

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Hometown tales from boy in bubble

'I have had a really creative spell,' said Colin MacIntyre, a musician and novelist from Mull, as he releases his memoir and first children's book this month.

Colin, the singer-songwriter behind Mull Historical Society, set his first novel on Mull, *The Letters of Ivor Punch*, which won the Edinburgh Book Festival's First Book Award.

Now he has published a memoir about growing up on the island, in *Hometown Tales: Highlands and Hebrides*, the latest in a series of books focusing on talented and important writers in Britain's regions, so far from Glasgow, the Midlands, Yorkshire, Wales, Birmingham, Lancashire, and the South Coast.

Colin's 'bright, funny and deeply felt' story, *The Boy in the Bubble*, sits beside a tale by Ellen MacAskill, A9, described as 'a captivating piece of short fiction about a girl torn between her love in Inverness and the chance to spread her wings'.

Then, the day after Colin's memoir is published on June 28, he launches his first children's picture book, called *The Humdrum Drum* and published by Argyll-based Little Door Books, with illustrations by Chilean artist Catherine Thomann, and accompanied by a CD of Colin's original songs. It is described as 'a heartwarming tale

of friendship and why being different is a good thing'.

'The orchestra drum is feeling very humdrum because he thinks he is being banged and boomed,' Colin explains. 'When Drum is feeling unhappy he stops playing and the entire orchestra comes to an embarrassing halt. But with the help of his friends - a cast of colourful instruments, as well as ironing mice, dish-washing ants and shaving pigeons - Drum realises that without him keeping the beat, they lose their way and that they need him to save the day.'

'I wanted to pen a musical tale about teamwork and togetherness with catchy accompanying songs for all ages. My own girls helped me with the tunes so it was a family affair!'

Little Door Books director Susan Windram said: 'The Humdrum Drum is a wonderful book that reflects Colin's literary and lyrical talent. It is fun and quirky, while at the same time offering a strong positive message.'

Continued on p58



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Mull author and songwriter talks about his latest work

Continued from page 57
'It is a book that families will love.'

Colin was born into a family of writers and storytellers.

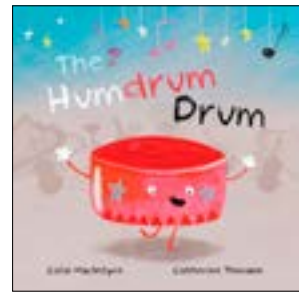
'My grandfather used to tell us we were descendants of the warrior-poet Duncan Ban MacIntyre,' Colin said, 'but I'm still waiting on my shield.'

That grandfather, Angus MacIntyre, was a bank manager and bard on Mull, while the other, John Kilsop, was the island's plumber.

'One was keeping the island afloat while the other kept it from sinking!' Colin said.

His works draw on island characters he knew, such as skippers in the Mishnish, Mull's own Evel Knievel, Iain 'Eeny' Brown.

'Evel Knievel used to jump cars,' Colin said. 'Eeny used to jump human beings on his BMX on Tobermory football pitch. One summer he jumped 17 bodies. I still remember Eeny going over



about saying goodbye on a Monday morning.'

The Mull Historical Society's eighth album Wakelines, produced by Bernard Butler, is released in September, as Colin embarks on a UK tour, finishing at the first Tobermory Book Festival at Mull Theatre on October 27.

He is also writing his second novel, and adapting his first, The Letters of Ivor Punch, for the stage, due to perform at Oran Mor in Glasgow later this year. 'I can't stop,' Colin said.

me in his Bruce Lee t-shirt on his BMX.'

Colin, who now lives in London with his family, said: 'I am always an islander, even trapped in the underground. I am always disappointed when 'Mind the gap' is not replayed in Gaelic.'

His mum owned the hairdressers in Tobermory, while his father, the late Kenny MacIntyre, was BBC Scotland's political correspondent.

In his memoir, he said: 'I have laid myself bare and how I miss my dad dreadfully. One song [in his upcoming album] is



A lyrical, magical journey

An extract from Colin MacIntyre's new memoir Boy In A Bubble

My two worlds collided on a wet and windy December night in the mid-1980s. The mainland came to the island.

