

Proud Scot honoured

A FORMER Helensburgh resident has been awarded "honorary" status after taking a taste of Scotland to Scandinavia.

James Hosca, 40, has been living in Norway's second largest city, Bergen, since 2002 and has been spreading his love of Scotland's culture and heritage for the last six years.

Born and raised in the town, the former Hermitage Academy pupil's first Saturday job was at the former William Lowe supermarket — now Tesco — on Sinclair Street, working as an assistant for butcher Tom Mackay. Educated at Glasgow University, where he received a degree in Geography, James then travelled to Norway to work at NHH Norwegian School of Economic and Marketing — combining taking a masters degree with a love of skiing.

It was here that James discovered the city's links with Scotland dating back to the Second World War when the British Ladies Club was formed. The women's group organised Burns suppers and ceilidh events but soon lost momentum and eventually folded due to a lack of support.

James said: "With the help of two former British Ladies Club members we organised a Burns supper and I was asked to be the immortal memory which was a real success."

"After that we brainstormed on how to expand our events in the future and in 2005 we formed the Bergen Scottish Society."

James was elected chairman six years running, before standing down this year to let someone else bring new ideas to the group.

During his time as chairman James built up ties with Scottish firms to ensure the authenticity of the Burns suppers they held.

He laughed saying: "The first time we organised it, it was a bit of a disaster. We organised a haggis from McSwinees in Edinburgh and they said they would send us one over. The first never arrived and the second — well it went on a bit of an adventure."

We followed it by its tracking number and at first it travelled over to Belgium, and was then taken to Vinnich by truck.

"It was then sent back to Belgium by mistake as there is also a town called Bergen there and was then re-routed to Copenhagen and then Oslo."

"Unfortunately they left it in a heated room for a week after mistaking the contents on the label and by the time it arrived it was green. So we had to use a meatloaf as our haggis substitute."

The following year James made contact with Scottish butcher Joe Findlay who was personally invited by the society to travel over to Norway to make haggis for the group and attend the society's supper as an honorary guest.

Since then Joe has made the journey to Bergen every year and James now takes two days off work to make over 200g haggis annually at a local butcher's for Norwegian families who want a taste of Scotland's delicacy.

HONOUR: James receives his framed Bergen tartan from the society's newly elected chairperson Barbara McIntosh



By Kayleigh Harvey

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James said: "I was working with Tom Mackay back at the butcher's in William Lowe's that taught me the skills I needed to help with making the haggis. I always try to see him when I travel back to."

The society now has over 100 members and has featured regularly on Bergen's local television station as popularity of their Burns suppers grows.

In addition to their annual Burns supper the society have now organised a number of ceilidh's and Helensburgh band Crowded Croft have also featured twice at the group's events. The group also take part in ceilidh, Scottish country dancing and have now formed two pipe bands which take part in Norway's national day celebrations.

James said: "The pipe band I have started playing has been drum in is called Bergen Pipes and Drums. This is

something very new for me but I am really enjoying it. We held our first performance at a ceilidh three weeks ago and now the band are planning to compete at the Scandinavian Pipe Band championships in May next year. We are also considering a trip over to the Cowal Games next year for the pipe band competition, but if we don't make it to Dunoon next summer, we will definitely be there in 2013."

To mark his stepping down as chairperson of the society, James was awarded a framed sample of the first bath of the society's own tartan and awarded honorary status for his work in the group.

He said: "It was a real surprise. I thought it was going to be the first time in six years that I could go to one of our dinners and just relax but I had to make a speech and I was very touched by the award."

James travels back to Helensburgh at least once a year to visit his parents, who still live in the town, along with his close friends and family.

For more information on the Bergen Scottish Society visit: www.bergenscottish.com.

Cash for carers centre

HELENSBURGH and Lomond Carers Centre will receive 25 per cent of an £11,226 government grant to help provide short breaks for carers.

The Scottish Government has made the Short Breaks Fund available to help support and sustain Scottish carers, including young carers and kinship carers, through enabling better access to short breaks or respite care and Argyll and Bute Carers Network has been awarded the £11,226 to develop a short breaks fund for Argyll and Bute carers.

And this week Eileen McCrory, manager of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers Helensburgh & Lomond, which offers support, information and advice to carers in the Helensburgh and Lomond area said: "We were part of a consortium bid. The funds will be administered by the Argyll and Bute Carers Network and we will take a 25 per cent share of funds."

