete Brown's Piblokto and Pink Floyd amongst many others. Today, Mojo and Uncut magazine include similar releases. This is a good way of checking out what's new. For example, I recently discovered the band Field Music from this source. Record Collector magazine and eBay are also useful ways discovering those elusive items.

Back in the '70's Radio 1 aired the John Peel Saturday Show and another called Sounds of the 70's. These, alongside the music press publications Melody Maker, NME and Sounds were invaluable for soaking up more of the scene. I was able to build a sort of mapping system of cross-referencing which I've found helpful for my work today. As a result, my record collection grew and grew. It must be remembered there was no internet then, and seldom any merchandising stalls at concerts. Certainly no MTV! The only way to get at what was happening was to go to concerts, listen to the radio and read the music papers. People say 'You had to be there' and that's true. I lived in London in 1973, working in the packaging department at Transatlantic Records, the world's smallest independent label, responsible for releases by Ralph McTell, Bert Jansch, Pentangle, Storyteller and so on. This was crucial to my understanding of how a record company actually worked in practice.

My wife has just put her head around the door, complaining, 'It's getting too much ... all these records of yours! This is one of the hazards of being a record collector.

(Or, of course, of being a husband!! Ed.)

The Burnside

Happy New Year

While we are awaiting the launch of the Building Design Competition for the new Art Centre...

The Gallery and art shop will be open from 1.30pm to 5.30pm daily Friday through to Wednesday including Weekends (closed Thursday) or by arrangement

Anyone needing us outside these hours can telephone 01770 303888, leaving a message and telephone number, or e-mail info@theburnside.com, and we will get back to you.

20% OFF arts and crafts materials still available in wee shop Please note: these will be the last supplies until new art shop is built.

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The final entry

By Margaret Kay

THURSDAY AGAIN — and this time it's one in a long series of 'lasts', as Wee Malkie goes to his new family tomorrow. Don't know just how much Bella will miss him, if at all. She has been so patient with him and even tonight has been lying behind him — but I guess it must be kind of sore on her now as his little teeth are like needles and he gets furry in, as he does most things in life, with gusto! Lots of the time she just plays with him and lets him wrestle her to the ground. He then has a tug of war with her whiskers or her ears or her tail.

He is quite unperturbed by her rumbling noises (which don't really sound as though she means them) and just keeps going back for more rough and tumble.

He is great pals with Ruby, although I think she may get the bunting out when he goes and she becomes the centre of attention again. Her smooth silky coat bears more than a passing resemblance to Dusty Springfield's beehive after he has finished playing with her and roughing up her hair. For such a small bundle, he has a much bigger impact on the household than his size would suggest.

Spangles, the grumpy one who is his Great Gran, just dotes on him. She is always very maternal and muscles in on making sure his ears and teeth and eyes are clean. She holds him down quite patient with him and even tonight has been attached to it so as it is still familiar to him. He doesn't like being closed in during the day as he prefers to sleep on a furry dog bed or the floor (I think all the dogs suggested to Clifford Latona that he persuade me to install underfloor heating) but he knows the routine and goes to bed quite happily at night, so he should not keep Peter and Elizabeth up overnight when he moves to Darvel.

We have a very early start in the morning, so Malkie's stuff is all out in the car, including his Kennel Club paperwork and pedigree. His registration papers arrived yesterday and his pedigree today — talk about cutting it fine! His registered name is Auchenrow Stroke Of Luck, which I've found helpful for my work today. As a result, my record collection grew and grew. It must be remembered there was no internet then, and seldom any merchandising stalls at concerts. Certainly no MTV!

My wife has just put her head around the door, complaining, 'It's getting too much ... all these records of yours! This is one of the hazards of being a record collector. (Or, of course, of being a husband!! Ed.)