Picture the scene: a man is wading in from a little boat to an island in the Hebrides. It is the middle of winter and pitch-black. He has a suit on, but no tie, and is carrying an object high above his head as though he has just won the men's final at Wimbledon.

He is travelling back late after spending the week working in the city, as he does every weekend in a whirlwind: a one-man Hebridean Grand Prix.

Having missed the last scheduled Caledonian MacBrayne ferry, his car has been ditched and he has been picked up from the banks of



Colin with his father, political journalist Kenny MacIntyre.

Ardnamurchan by a boat belonging to a clam diver. But the diver's boat can't get any closer to the little jetty on the island. The tides are not behaving. That's what tides do; they either behave or they don't. The man is only lit by the light of the boat. The spotlight makes sideways daggers of the rain, casting a spell over the choppy sea, turning black

into white. The man is slowly reaching the shore, his drenched suited legs gradually emerging from the sea like Charlie Chaplin from an encounter with a hosepipe. It is Friday night. He is almost home. He is my father. The clam diver is my uncle Rob. The object held above my father's head is my Christmas present, come early. It is

not the All England Club's Gentlemen's Singles Trophy; it is a 1978 USA original Fender Telecaster guitar. We all know about the day the music died . . . well, this is the night the music arrived.

To me. To my island. You might think from the way I describe the scene I actually witnessed it. I didn't. I was at home waiting for the prize. I was 13, ready to plug in. My world was about to change.

Fifteen years later, my father died suddenly at the age of 54, after jogging around a reservoir north of Glasgow, where he was working as a journalist for the BBC.

The shock of his death kick-started my music career proper and inspired my debut album, Loss.

That was my way of celebrating him, what he had given to me; what he had waded home with that dark, wet night.

I still have that guitar, with its unusual finish of light green and cream. I have never seen another like it.

I am looking at it now – at the stickers I naively defaced it with in my youth. SAVEEA, one says.

It was a popular word among my close-knit group of teenage friends. Nothing was ever severe in our

world; it was always 'saveea'. The guitar has travelled around the world with me; it has stood on festival stages and in TV and radio studios, been played on eight albums and counting. But I have always looked at it as having come from the sea.

Every time I plug it in, I expect to be 13. I expect an electric shock. And in a way that is what it gave me when it arrived in 1984 and continues to give me now.

It has journeyed with me to the mainland from where it came, as I became an islander among mainlanders, a musician, and then a writer too.

It is never far from me, just as the Thames is not the sea; that the voice over the speaker on the tube is a driver from London Transport and not the familiar tones of the CalMac ferry announcer; that the Piccadilly line stops are interspersed with warnings to 'MIND THE GAP' and not the availability of trinkets in the ferry shop.

And all this then replayed in Gaelic. That's what I hear.

A tale of love and adventure in WWII

We Fought For Ardnish, by Angus MacDonald – review by Kelsey Ward at The Highland Bookshop, Fort William

Donald Angus Gillies joins the Lovat Scouts during the Second World War.

On a special operatives mission he falls for Francoise, a resistance agent for the allies. As the tragedies of war try to pull them apart, they are given one final, and very dangerous mission.

This novel takes the reader from the dizzying heights of the Alps, to the blustery sea coast of Cape Breton, and, of course, to the west coast of Scotland.

Donald Angus is charming and relatable, with homely notions. While Francoise is coy, leaving the reader full of questions, just as Donald Angus is.

Above all this book is an excellent reflection of a love of one's home and heritage.

It is clear MacDonald has a deep affection for the landscape and history of the west coast, particularly the Ardnish/Arisaig peninsula. It unfolds with close-to-home characters and careful, nostalgic

depictions of what things really used to be like.

MacDonald is also thoroughly versed in history and his research in all aspects of war, land and people shows through. He is generous with his information as a means of truly building the backdrop to a marvellous adventure.

A good soldiering pace is kept in his writing, as he casts between the sweet past and the dogged now of the Second World War. The calm moments give impact to the rush of drama and action. Simply put, it was a page turner, and rather difficult to put down.

