



Welcome to the first edition of Voice for Arran!

Thursday 8th April 2010

This is a free newspaper, issued weekly online at no cost. If you can spare a few moments, please print a few copies of it and put them in your local shop, Post Office, Village Hall etc so that people who don't have computers can read it as well. It needs to be available all over the island.

Our aim is to provide a useful free-sheet newspaper that will publicise all Arran activities with no charge for editorial reviewing of your events and ridiculously low rates for adverts. In order to cover expenses, we will ask businesses to consider taking out a yearly subscription for £35, which will buy them a year's publicity for all the events they put on. For charities and voluntary groups, the subscription is just £20 a year for the same service – less than 50p a week. This, we hope, will be a big help to festivals and ongoing Arran enterprises.

People who want to have a box advert for their trade or services can do so – just contact us on info@voiceforarran.com. We're setting up a PayPal facility online, or you can send a cheque to Woodside, Kildonan, Arran KA278RP, made out to Voice for Arran. Once we have enough funds to meet overheads, we'll try to reimburse people for printing off Voice copies each week, but right now, we'd be immensely grateful if you could do this as a voluntary service so as to get the paper started. Your help will be of huge value and the paper should be well worth it in terms of usefulness to everyone.

Because we have no paid staff, we can't send a reporter to cover events. The paper will depend on the public to e-mail us their news, photos, requests and opinions. Don't worry if you're not used to writing for publication – glitches will be sorted, though like every publication, we'll have fingers crossed to ward off gremlins.

If you are reading this on Thursday 8th April, please come to a meeting at 5.30 today at the Glen Cloy Suite, Auchrannie Spa, at which we'll be sorting out further details. If you can't, not to worry – just drop us a message on info@voiceforarran.com or phone 700 574 or 820 361. The Voice is now being run by the Arran community on a completely voluntary basis. So far, 32 people have signed up to give a hand, and offers are still coming in. There's no limit to the number who can be part of it. Nobody gets paid, but nobody has to do very much, either. Today or any day, you will be more than welcome to be part of the new Voice for Arran.

Monsters launched

In our picture, Diana Riddell and Gordon Davidson hold up The Book of Arran Monsters, which they launched at the Book and Card Centre in Brodick last Saturday. Diana,



who teaches at Lamlash Primary school, has written several books of poems for children as well as a show for giant puppets, but this time she turned a cheerful pen to the invention of

some mythical Arran beasts. We have the Corrie Cuddler, the Machrie Masher, the Pirmill Pouncer among many others, and Corrie artist Gordon Davidson has set the poems into drawings that make it clear just how weird the monsters are, while respecting the balance and design of each A4 page. The double spread for the Kilmory Giant, a rather more serious and evocative poem, is a delight,

with shafts of sun breaking through dark clouds and a buzzard winging its way along the horizon.

Gordon, who has for many years given support to Peruvian youngsters in need has an exhibition opening at the Peruvian Embassy in London on April 28th. Because the Embassy person who had commissioned the show had left by the time Gordon got back from Peru with his paintings, there was a nasty moment when nobody seemed to know anything about the commission, but intervention from the Anglo-Peruvian Society did the trick. We wish Gordon all the best for his new show, and hope that Diana does equally well with the self-published Monsters.

What about these Special Uplift prices?

NAC is now charging £12.50 for up to five items collected from a house by their Special Uplift service. Any more than that are charged at £2.40 per item. It's free to take things to the coup in Market Road yourself, but you have to phone for an appointment first. An indignant resident pointed out that this penalises the elderly or infirm who don't have cars, and may well encourage fly-tipping, as you have to pay £12.50 even for a single item. We all know the Council is strapped for cash, but nobody wants to see old mattresses and

defunct TVs dumped at the roadside or down the bank of some handy burn. What do people think? Our letters page is open for your opinions. E-mail info@voiceforarran.com.

Since the above was written, Katy Clark MP has e-mailed a comment, as follows:

'I am extremely concerned about the potential impact the removal of this service will have on the environment, from increased fly tipping. If people have to pay for the service some may think the easier option is simply to dump their unwanted goods in rural areas. This causes a blight on our beautiful landscape and can create a hazard for people who are simply trying to enjoy the countryside. A free uplift service is a major factor in fighting this kind of behaviour. I have written to North Ayrshire council expressing my concerns about this issue.'

Katy also sends us a statement of her policies in the coming election.