We thank Margaret for sharing her puppy's first days with us — best of luck to Wee Malkie/Ben and his new family.
Red Squirrel Ale photos shortlisted

OVER THE PAST few weeks the Arran Brewery and The Arran Voice have run a competition to find the perfect picture of a red squirrel to be used on the bottle of the company’s new Red Squirrel Ale. After a steady stream of very high quality entries, the Arran Brewery now has the difficult task of selecting a winning image.

News of the Brewery’s latest beer has piqued the interest of ale-lovers and conservationists alike. Over the Christmas period both the Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group and the European Squirrel Initiative congratulated the Brewery for its plans to use some of the profits from the sale of the beer to support a local red squirrel conservation project. Earlier this week, brewer Kevin Dewar was in the final stages of completing the new ale and the Brewery is now working on designing some attractive labels for Arran’s latest export.

SHORTLIST

The three photos above have been shortlisted for selection. Have a look in next week’s Arran Voice to find out which one will be used on the labelling for the Red Squirrel Ale and who won the £100 prize. A huge number of other excellent entries to the competition were submitted. Here are a few of them (see below) and thank you to all those who contributed. Arran’s squirrels are surely blushing red with photographed pride.

Recipe

By Janis Murchie

LEEK AND POTATO SOUP

A winter warmer to see you through a chilly day. Suitable for vegetarians.

Ready in 35 minutes, serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 leeks, trimmed and sliced
- 1 large potato, peeled and diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 800ml vegetable stock
- 300ml semi-skimmed milk
- 4tbsp crème fraîche

Method

1. Put the leeks, potato, bay leaf and stock in a pan. Cover, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the milk and simmer for 5 minutes.
2. Discard the bay leaf. Purée the soup and pour into 4 bowls. Add a spoonful of crème fraîche to each and garnish.
Filmobile brings Australia and a mouse with big ears

By Alison Prince

THE FILMOBILE, which shows recently-released films in the Community Theatre in Lamlash High School, is bringing two offerings next week. On Thursday and Friday January 22nd and 23rd, it has the epic spectacular, Australia, and on Saturday it has just as much fun on a smaller scale with The Tale of Despereaux, a cartoon film about a cheerful rat played by Dustin Hoffman.

Australia stars Nicole Kidman as Lady Sarah Ashley, who travels Ozzwards from England in order to make her ne’er-do-well husband sell his grotty cattle station called Faraway Downs and start behaving properly. Her husband doesn’t turn up to meet her at Darwin, but sends a man simply known as Drover, played by Hugh Jackman, to escort her to Faraway Downs. They arrive there to find that Lady Sarah’s husband has been murdered. Things get complicated after that, but Nicole Kidman looks ravishing and the cattle act their socks off. There are touching intimate altogether. Roscuro (Dustin Hoffman), a ship’s rat who has ventured as befits a world inhabited by mice, the scope of the huge country is magnificent.

As befits a world inhabited by mice, the scope of The Tale of Despereaux is more intimate altogether. Roscuro (Dustin Hoffman), a ship’s rat who has ventured ashore, manages to fall off a chandelier into the queen’s soup in the opening minutes, causing her to have a fatal heart attack, and things go merrily on from there. Despereaux, a mouse born with very big ears and the voice of Matthew Broderick, is something of a maverick but, and is very nearly eaten by a tethered cat for the amusement of rats round a dining table. However, Roscuro is a sweet soul at heart, and rescues the wee mouse. Robbie Coltrane is Gregory the gaoler, and all these stars probably had a whale of a time as they acted out this gently wacky fantasy. Good fun for the kids and any adults in need of daft relaxation.

News from the Blues

THIS WEEK

SGT Andrew Brown has been on the island covering for Sgt Bob MacKay. PC Danielle Hepburn has also been working with the local police team. It’s been reasonably busy.

SPEED CHECKED

The police have continued their on-going road safety campaign by operating speed checks at various places around the island. No-one was charged with speeding during the week, but a number of warnings were issued.