Angus MacDonald has lived all his life in the Highlands and is steeped in their tales. He served in his local regiment, the Queen's Own Highlanders.

A serial entrepreneur he was awarded the Spear's UK entrepreneur of the year award for 2017, building businesses in publishing, renewable energy, recycling and education. He founded The Caledonian Challenge and runs The Moidart Trust, as well as being co-owner of The Highland Bookshop in Fort William.

WHAT'S ON IN OBAN

In partnership with Oban Town Diary bid4oban.co.uk

<p>Thursday 28th June</p> <p>Oban Health Walk Oban Congregational Church Hall 10am - 11.30am</p> <p>Oban Walking Tours Oban, i-centre 10am - 11.30am 2.00pm - 3.30pm</p> <p>Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY</p>	<p>Friday 29th June</p> <p>Oban Dance Academy - Cheerleading Glencruitten Church Hall All Day</p> <p>WHHA Friendship Club The Rockfield Centre 2pm - 4pm</p> <p>The Royal Hotel Quiz Night All proceeds to Hope Kitchen and Oban Link Club 7.30pm</p> <p>Markie Dans Music Festival Crooked Reel & Chunks Free entry Open till 3am</p> <p>Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban From 9pm Free Entry</p>	<p>Saturday 30th June</p> <p>Oban Dance Academy - Cheerleading Glencruitten Church Hall All Day</p> <p>Oban Walking Tours Oban, i-centre 10am - 11.30am 2.00pm - 3.30pm</p> <p>Green Shoots Open Garden Glencruitten Walled Garden 11am - 3pm Free Entry</p> <p>Markie Dans Music Festival Crooked Reel, Ceol An Aire, Rhuval & Crackin' Craic</p>	<p>Sunday 1st July</p> <p>Markie Dans Music Festival Rolling Drones, K9 Kev & OB, Robert Robertson Band & Crackin' Craic Free entry Open till 2am</p> <p>Monday 2nd July</p> <p>Slimming World Union Street/Argyll Street, Lochgilphead 5.30pm & 7.30pm Tel: Rhona 07880 878906</p> <p>Tuesday 3rd July</p> <p>Oban Walking Tours Oban, i-centre 10am - 11.30am 2.00pm - 3.30pm</p> <p>Wednesday 4th July</p> <p>Slimming World Glencruitten Church Hall, Oban 9.30am, 11.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm Tel: Gillian 07796 040803</p> <p>Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban Lorne Pub Quiz Starting at 9pm £25 bar voucher prize and free pizza at half time</p> <p>Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details.</p> <p>To list your event, please call 01631 568000</p>
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Summer dining in Oban: Loch Melfort Hotel

For the best of West Coast produce, fresh and wonderful flavours, served in a stunning setting, look no further than Loch Melfort Hotel & Restaurant.

Loch Melfort is situated by Arduaine Point next to Arduaine Gardens and has direct access to the beach, where you can take a digestive stroll by the sea after a lovely meal.

You can dine in the hotel's 2AA Rosette restaurant (evenings) or the more informal Bistro (open all day for refreshments and drinks, as well as lunch and dinner service). Both have direct sea views and you won't fail to be taken in by the amazing scenery, looking out over the Sound of Jura and the Inner Hebrides beyond.

Loch Melfort is passionate about good food and fine wine and this is reflected in a menu restaurant with an emphasis on fresh local seafood although meat lovers also get plenty of choice. It boasts a strong wine list and some excellent local ales and draught beers. The home-made ice creams and baking make it an excellent choice for families with a play area next to the terrace and our friendly local residents, the hens and Highland cows.

The Restaurant offers a wonderful dining experience in comfortable, more formal surroundings. The seasonal menu delivers options that combine traditional dishes with modern techniques, showcasing a range of locally foraged ingredients from the woods and the sea. Sure to delight food lovers from home and abroad. With a choice from the A La Carte or Table d'hôte menus and a beautiful wine list to select from, a meal here is a lovely experience you won't forget in a hurry.

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