'It has been a privilege to represent the people of North Ayrshire and Arran as their Member of Parliament for the last five years. I now look forward to the election campaign. My priorities are; fighting for local jobs, defending public services, helping families, strengthening our communities and improving local transport links. If re-elected I will continue to fight for the people of North Ayrshire and Arran for decent funding of our public services, better employment rights and more funding for much-needed council houses.'

Kilmory Art Show

The fifth annual exhibition of Arran-produced art in every form was, as ever, a delight. Arran Visual Arts is a marvellously



successful organisation, not only putting on two major exhibitions a year but also providing workshops run by expert professionals and running excellent community projects. This year's show had the usual stimulating

mix of media, with outstanding textiles, woodwork and willow-work, ceramics and sculpture in addition to the range of paintings and drawings. In such a wealth of general talent, it is inevitably unfair to single out any particular artist, and every visitor will have picked favourites of their own. I liked Dave Tapson's coffee table made of Arran ash, irregularly shaped but with a firmly geometric magazine shelf below it, and Ruth Mae's little wire horses were so full of implied movement that one could swear

their tails were blowing in the wind. Of the two-dimensional work, I was taken by Morag Campbell's well-judged painting of Mevagissey, low-keyed but every colour and tone well



-related. Rebecca Roberts showed paintings that explored light and brilliance, and her Horses and Buttercups in particular captured a yellow summery heat that was tremendously evocative. In a similar vein, Tricia Sloss had a composition of

leafy tree branches that caught exactly the sense of sky and transparency. Particularly appealing was a machine-embroidered picture from an un-named artist at the Kirk Care workshop, where 'I love my tea' was stitched into an intricately detailed composition of cup, jug, teapot and lace mat – a beautiful piece of work. The blue Rag Rug made by Sharon Wedge was



Viv Parks opened the Kilmory Exhibition

magnificent, and the textiles table included countless items that made one want to touch and handle them for the pleasure of their colour and texture. Jan McGregor's use of fabrics in her Impressions of India was immensely evocative, and

Roslyn Gibson's spun and woven use of wool was, as ever, masterly. Photography continues to be more and more significant as an art form, and Andy Surridge, ever the technical master, has perfected his technique of printing on canvas, creating an intricate texture that baffles the eye. David and Emma Ingham both demonstrate a well-seen and often poetic feeling for Arran's landscape, and Lenny Hartley's sweeping evocation of Glen Rosa was, quite simply, stunning. All round, an excellent show that proves once again how Arran's artists continue to develop and expand their skills.



Patricia Gibson sends news of help for businesses

An extra 3,600 small Scottish firms are set to become eligible for a discount on their business rates bill through an expansion of the Government's small Business Bonus Scheme.

Changes that came into effect this week mean almost 60% of all business premises in Scotland will be better off, with average savings on their business rates bill of over £1,300. Around a quarter of all business premises in Scotland will pay no business rates at all. The rates relief package is worth £2.4 billion over five years.

Councillor Patricia Gibson, SNP Candidate for North Ayrshire & Arran, points out that the Small Business Bonus Scheme is already helping companies in Arran by allowing them to make vital savings to re-invest in their business. She says, 'Initiatives of this kind underline the SNP's determination to do all we can to help Scottish companies through the challenges of the recession, encourage a strong recovery and help firms make the fullest possible contribution to building a strong and sustainable Scottish economy.'

She also notes that, following agreement of the world-leading Climate Change Act, the Scottish Government is introducing a new targeted relief scheme for the renewable energy sector, offering discounts of up to 100%.

Dental disaster? Emergency help is at hand

The NHS announces a new emergency service for any unfortunate soul suffering a dental emergency at a time when surgeries would not normally be open. As part of a trial, people can call NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24 on weekdays from 6pm in the evening until 8am the following morning and at weekends from Friday at 6pm until Monday at 8am. Arran residents who are registered with a dental practice should contact their own dentist if possible, but may contact the above number in case of an out-of-hours emergency. This could be useful for visitors, or for anyone not registered with an Arran practice. They should contact the Dental Helpline on 01563 578664 for advice.

More plastic on our beaches

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) held a Beachwatch Big Weekend over the 19th and 20th September 2009. Arran people helped by clearing some of our own beaches, part of a total of 4,655 MCS volunteers. Overall, the total haul included 7,393 plastic bags, 16,243 plastic drinks bottles, 17,712 fishing nets and 70,546 small plastic pieces in just ONE weekend. The litter filled 2,742 rubbish bags – and it's not getting better. Plastic litter on UK beaches has increased by a staggering 121% since the first Beachwatch in 1994.