HEDGE ROW

A group of youths were warned for causing damage to garden hedges in Montrose Terrace in Brodick after the police received complaints from homeowners. The damage was caused during two separate incidents of hedge-bashing on the 6th and 8th of January. The hedges were trashed as a result of young people running through them at speed.

GROTTY VANDALISM

On 7th January between 6pm and 7.30pm a Vauxhall Vectra owned by a 48 year old Lamlash woman was cruelly vandalised in Whiting Bay. Dog faeces had been smeared over the car and underneath the vehicle’s door handles. Police are following a positive line of enquiry to find the person responsible for the upsetting act.

FIREARMS CHARGE

A 52 year old man from the Southend was charged on the 8th of January after it was discovered four days earlier that he had committed offences in relation to firearms licensing and storage regulations. A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal and Licensing authority.

DANGEROUS DRIVING

On the 8th of January a 73 year old Lamlash lady was charged with dangerous driving on the Brodick-Lamlash road. A police patrol vehicle present at the scene noticed the driving behaviour and stopped the driver. A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

The People of the Other Village

By Thomas Lux (1946)

The people of the other village
hate the people of this village
and would nail our hats
to our heads for refusing in their presence to remove them
or staple our hands to our foreheads
for refusing to salute them
if we did not hurt them first: mail them packages of rats,
mix their flour at night with broken glass.
We do this, they do that.
They peel the larynx from one of our brothers’ throats.
We devine one of their sisters.
The quicksand pits they built were good.
Our amputation teams were better.
We trained some birds to steal their wheat.
They sent to us exploding ambassadors of peace.
They do this, we do that.
We cancelled our sheep imports.
They no longer bought our blankets.
We mocked their greatest poet
and when that had no effect
we parodied the way they dance
which did cause pain, so they, in turn, said our God
was leprous, hairless.
We do this, they do that.
Ten thousand (10,000) years, ten thousand
(10,000) brutal, beautiful years.

Thomas Lux is a distinguished American poet and teacher. Our poetry editor heard him performing recently and described him as ‘a zany and powerful presence.’
Win an Arran Aromatics gift box worth £30 this week
You have until Tuesday, 27 January 2009 to send in your completed cryptic crossword.
This week’s crossword sponsored by Arran Aromatics, Tel: 01770 302595, Website: www.arranaromatics.com. Winners are asked to contact the shop before collecting their prize.
Answers to last week’s crossword will be printed next week.

Cryptic Clues

Across
1 Tired Scots wait round Boys Brigade (6)
5 Crop strike animal (8)
10 Flicker flash (5)
11 Dumbfounded (9)
12 'e set every last night (9)
13 Wish granting spirits (5)
14 Powerless an' blue (6)
15 Good health, or spit (6)
17 Her ski ramblers (6)
19 Satirical press 99 (6)
22 Umbilicus sounds nautical (5)
24 Recommends lawyers (9)
26 Carats sic biting (9)
27 Small role carved stone (5)
28 Alarming dread a few (8)
29 Hand over to the enemy punt shaft (6)

Down
1 Disclaim responsibility for personal hygiene act (4,4,5,2)
2 Jack's ladder to fame and fortune pulses say (9)
3 Writer's reserve black liquid ok (7)
5 Cannabis cigarette jacket (6)
6 Whole number greetin' (7)
7 Small stream or bun (5)
8 Arrest east toy duck station (4,4,7)
9 Funeral vigil (4)
16 Primitive clock and mister confused (9)
18 Reads around beholde charges again (7)
20 Reclaim one hundred celery (7)
21 Small fowl veto cloth cap (6)
23 See 25 down
25,23 Evil mixed avers the opposite (4,5)

Quick Clues — just for fun!

