



This newsletter has been designed to enable you to get an idea of what kind of experience you will have should you join us on one of our cruises.

Thu 1 Oct | Autumn's upon us It's October already and all our Hebridean Wildlife and Island Cruises have been delivered. There are a few dive charters remaining this year but unsurprisingly there is much less news for us to report over the off-season months. This newspaper will run from 1 October to 31 December and we'll use it to keep you updated of our progress over the winter and to feature any news items we hope you will enjoy.

Sat 17 Oct | Dive charter weekend Hjalmar Bjorge boarded 12 divers in Oban last night, staying put on the pier. The boat departed Oban early this morning for the group's first dive of the weekend. Whilst on anchor close to Aros Castle in the Sound of Mull they watched a pair of golden eagles scrapping on the skyline.

Mon 19 Oct | Early morning dip The two photos below were taken from Hjalmar Bjorge at about 0700 this morning. The boat left Tobermory at around 0630 and made for Auliston Point at the entrance to Loch Sunart. The divers went into the water in the dark to dive a cliff face (under starlight). They enjoyed the novelty of going in and coming out enlightened! The divers headed home after brunch today. Below: looking east down Loch Sunart towards Loch na Droma Buidhe by Mark Henrys



Tue 20 Oct | Unusual fish sighted Grey trigger fish (*balistes capriscus*) are normally found in warm waters close to the Mediterranean but astonished fishermen recently caught several of them in creels in the somewhat colder Sound of Mull. Two live fish are now on display at the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary near Oban. The fact the fish have been caught alive suggests they've been here for some time and have adapted to the lower water temperature. Read more at <http://news.stv.tv/scotland/west-central/131483-unusual-fish-turns-up-off-west-coast-of-scotland>.

Sat 31 Oct | Massive monsoon The final trip of the season got off to a worrying start with a torrential rain storm over Fort William early this evening. Hjalmar Bjorge was safely berthed at Corapch waiting for guests most of whom were, by now, either onboard or very close by. Linda and Ian weren't so lucky, however, and ended up sheltering in Macdonalds in Fort William whilst waiting to hear if the flooded and closed road between the town and Corpach would be re-opened. They eventually headed south again and took the Corran ferry, driving the long way round Loch Eil to get onboard.

Sun 1 Nov | Full moon over pontoon The boat set off early from Corpach this morning. It was still wet but thankfully not as bad as last night. The guests' first dive was off Balnagowan in Cuil Bay with the boat then heading up the Sound of Mull where a second dive was undertaken off Calve Island in the afternoon.

The forecast storm materialised in the evening but there was the consolation of a dramatic full moon over Tobermory. This helped illuminate the local otter, seen at close quarters by several guests, feeding on the pontoon in the harbour. Right: full moon over Tobermory harbour by Anna White



Mon 2 Nov | Horrible "head" on Hispania Hurrah! A break in the weather this morning allowed for a good dive on the Hispania. The wreck was adorned by a particularly ghoulish pumpkin that had been brought onboard by Donald. It was lodged on one of the remaining handrails to provide a creepy encounter for subsequent divers visiting this popular wreck!

In the afternoon there was a scallop dive before Hjalmar Bjorge returned to Tobermory for the evening. Right: rainbow in the Sound of Mull seen from over the top of the wreck of the Hispania by Mark Henrys



Tue 3 Nov | Last day, last charter An early start for Hjalmar Bjorge divers this morning, being dropped in the water at 0730 on the big wall at Calve Island. They went underwater in the dark and emerged in daylight. After a light breakfast they did a second dive in Loch Linnhe before a final brunch and farewell back at Corpach. Considering the rubbish weather it was a good weekend of good company, good diving, good food and good craic. That's Hjalmar Bjorge finished with charters this year now. She'll be in Corpach over the winter until it all starts again next April.

Wed 4 Nov | Farmed Salmon Exposed Three minute video uploaded to youtube— <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egqrGn0V0fg> — discussing the environmental costs of farmed salmon. This is a short excerpt from a new film "The End of the Line for Open Net Cage Salmon Farming?" which premieres around the world during next week's Global Week of Action. Visit the website of the Pure Salmon Campaign at <http://www.puresalmon.org> for more information.

Fri 6 Nov | Seal shooting e-petition response The shooting of seals is of concern to many local operators for both reasons of cruelty (suffering) and commercial interest, e.g. a number of day boats on the west coast of Scotland make a living by taking visitors to see seals. An e-petition was launched asking for British seals to be given the same protection as dolphins and otters. The Government responded to this petition today, this can be seen at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page21205>.