Plastic does not biodegrade but breaks down into small pieces that will last for hundreds if not thousands of years. In parts of our oceans there are now six times more plastic particles in the water than plankton. Plastic fragments have also been shown to attract toxic chemicals onto their surfaces and marine creatures are eating these fragments. Ultimately, plastic litter may be providing a new method for these chemicals to be passed up the food chain to human consumers. Now, there's an idea to chew over as you enjoy your fish and chips.

Rachel Bailey of the MCS says, 'We are so grateful to all the dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who joined us last September. Beachwatch Big Weekend 2010 is over the 18th and 19th September this year and we ask everyone to register now to take part and make a real difference to our marine environment.'

Fisherman dies in fire

Marius Kliuskas aged 27, was killed in a fire at a flat in Main Street, Campbeltown in the early hours of Good Friday, April 2nd. The body of the Lithuanian fisherman was discovered after the blaze was extinguished by part-time fire crews from Campbeltown. It is not known what boat Mr Kliuskas worked on, if any. Strathclyde Police said there appeared to be no suspicious circumstances and a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

From John Kinsman, Marine editor

And a recipe –

We are grateful to Anne Adams, who has volunteered to send us a delicious and easy-to-cook recipe every week. Here's her first one.

TROUT WITH ALMONDS

This is a classic dish that combines the soft succulent texture of trout with the crisp crunchy bite of fried almonds. Ideal for lunch or a fish course. Serves 4

Ingredients

4 Trout, gutted and cleaned, with the heads on
Flour for coating.
Salt and ground black pepper
Butter for frying
50g [2oz] flaked blanched almonds
Juice of lemon

To finish

4 lemon wedges
Few parsley sprigs

Method

1. Coat the fish in the flour seasoned with salt and pepper.
2. Melt a knob of butter in large frying pan. Add the almonds and fry gently, stirring, 2 to 3 minutes until golden brown, being careful that the butter does not begin to burn.
3. Remove the almonds from the pan with a slotted spoon. Drain on kitchen paper and keep warm
4. Wipe the pan clean with kitchen paper and add another knob of butter. When it has melted, add the trout and cook gently for 5-8 minutes on each side or until the trout is tender. Test with a fork, the flesh should flake easily.
5. Transfer the trout to a serving dish, sprinkle with the almonds and lemon juice and serve immediately garnished with lemon wedges and parsley

Letters for Voice for Arran 8.4.10

Black Grouse on Arran

Since its formation many people have contributed effort, time, expertise, money and land to the Arran Black Grouse Group (ABGG). A number of these people do not communicate by email or find meeting times inconvenient and may be unaware that Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) recently produced a REVIEW OF THE ARRAN BLACK GROUSE RE-INTRODUCTION PROJECT.

This review supersedes an earlier report, drawn up in 2004, which assessed the habitat on the island in its present condition as 'not suitable for a large scale re-introduction.' The new review states that, 'The ABGG disagree strongly with the [previous] conclusion. KK and RM came to the conclusion that the ABGG were correct.' (KK - Kenny Kortland, FCS species ecologist. RM – Dr Robert Moss, scientist/consultant and co-author with Adam Watson of 'Grouse' in New Naturalist series of publications.)

The new report further states, 'Given the large amount of apparently good quality, interconnected habitat and the commitment of the ABGG, Arran is a good location in which to attempt to re-establish a population of Black Grouse.' It adds, 'If the ABGG fulfil the six recommendations in this report and obtains the support of the Scottish Black Grouse BAP Group, FCS should allow FCS land to be used for releasing birds.'

In an Appendix, Dr Moss observes, 'Even if the project fails, establishing causes for failure would make it scientifically worthwhile.' The ABGG concurs with this statement and welcomes the opportunity to fulfil its long held ambition to release birds into the best habitats available in Arran. From the outset, ABGG has understood that for the experiment to have any scientific merit, release into best habitats is essential. Until recently, however, the possibility of this happening has been

denied by FCS.

The new report totally supports the view of island residents as to the state of Arran habitats and rightly informs on the 'worthiness' of the group. Hopefully the ABGG can now look forward to greatly increased co-operation from FCS.

Yours sincerely,
John Rhead

Alcohol minimum pricing.

Alcohol has been the centre of folks responsible drinking socially for many years. In the 1700's illicit stills were in a number of locations on the Island of Arran. Having full knowledge of the Scottish sickness and the trade in general I cannot support the view that minimum pricing of alcohol will make a difference to regular consumption. The statement that minimum pricing will not affect the responsible drinker is also surely a fallacy. Because it will be across the board, affecting all basic pricing at source, it will not reduce consumption but will merely add to the coffers of taxation and frequenting the local will become even scarcer as the general public will act accordingly.