Helensburgh and Lomond Carers Centre will appoint a time to Live Panel and invite carers to apply for funds for a short break, up to a maximum of £500.

"Short breaks can be of any kind that will benefit the carer ranging from respite care to enabling a carer to attend an appointment, attend a family gathering, an overnight stay, visit to the theatre, have a new hair-do or therapeutic massage, through to a holiday for the carer and the cared-for."

"It is the carer's personal choice as to what will constitute a short break for them. We will work with Short Break Bureau to support and help carers identify the kind of break they would really like to have."

Knitters are wanted

KNITTING enthusiasts are being asked to get their needles out for Robin House in Bailloch.

Lucy Jane Ellis is planning a charity event for CHAS at Robin House Bailloch, "Knit it up for Robin House", on Thursday December 8 from 10am until 10pm at Cameron House Hotel, Loch Lomond.

The plan is for people to drop by or come for the whole day (10am to 10pm), whatever takes their fancy, to knit squares, 15cm x 15cm in any design or colour.

All the squares will then be sewn together to make blankets for the children who are in Robin House.

There will also be a raffle to help raise money for the charity.

Lucy works in the events operations department which is responsible for running weddings along with other corporate functions at Cameron House.

She said: "I started up a social enterprise 'Lucy Events' to gain experience of running events whilst at university. The difference from this and my job at Cameron House is I take to do with absolutely every aspect of the event, the initial planning, organising, sponsorship, to implementing and staging the event, getting volunteers, training people, and utilising contacts."

"I wanted to do 'Knit it up for Robin House' as my first solo event. I love the aspect of keeping it local and utilising local facilities as well as bringing the community together for a very close charity."

If you are a knitter who is interested in attending and know more knitters that would like to come along Lucy will be putting "sign up" sheets into local companies in Helensburgh or you can email her at lucyjewells@hotmail.com.

HELENSBURGH ADVERTISER

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High tides at Sunrise/set Helensburgh

All times are GMT

Thursday	0513	1718	Thursday	0700	1707
Friday	0619	1827	Friday	0702	1705
Saturday	0751	1947	Saturday	0704	1702
Sunday	0918	2103	Sunday	0706	1700
Monday	1012	2204	Monday	0708	1658
Tuesday	1058	2256	Tuesday	0710	1655
Wednesday	1141	2345	Wednesday	0712	1653

SUNDAY Sinclair Street, Helensburgh will open on Sundays from noon

to 4pm

USEFUL NUMBERS

Fire Brigade, Police, Ambulance, Coastguard, Mountain Rescue, Cave Rescue (emergency only) 999 or 112
Police Station, East King Street, Helensburgh 01436 633600
NHS 24-hour helpline 0845 424 2424
Mental Health issues: Breathing Space Helpline 0800 83 85 87
Water helpline 0845 601 8855
Gas emergencies 0800 111 999
Electrical faults/emergencies 085 272 7999
Argyll & Bute Women's Aid 01436 677434
Argyll & Bute Rape Crisis 0800 121 4685

www.lesssproject.co.uk - To Educate Schois Sexual Awareness Project
Argyll & Bute Council 01546 602127
Dementia Helpline 0800 808 3000
Family Planning Clinic 01436 655000
Helensburgh Medical Centre Dr Brown and Partners 01436 673366
www.helensburghmedicalcentre.co.uk
Dr Macleod and Partners 01436 672277
www.helensburghmedicalcentre.com
Garlochhead Medical Centre Dr McKevie 01436 810370
Kilcreggan Medical Centre Dr A Doyle and Dr A Falconer 01436 842156

Arrochar Medical Centre
Dr David Troup 0844 477 2520
The Samaritans 24-hour 0845 790 9090
Kirkcubbin Sports & Recreation Assoc. 01436 672105 www.kstra.org.uk
Helensburgh Library 01436 658833
Cardross Library 01369 841215
Cove Library 01436 842315
Rosneath Library 01436 831630
Alcoholics Anonymous 0845 789 7555
Argyll Voluntary Action (The Volunteer Centre) 01436 671613
Helensburgh and Lomond Chamber of Commerce 01436 268085

* Please let us know if there are other useful numbers you think should be included

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