Across
1 An awkward swaying gait (6)
6 Hinged dining table (8)
10 Angry (5)
11 Concerning the lower body (9)
12 A period of testing to assess suitability (9)
13 Goes out (5)
14 Country of east central Africa (6)
15 Towards the back of a ship (6)
17 Scottish monster (6)
19 Edible tuber (6)
22 Edible nut (5)
24 Scottish reel (9)
26 Keeness (9)
27 Indian fritter (5)
28 Loud and harsh (8)
29 Scots grease (6)

Down
1 Impudent young people (15)
2 Lines running from corner to corner (9)
3 The side toward which the wind is blowing (7)
5 Animal such as a rat or a mouse (6)
6 Spoils (7)
7 Weariness (5)
8 Becomes enamoured of (5,2,4,4)
9 The Wise Men (4)
16 Complicated (9)
18 Blanked (7)
20 Tenth month (7)
21 Humble (6)
23 Tobacco roll (5)
25 Catch ones breath (4)

Please send your completed crosswords to The Arran Voice, Pier Buildings, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8AX. Alternatively, e-mail your answers to info@arranvoice.com, with the word “Crossword - issue 92” in the subject line.

Name: ..............................................................................................................
Address: ...........................................................................................................
Telephone/E-mail: ..........................................................................................
15th January 2009 / The Arran Voice Ltd  Tel: 01770 303 636  E-mail: info@arranvoice.com

Issue 91 Sudoku & Kakuro Solutions

Sudoku

Sudoku really only has one rule: Every row, column and 3x3 box must contain the numbers 1 through 9. We’ve given you a medium and hard puzzle to try. Visit our website at www.arranvoice.com to find new Sudoku puzzles everyday!

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please note that the answers and winner for issue 91’s crossword will appear here in next week’s issue.

Kakuro

How to do Kakuro

Fill in the blank squares in the grid with numbers from 1-9 so that each horizontal or vertical line adds up to the total given in the box either to the left or above it. Horizontal totals are given in the top right corners of the shaded boxes. Vertical totals are given in the bottom left corners. You may not use the same number more than once in any run. The number may be used again, however, in the same row or column, but as part of another run.

Star Birthdays

1759 The British Museum opens.
1889 The Coca-Cola Company, then known as the Pemberton Medicine Company, is originally incorporated in Atlanta, Georgia.
1892 James Naismith publishes the rules for basketball.
1991 The United Nations deadline for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from occupied Kuwait expires, preparing the way for the start of Operation Desert Storm.
2001 Wikipedia, a free online encyclopedia, is launched.

1945 Princess Michael of Kent, British royal
1965 James Nesbitt, Northern Irish actor
1972 Claudia Winkleman, English television presenter
1975 Edith Bowman, Scottish television presenter
1981 Sean Lamont, Scottish Rugby Union player

Recycling

Did you know that you can recycle your old unwanted items free of charge on ArranOnline.com?

If you have something that’s just taking up space – why not visit ArranOnline.com, register free, and offer it to someone else?

You can also put in requests for items that you need.

There are full guidelines on the website, but the main rule is that only items that are being offered free should be added.

If there is space, we’ll also add a note of items available for recycling in our Classifieds section of the paper.

Remember – one person’s rubbish can be another person’s treasure!

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You can also order online at www.arranvoice.com

“Aye – it’s good tae be back – isnae that a phoenix on yer roof?”
It’s a Car’s Lot

POLICE SPENT £50K REPAIRING FUEL MISTAKES

Facts made known through Freedom of Information have revealed that over the last 5 years, Strathclyde Police spent £54,026 repairing damage to engines after officers had filled their cars with the wrong type of fuel. 363 of the fleet’s 1,148 vehicles were fuelled with petrol instead of diesel between 2003 and 2008.

Putting petrol in diesel car or vice versa can have disastrous results if the engine is then switched on. Restoring it to its normal function can cost several thousand pounds. Even if the embarrassed driver realises the mistake straight away, the car will have to be towed away to a special cleansing area, where the tankful of new fuel will be pumped out and dumped and the tank cleaned out at a cost of about £150. And of course, a new tankful of the correct fuel will add a further cost to the grand total.