Sat 7 Nov | Wedding! Woo hoo! A day of celebration today. This afternoon, in Torosay Church in Craignure on the Isle of Mull, Big John married Cathy, his beautiful bride.

Lindsay kept everyone entertained with her fiddle playing while they signed the register then it was over to Craignure Hall for a slap up meal followed by some riotous partying.

Huge congratulations to Mr and Mrs Maughan and all the best for their new life together on Mull. Below left: John and Cathy lead the dancing at their evening ceilidh



It was a real "catch up" occasion for Northern Light Charters crew, past and present, with lots of familiar faces present. In the photo above are (L-R) Jan who ran charter boat Harry Slater with her late partner Dave, and more recently worked with John aboard Hans Hansson; Sue who has, so far, escaped employment on our boats but has travelled on Chalice, Hjalmar Bjorge and Zusa upon many occasions; Lindsay who worked two seasons aboard Hjalmar Bjorge for us; Hannah; Rhona (Lindsay's mum) who has crewed on various trips; Kirsty who worked for us for more years than I can remember, aboard Chalice, Poplar Diver and Hjalmar Bjorge (as well as Elizabeth G and other local boats) and Ylva who cooked for us for two seasons aboard Hjalmar Bjorge. Above right: boat girls

Thu 12 Nov | An end to Japanese whaling? Massive cuts to subsidy could force an end to Japanese whaling according to a report on the Wildlife Extra website. A Spending Review Committee considering the outgoings of the Japanese government has proposed massive cuts in subsidies to a body which funds the country's whaling activities, referred to as a "scientific research programme".

Tues 30 Nov | Charity cheques A little later than planned but we are happy to publish details of this year's charitable donations. Several years ago Hannah and Mark decided to make a £5 donation to one of two local charities for every cruise guest who booked on our boats. Our guests are also given the option of doubling this by paying an additional £5. Today we are delighted to have posted cheques for £352.50 to Argyll Animal Aid (<http://www.smallpaws.co.uk>) and £798 to Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team (<http://www.glencoe mountainrescue.org.uk>). Of the total donation of £1150.50 the sum of £290.50 came from our kind hearted guests who opted to pay an extra £5 per head to the charities. Big thanks go to...

Peter Atherall
Keron Beattie
Marc Calhoun
Paul and Ann Careless
Mike and Janet Cave
Anthony F Corrigan
Ronnie Cramond
Joyce Cronin
Helen M Dingley

Miss Fiona Lawrie
J Philip and Diana M Lawson
Helen and David Litt
Nigel Lynch
Mrs Pamela Mulligan
Steve Poole and family
Ann Rayner
Norman and Valerie Robb
Alexander Robbie (twice)

John K Earle

Johanna R Egar

Frances Evans

Graham Farrant

Alexander J and Anne R Findlay

Jeffrey G and Hazel J Florence

Miss Kirsten Forsell

Marie and Rod Gledhill

Christine and Kim Jones

Lyndon Knott

Keith Rogers

Richard and Peter Sheaf

Mr Archibald CK Smith

Brenda Smith (twice)

David and Rebecca Smith

Ian and Sheila Swanson

Carole Thomas

Karen and Robert Walton

Patrick NG Wilson and family

Fri 4 Dec | Scotland Outdoors Winter issue For everyone interested in Scotland's great outdoors, the new issue is published today. As usual you can download a few articles as PDF files. Why not read about (1) community ownership of Knoydart, (2) snow-free sled-dog racing in the Cairngorms or (3) stargazing in Scotland? Visit <http://www.scotoutdoors.com/currentissue.php> to access these free features.



Just a week or so ago Scotland Outdoors won an award at the PPA Scotland, Scottish Magazine Awards, that of "Best Small Publishing Company Magazine 2009" so big congratulations to the small but dedicated team!

Fri 25 Dec | Merry Christmas to all Hannah Thompson and Mark Henrys would like to wish all our customers (previous and those who have yet to travel with us!) a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. Thank you to everyone who has sent us Christmas cards this year - they are all appreciated.



The picture on the previous page is from a nice card sent to us by all the very helpful bods at Corpach Sea Lock on the Caledonian Canal where Hjalmar Bjorge is berthed whilst not at sea. The image above, of Ben Nevis at dusk, was donated by Duncan McEwan to the Highland Hospice (<http://www.highlandhospice.org>). Please have a look at Duncan's Exclusively Scottish photo website — <http://www.dmcewanphotography.co.uk>.

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