The main problem in Scottish society is not what is consumed in the clubs or bars, but without doubt sales in the supermarkets. It would be more productive to ease the Scottish problem if off-sales were controlled by increasing the minimum age allowed to purchase and the hours of trading reduced. In the Scottish Cities the problem is exacerbated by youths drinking before they visit the clubs or bars.

Sales in the trade (clubs, hotels and bars) has dropped dramatically in the past two years, according to figures released by the 'Scottish Licensed Trade', and many establishments have closed their doors, resulting in the loss of many jobs. Arran has not been immune from this. UK figures show a drop in sales of £650 million for 2009. The statistics raise many questions about the facts and figures released to support the SNP proposal for the above.

Budget increases are already affecting the trade; minimum pricing would just create another wedge in the weekly budget of most households. Yet they will do absolutely nothing to reduce the effect of irresponsible drinkers.

Repressing the supply of alcohol is a counterproductive strategy, which will encourage illegal entrepreneurs and create ways of folk purchasing alcohol by other means at a reduced cost.

How can any government legislate for parents who purchase alcohol legally for their minors' consumption? It does happen! Even on Arran.

Jim Henderson
Lamlash.

Arran as a green energy exporter

Callum Rae, a 5th year Building Design Engineering student at Strathclyde University, is joining with a fellow-student, Ben Ross Mowat, in a project on Scotland's renewable energy resource. He e-mailed the Voice on April 3rd to ask if Arran might be interested in 'the concept of island self-sufficiency ... particularly regarding wind power.'

The correspondence continues I was interested to hear that Arran's potential as a green energy exporter is limited by the cable linking you to the mainland. Our project presents the combination of wind power with Hydrogen production (via wind-powered electrolysis of water, which splits water into Hydrogen and Oxygen) as a possible method of overcoming some of the barriers associated with remote large-scale generation. Essentially, this involves

using unwanted/excess wind power to produce Hydrogen gas, which can then be stored for use in fuel cells that provide power when the wind isn't blowing. In addition to overcoming the intermittence of wind energy, this method also presents the opportunity to export energy in the form of Hydrogen, for use in fuel cell/transport applications. I believe the PURE project on Unst has run a small-scale trial on this. (<http://www.hydrogenassociation.org/advocate/ad93sref.asp>). Our proposal for Arran would be based on the same principle, but on a scale that would meet the whole island's needs. It could be expanded to supply the mainland with renewably produced Hydrogen. This would bring with it the obvious additional benefits (jobs, investment, tourism etc) that are the by-products of such self-sufficiency schemes. These benefits are exemplified by the Danish island of Samsø (http://www.energiakademiet.dk/flashmap_uk.asp) which provides an interesting precedent and a useful model for island self-sufficiency

Callum Rae
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Golf Results

Thursday 1st April saw the start of the summer competitions. It felt a bit more like winter - however the first day had an excellent turnout.

Seniors 6 played from the box tees now a standard s.s.s. of 61
No Magic twos

First Andrew Crawford 86-16-70

Second E.I.Cannon 96-17-79

Summer Cup from the White tees c.s.s. 65

24 competed and there was 7 magic two's the best one by Derek Robertson at the 18th

Scratch Dougie MacFarlane 67

First Ian Bremner 69-8-61

2nd Todd Jameson 77-14-63

3rd Neil Young 68-4-64

4th William Q Young 77-12-65

Saturday 3rd April. There was a prediction of rain but it turned out to be a grand afternoon despite the cold wind.

Glenisle Mixed Fours 16 couples competed with no magis 2's recorded

First Iain & Linda Murchie 74-19.5-54.5

2nd Derek & Catherine Robertson 73-15.5-57.5

3rd Bob & Jo Hastings 81-18-63

Sunday 4th April. Mixed Texas Scramble, 6 teams of four with 13 gents & 11 Ladies competed in another good day.

First Alis. Crawford, Alis Robertson, Jim Henderson & Cathie Robertson 56-6.6-49.4

2nd Derek Robertson, M.Watt, J.Ronaldson & Val Crawford 57-5.7- 51.3

3rd Iain Murchie, Andy Smith, Rachel Wren & C.Robertson. 60-8.3-51.7 B.I.H.

Fixtures

Every Thursday, Summer Cup and Seniors day, arranging time with starter.

Sunday 11th April Carpenter Rosebowl ballot 0930 and 1300 hrs.