Amazingly, one in four cars in the Strathclyde fleet have been filled with the wrong fuel since 2003. This is despite the fact that ‘fuel tabs’ were fitted five years ago. Glasgow’s MSP Frank McAveety said, ‘It seems a terrible waste of money. If the police are going to invest in anything it would need to be observational skills.’

Most drivers would probably agree that car manufacturers ought to make the filler caps on vehicles specific to either petrol or diesel, since the mistake of putting in the wrong fuel is such a time-consuming and costly one. Anyone familiar with the TV show Dragons’ Den may have noticed that it recently featured the Fuel Angel, a Misfuelling Prevention Device that can be fitted into the wide neck of a diesel vehicle filler to prevent the narrower nozzle of an unleaded petrol pump from being inserted. At £39.95, it might be a cheaper bet than the loss of time, money and fuel resulting from a day-dreaming officer’s mistake. However, the force has no plans to try the device.

Jane Wisson, Head of Transport and Logistics for Strathclyde Police, seemed pleased that the incidence of mis-filling had dropped over the past five years. She said, ‘In 2003 we experienced 80 mis-fuelled vehicles; in 2008 that figure was reduced to 42.’ That’s getting on for three a month, all the same. Forgive us for sounding less than impressed, but it sounds like a case of Could Do Better.

CARS FOR SALE

‘08 Toyota Yaris Diesel
5 Door, Blue, 7,380 Miles

‘07 Ford Mondeo Diesel 130 LX
5 Door, Gold

‘05-05 Nissan Almera 1.5 S
5 Door, Silver, 21,000 Miles

‘05-54 Vauxhall Astra Estate
Club CDTI Diesel, Silver
79,000 Miles

‘03 Jeep Cherokee Sport 2.5 CR
Diesel, Green Metallic
53,000 Miles

‘02 BMW 320D Touring
5 Door Estate, Blue Metallic

‘02 Hyundai Santa Fe 4x4
2.0 Diesel, Silver, 80,000 Miles

‘02 Toyota Avensis Saloon
Silver, 73,000 Miles

2001 X-Reg Renault Scenic 1.4
5 Door, Green, 25,000 Miles

2000 W-Reg Citroën Saxo
1.1 Forte
Red Metallic, 46,000 Miles

X-Reg BMW 320
4 Door, Black (Diesel)

T-Reg Vauxhall Corsa Breeze 1.0
3 Door, Silver, 32,000 miles

R-Reg Citroën Xsara Estate
Diesel, Green Metallic

VANS/COMMERCIALS

55 Reg ‘06 VW Transporter T28
White, 44,000 Miles

55 Reg Ford Transit 280
With extra row of seats

04 Citroën Berlingo
2.0 HDI, White

04 Ford Transit SWB
Medium Roof, White

Tel: 01770 840 231
Open Monday – Saturday
8.00am – 6.00pm
FOR SALE

Potatoes for sale — Golden Wonder, Kerrs Pinks, Marris Piper, dirty carrots and pony carrots. Regular deliveries Sliddery-Brodick. Contact W. Cook 820218

Arran Lamb Prepared for the freezer £5/kg Delivered throughout the Island. Please Contact Richard McMaster - Tel 820 253

Arran mutton available. £3/kg. Island delivery available. Please contact Richard McMaster - Tel 01770 820 253

New 30 String Irish Harp with carry bag £250 ono phone 302150

IKEA - Tall pine unit with four glass shelves - £40.00 Tel: 860 395

SERVICES

Clifford Latona Plumbing and Heating Engineers. Tel: 01770 600391 Corgi, Calor and Oftec registered.

Professional Garden Services, Hedges, grass, pruning, strimming, drainage, paths, patios, decking, fencing etc. Free estimates. Call Tony 303539

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PAT testing for all your electrical appliances. Call Chris — 302 397.

