



Guga debate still boiling

They say that there is “no such thing as bad publicity,” which is certainly being tested this week with the UK media once again hyperventilating about Ness’ centuries old Sulasgeir expedition; maintaining the tradition of culling and marinating a few thousand young gannets for local consumption. The latest media hysteria followed newspaper coverage of a ‘guga eating competition’ held in the Ness Social Club during the festive period, which subsequently resulted in an online petition that has attracted well over 70,000 signatures against the annual hunt.

The online petition, authored by a ‘Judith B’ and directed at the Comhairle, was carried on a website - Care2.com - that describes itself as “the largest online community empowering people to lead a healthy and green lifestyle while taking action on important causes such as human rights, animal welfare and global warming.”

Being an internet petition, and carried on an ‘environmental’ website, the signatories are from around the world and will reflect the core values and views of Care2.com subscribers; and more than likely founded in ignorance, rather than genuine knowledge of the annual Sulasgeir expedition.

The petitioner, referring to the ‘guga eating competition’, describes how “contestants race to guzzle half a chick in the least amount of time,” and inviting signatories to “tell the local council that the 21st century started a while ago and demand they ban the killing of seabird chicks, full stop.”

It was almost inevitable that animal rights groups, naturalists, environmentalists and assorted ‘campaigners’ would be drawn to the perennially contentious issue by recent press coverage;

(continued on page 3)

International Space Station sighted over Eoropie



JOHN GRAY FROM THE EOROPIE TEAROOM took the picture above early last Wednesday morning.

John spoke to Fios this week about the fantastic shot, and how exactly he was able to capture it: “The image is of the ISS International Space Station at 7.25am on 15 January,” he explained. “The image is made up of seventy three second images as it would have been too light to leave the shutter open for a few minutes; so, by stacking the images on top of each other it gives you the same effect.

My camera settings that morning were F3.2, ISO1600, 11mm Lens and each image for a 3 second exposure. I used a tripod too. It’s very easy to do in just a few minutes.

“I use a website called calsky.com where you can put your location in and it will tell what is happening in the sky above you at any time, day or night. You can spot the ISS or just look for different Satellites.”

Many more of John’s incredible photos are available to view on the Eoropie Tearoom Facebook page.

Katie Macleod’s Ness travelogue makes final of national writing competition

AN ARTICLE ABOUT the joyous experience of holidaying in Ness has been shortlisted for the ‘Best Travel Blog of 2013’ on the Holiday Hype website. Katie Macleod, who works for Events newspaper in Stornoway, runs the blog Stories My Suitcase Could Tell – an entertaining, evocative, and educational account of her world travels. At the time of going to press, Katie’s blog about Ness was leading the competition – ahead of entries about exotic locales like Barbados, Egypt and Cyprus.

Katie gave Fios some more details about the competition: “I submitted my blog entry to the Holiday Hype competition one evening last week, and by the next morning it had been approved and featured on their website. There is so much to see and do here, and I think people can sometimes overlook that, so I wanted to try and promote

Lewis - and in this case, Ness - as a destination well worth visiting.”

Katie was positively effusive about Ness in her article, and excerpts from the strikingly well-written piece include:

“At the head of the Outer Hebrides sits Ness, the last link in this spinal chain of Scottish islands. The archipelago’s most northern community is made up of a number of villages each as warm and welcoming as the next.”

“After the mass expanse of moorland that makes up much of north Lewis, the landscape of Ness is surprisingly lush: the grass is a glorious green, and small flowers are freckled

across the machair and along the sides of the single-track roads.”

“There are pubs as well as peats, shops as well as sheep, and a certain charm in this place by the

(continued on page 2)





The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

Faillte to all fios readers

Spòrsnis wishes to thank everyone involved in the production of the paper - the contributors, those who collate and fold the paper, deliver it to the retail outlets, and carry out all the admin work required to ensure that the process runs smoothly.

editorial team

Hugh MacInnes - Editor
Ali Walker - 07776414629
Donald A Morrison
fios office: 01851 810039
email: fios@sporsnis.co.uk

Editorial Policy

Our aim is to produce a quality bi-weekly newspaper that serves northern Lewis, particularly the community-owned Galson Estate (Butt of Lewis to Barvas) and West Side communities.

Fios will endeavour to publish the latest news from around our communities, together with reports, articles and features of wider significance that may be of interest to, or affect, our readership and area.

Fios may occasionally adopt editorial positions on issues affecting the community, or relating to this publication. Contributed articles may be edited.

sales and advertising

Contact 810039:

Small private adverts and notices are free but any donation will be welcome.

Commercial advertising charges: full page £80, half page £50, quarter page £30, one eighth £20 - all plus VAT

Ads booked for four or more issues, half the above prices.

Ads for local voluntary groups: Half the above prices. Registered charities - no VAT

subscriptions

Postal and email subscriptions are available. For 12 months subscription (26 issues) the cost of the pdf version (sent by email on the day of publication) is £27 and postal subscription is £59 (£30 for 6 months) sent by First Class mail to UK only.