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in The Arran Voice

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in Classifieds — £16 (mono)
in Personals — £11 (mono)

1/16 Advert £46 (Mono)/£60 (colour)
in Classifieds — £30 (mono)
in Personals — £20 (mono)

Line Ads from only £3.50 per line

Discounts available for block bookings

We will be happy to discuss any ideas you have.

Our full ratecard is online at: www.arranvoice.com

RECYCLING

Lots of German books free to good home(s): Novels, thrillers, non-fiction etc. Call Assja (700 662) or just drop by at the Argentine and make your choice.

Bagged Manure for uplift — Tel 800 517.

Large capacity Lec fridge with internal light, in full working order. Now surplus to requirements. Call Chris or Jan on 302 397. Will need to be collected from Belvedere in Brodick by the end of this week.

18 speed mountain bike, hardly used but needs new tyres and thorough overhaul. Free to uplift from Corrie Tel 810640

A fully operational PC, running Windows XP, built to last by Andrew Grazier, is offered free to a good home. Call Chris or Jan on 302 397.

Do you have something for sale? Our competitive rates and clearly laid-out advertising will help sell your car, boat, sofa... whatever you have.

Classified listings start at just £3.50 + VAT, though charities benefit from significant savings on our standard rates.

You can add your recycle items to ArranOnline.com free of charge, and they will appear here automatically, subject to space and suitability.

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& SPION KOP WOODWORK

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ON HILL BETWEEN LAMLASH & WHITING BAY

PHONE: 01770 600 474
Lamlash Bridge Results

MONDAY 12TH JANUARY
N/S
1. J. Barclay & E. McNiven +1170
2. D. & M. Bruce +1110
3. J. McBride & E. Sillars +970

E/W
1. T. Martin & D. Hamilton +3430
2. J. Maclure & A. McKelvie +720
3. P. Adamson & E. McConnell +280

Brodick Bridge Results

9TH JANUARY 2009
N/S
1. T. Martin & D. Hamilton -440
2. M. McGill & E. McConnell -550
3. J. & J. Beattie -600

E/W
1. H. Boyd & L. Paul +1700
2. E. McNiven & L. Tricket +1220
3. J. Murchie & J. McBride +1000

Double tops the lot

Continued from page 24

DUDE LOOKS LIKE A LADY

The two gents seemed to be in contravention of the 'mixed' requirement for the competition, but as the young Mulholland loosened up his darts arm to chants of Aerosmith's 'Dude looks like a lady,' the judges appeared not to notice the gender imbalance.

A starting score of 501 was played for the final match and Paula and Eddie eventually came out on top, nailing the encounter 2-0.

'I'm very chuffed,' said Paula, who is captain of the Kildonan ladies darts team. 'I didn't play to the best of my abilities because I couldn't see the board very well towards the end of the night,' she confessed.

NEXT MATCH

Very generous raffle fodder supplied by the Kildonan Ladies darts team provided some great commiseration prizes and darts players now look forward to the Donald McKenzie Memorial Darts competition on the 28th February.

Golf Results

Arran Golf Results - 15th January 2009

The Arran Golfers Association winter league match due to be played last weekend has been rescheduled for this Saturday 17th January. Matches are as follows:

- Corrie v Lamlash
- Machrie Bay v Brodick
- Whiting Bay v Shiskine

Machrie Bay Golf Club

Results:
Tuesday 6th January, Winter Cup
1st Peter Emsley 63
2nd Hamish Bannatyne 64
3rd David Wilkinson 65
Scratch, Hamish Bannatyne 69
Two's: Niel Frost, Hamish Bannatyne

2008 Two's Competition winner was Hamish Bannatyne with 30 points
2nd Drew Crawford 27 points
3rd Alistair MacDonald & David Wilkinson were equal on 20 points

This year over £300 was raised for charity and will be shared between Cancer Research UK, Marie Curie & Clic Sargent

Fixtures:
Tuesday 20th January, Lochranza Hotel Cup, 12pm tee-off

Shiskine Golf and Tennis Club

Results:
Thursday 8th January, Ladies 18 hole Medal
1st Sally Brookes 91-24 67 (bih)
2nd Alice Anderson 87-20 67
3rd Liz Kerr 85-19 69

Best Scratch, Liz Kerr 85

Whiting Bay Golf Club

Fixtures:
Sunday 18th, Winter Cup Round 4
Sunday 25th, Medal
CALCUTTA CUP COMES TO ARRAN

ISLAND’S RUGBY FANS WILL HAVE CHANCE TO HOLD LEGENDARY TROPHY

This Saturday (17th January) representatives from Murrayfield are bringing the Calcutta Cup to Arran, giving islanders a rare chance see up close the much-coveted trophy, a symbol of the healthy and longstanding rivalry between Scotland and England.

Last year Scotland brought the trophy home to Murrayfield after beating England 15-9 in a memorable clash at Edinburgh. And as long as the Firth of Clyde doesn't decide to throw a tantrum, it will be sailing its way to Arran on the 9.45am ferry from Ardrossan.

GET SNAPPED

From 12pm, as Arran’s senior rugby team kicks off against Cowal RFC, the prestigious bit of silverware will be available for the public to see and hold and have their pictures taken with.

For non-rugby fans, the Calcutta Cup is a rugby union trophy awarded between Scotland and England during the Six Nations tournament. The match has been played 115 times as each year the old foes compete for the cup presented to Rugby Football Union in 1879 by the Calcutta Football Club. Calcutta FC had joined the RFU after their players were inspired by the passion of a match played in their city between England and a team representing Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

MELTED SILVER

When eventually the Indian club disbanded, its funds — held in silver Rupees — were melted down to form the cup, a piece of stunning Indian workmanship. 18 inches high, the body is finely engraved and has three king cobras as its handles and on top of the domed lid is a silver elephant.

Let's hope that Arran RFC charge like proverbial elephants against Cowal and do the spirit of amateur sporting competition proud.

Who will beat Bar Eden?

IN ANOTHER familiar set of pool results, Bar Eden saw off Corrie at home last Thursday to keep their perfect clean sheet of wins. The score finished up 9-3, with Corrie hardly at the races. The visitors did not win any of their doubles matches, suggesting that some players had not been practising during the New Year festivities.

Elsewhere Kildonan continued their own perfect score. They were beaten away by Catacol 8-4 and lost the Gallon round to boot. Kildonan remain resolutely at the bottom of the table with no points won yet this season.

The Cameronia beat the PHT 7-5 in a close encounter of the Whiting Bay kind and the Southend P.T. 1934 squad could not halt the advances of Drift Inn Drift Out, as their Lamlash visitors came and conquered 8-4. With their pub shut for the time being, the Drift team is homeless, but with an away match this week, and hopes that the Lamlash bar will re-open. Captain Lee Girbow has yet to ask the RNLI for help

DOUBLES

There have been some shock doubles results, with Murray Picken and Niall McMaster being well beaten by Frazer Campesi Barr and Danny Head. And the [1]Arran Voice[/1]'s hotly-tipped favourites, Steve Heaney and Iain Murchie, blasted away their first obstacle in their journey towards the silverware by seeing off the Sannox brothers partnership of Ewan and Pete McKinnon.

Doubles results as of 13th January are as follows:

- D. Head/F. Barr (Bar Eden) beat M. Picken/N. McMaster (P.T. 1934)
- I. Murchie/S. Heaney (Drift) beat P. McKinnon/E. McKinnon (Corrie)
- L. Little/I. Roberts (PHT) — Bye
- S. Weir/S. Logan (Catacol) beat M. McDonald/W. McDonald (Drift)
- J. Lyon/S. Lawson (Catacol) — Bye
- H. Driver/C. Wannop (Kildonan) beat D. Smith/E. Picken (P.T. 1934)
- M. Worthington/C. Galloway (P.T. 1934) beat A. Jeffrey/C. Trail (Catacol)
- S. McGovern/S. Pringle (Bar Eden) beat T. Mulholland/S. Patrick (P.T. 1934)
- L. Girbow/C. Black (Drift) — Bye
- J. Copperwheat/S. Scott (Drift) — Bye

Sport-at-a-glance

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR LAMLASH?