Audio version of Fios on USB stick or CD for registered blind or visually impaired. 6 months £20; 12 Months £38 (UK only).

Payment may be made online by paypal, by cash at spòrsnis reception, or by cheque payable to NSRA Ltd to

Spòrsnis
by Lionel School
Port of Ness
Isle of Lewis
HS2 0XB

Please ensure you give your full name, address, post code and email address.

Paramount rock the big stage in Glasgow

LOCALLY-FRONTED BAND Paramount played on the big stage in Glasgow, a week last Saturday. In front of a crowd in excess of a thousand people, Paramount performed well at the Soundwave Music Competition final 2013 on the world-famous O2 ABC on Sauchiehall Street. The boys were not placed first of the twelve competing acts, but acquitted themselves well, leading to a potential record-deal.

Singer and lead guitarist, Andrew 'Bubble' MacLeod, from Lionel, told Fios last week: "The gig went really well, even though we didn't come first. It was good to get very positive feedback from the crowd - and security guys - though. It seemed a lot of people thought we should have won, but overall it was a valuable experience.

"Playing in front of a thousand plus people wasn't as nerve-racking as we thought and being comfortable and confident with the songs you're playing definitely helps! The crowd jumping around to your own material makes it all worthwhile. We're meeting up this weekend to discuss our next move. The aim right now is to release an album at some point."

Alasdair Macdonald, also from Lionel, who plays bass guitar in

the band, also spoke to Fios on Wednesday: "The gig was great, it was a fantastic opportunity to get our music heard by such a vast crowd. It was an eye-opener in terms of audience since we'd never played at a big venue like the ABC. We haven't been signed yet but this gig has increased our chances a lot.

"There was a great atmosphere on the night and we got some very positive feedback. The plans now are to continue gigging, writing and playing to make Paramount as successful as possible!"

Stornowegian Charlie Morrison, who plays drums in the band,

commented to Fios about the concert: "It was such a great experience. We got good feedback also, which was a bonus. It was just a shame it went by so quickly; I wish we could have played more songs but not to worry. Most of the other bands were really good, but we did ourselves proud. Playing with a professional sound set up was exciting to."

To perform so well in front of large crowd was a great accomplishment for the band and we wish the Paramount boys the best of luck as they continue to try and make their way in the music industry!



From left: Alasdair Macdonald, Charlie Morrison, and Andrew 'Bubble' MacLeod.

Ness travel tales are popular on the web

(continued from front page)

sea - Ness is a very self-contained community, with every need catered for."

"You can't miss the bright and cheery Ness post office on the main road; a little further along you can find the multi-purpose Cross Stores. Watering holes like the Cross Inn and Ness Social Club provide an evening's entertainment close to home, and there are plenty of cafes dotted here and there for some light bites."

"With a bowling alley and a swimming pool (as well as the aforementioned adventure play park), kids will always be kept busy. In the old Cross school, visitors with a penchant for the past can enjoy a cup of tea as they explore the archives of the local historical society, Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, which provides an insight into the community's collective history."

"Like the rest of the Western Isles, Ness is home to more than just dramatic landscapes. When you head to the Hebrides, don't

neglect to discover the north."

Katie, who is from Point, confesses to having been a travel addict from an early age: "I have been a travel addict since the age of eight. That was the year I went away for the first time without my parents, to a Brownie camp in the Scottish Borders; it was also the year I first visited London, where I fell in love with cities and skyscrapers. My suitcase and I have been on the move ever since, taking in everywhere from California to Copenhagen and Beijing to Budapest."

She started her blog after time spent as an English teacher in the Far East: "This blog was born on my return to the U.K. after a year of teaching English in China. Having documented my Asian adventures at Tianjin Tales, I decided to continue combining two of my great loves - writing and travelling - and started Stories My Suitcase Could Tell."

To vote for Katie in the competition, enter this link into your internet search engine of choice and click on the 'Vote'

button at the top of the page: <http://www.holidayhypermarket.co.uk/hype/ness-notes-from-the-north/> The prize for winning the competition is a Nokia Lumia 1250 mobile phone, and, appropriately, a holiday worth £1,000. Good luck, Katie!

On a related note, last week the Hebrides were listed third on a list of Britain's favourite travel destinations. 101 Holidays conducted the biggest ever survey of the UK's travel journalists to find their favourite cities, countries, beach resorts and airlines. In fact, the Hebrides were the highest-placed non-city on the list.

Local MP Angus MacNeil commented: "I am delighted to see that the Hebrides has been ranked as the No 3 travel destination in the UK. We must note that we were beaten by two cities London and Edinburgh, when you exclude cities from this category, the Hebrides ranked No 1. This is a fantastic boost for our tourism industry and will be welcomed throughout the Hebrides."