Lamlash football club is hoping to resurrect a squad this year and restore the natural balance of five teams in the island's summer football league. A meeting is being held this Friday 16th January at the Pierhead Tavern. The Arran Voice hopes to pen a full report detailing the outcome of discussions (including likely captaincy, new signings, club sponsor and their season's ambitions) for next week's paper.

JUNIOR RUGBY

Arran's under-16s rugby team takes on Cumnock at home this Sunday 18th January. Come along to Ormidale park and lend your support.

POKER NIGHT WIN

A good crowd turned out for a poker tournament last Friday at the Catacol Bay Hotel. Over 20 people pitched up for the competition and by the end of the evening Scott Weir had scooped the £100 pot.

Arran progress to next round

AFTER ANOTHER cancelled Cup match against Mull rugby club last weekend, Arran move to the next round of the Cup competition and will face Greenock. At the time of going to press, the date for the fixture had yet to be decided.

COWAL MATCH

This weekend Arran RFC will play Cowal in their first competitive match of the season. Like Arran, Cowal were promoted to West League Division 2 last year and are sitting in 8th position in the league after taking only 4 points from their first six games. Come along and lend your support for a 12pm kick-off at Ormidale park.
Motorcyclists in Nigeria have found a novel way to evade the newly introduced law forcing them to wear crash helmets. They don a calabash, or dried pumpkin, instead. Real helmets cost around £20, well beyond the reach of many of the motorbike taxi drivers plying their trade on Nigerian city streets. The taxi drivers have protested at the introduction of the law by driving in convoy waving palm fronds in the city of Kaduna, whilst complaining that often passengers steal the helmets at their journey’s end. Passengers, on the other hand, complain that being forced to wear the helmets puts them at risk of having spells cast on them by the motorcyclists. ‘Some people can put juju inside the helmets and when they are worn the victim can either lose consciousness or be struck dumb,’ passenger Kolawole Aremu told the Daily Trust newspaper.

It should be noted that on Arran reverse juju applies; you can lose consciousness, be struck dumb or even worse if you do NOT wear a helmet...

DARLING DARTS DUO Paula Rouine and Eddie Picken flew to victory at last weekend’s Southend darts tournament. Over 20 folks had gathered at the Kildonan Hotel for an eagerly anticipated competition, which saw leading island darts-masters pitted head to head in mixed pairings.

The early rounds threatened to stretch proceedings into a two-day tournament as players found themselves taking a bit longer than expected to reach the double finish stage. Despite the reduced target of 301, and a healthy smattering of ‘26’ scores, many of the rounds were being settled in battles to find that elusive double ‘1’. Players were given plenty of encouragement, with spectators and judges alike urging them to ‘just hit the ****ing thing.’

And Finally ...

**MOTORCYCLE MAGIC**

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**SOUTHEND PAIR OVERCOME CONTROVERSIAL PARTNERSHIP**

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**FOUR HORSE RACE?**

Some big names dropped out in the early rounds with Alan MacLeod and Jill MacLeod, Jamie Picken and Flora Lammie all losing their games against the odds. But as the field thinned out some quality still remained and it looked to be a four horse race between the pairing of Niall McMaster and Keyd and Eddie and Paula.

This likely showdown was upset by late entrants Tommy Mulholland and John Allen, who showed impressive fight to make the semi-finals. After Paula and Eddie cruised by Trisha and Nick in the first of the semis (2-0), Tommy and John took the scalps of Niall and Keyd in a comeback bout. John hit the winning double to make it 2-1 and seal a climactic showdown against Paula and Eddie.

Continued on page 22