Acclaimed British Actor On Board
Footloose to the Clyde
Hebridean River Cruises 2018 Launch
Acclaimed British Actor On Board
## CONTENTS

**News in Brief**  
Ilkley Literature Festival  
British Travel Awards  

4

**Guest Contributions**  
Lucille Jones and Geoff Dixon  

5

**A Norwegian Adventure**  
Ken Charleson  

6-7

**Footloose to the Clyde**  
John Bowness  

8-9

**STV Productions**  
**Documentary**  
Richard Wilson  

10-11

**Armadale Castle and Clan Donald**  

12

**Hebridean River Cruises 2018 Launch**  

13

**What our Guests say**  

14-15

**Meet the Team**  
Abigail Stevens  

14-15

**Food and Drink**  

16

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Cover image: Loch-na-Keal, Isle of Mull. Paul Mills
Welcome to the Autumn 2017 edition of The Hebridean Times

Hebridean Princess has recently returned to the familiar waters of Scotland’s west coast following a series of stunning cruises in the spectacular Norwegian Fjords. Managing Director, Ken Charleson has written about our Norwegian Adventure on pages 6 and 7.

Now back in Scotland we can look forward to the colours of autumn in the Hebrides before we head to our winter home on the Clyde for our annual re-fit.

Our 2017 river cruises have now been completed and our 2018 European River Cruise Collection has recently been launched with four varied itineraries on the Dutch and Belgian Waterways, the Main, Rhine and Moselle. All our river cruises are accompanied by renowned and knowledgeable guest speakers and we are delighted that Martin Bell will once again be joining us, together with three new lecturers who have been chosen, not only for their expertise, but also for their ability to entertain.

Thank you to regular Footloose walking guide John Bowness who has kindly written an article focusing on the ‘Footloose to the Clyde’ cruise which he will be accompanying on Hebridean Princess in October, and to guests Lucille Jones and Geoff Dixon for their contributions.

I do hope that you enjoy this issue of The Hebridean Times and we look forward to welcoming you on board in the very near future.

Louise Pratt
Hebridean Times Editor
COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS TO THE ILF 2017

Ilkley Literature Festival is an annual event in the spa town of Ilkley, West Yorkshire (close to Hebridean’s office in Skipton) and has become one of the UK’s top literary festivals. Attracting many important international literary figures, its two-week programme, starting in October, now features more than 250 events in a variety of venues in the Ilkley area.

Over the past few years Hebridean Island Cruises has been proud to sponsor a number of events at the festival and this year we are delighted to be doing so again. We do therefore have a limited number of complimentary tickets available for the following event:

Judy Murray
KNOWING THE SCORE, Kings Hall, Ilkley
Tuesday 3rd October 6–7pm

Judy Murray is almost as recognisable as her tennis champion sons, Andy and Jamie. But before becoming a Strictly star and familiar face at Wimbledon, she was a title-winning player. Now Scottish National Coach and coach of the women’s Fed Cup team, she joins us to tell the remarkable story of how she and her family repeatedly defied the odds, from desperate finances to growing pains, and how she inspired a revolution in British tennis.

If you would like to attend this fascinating evening, including a drinks and canapés reception beforehand, please call our reservations team on 01756 704704 to reserve your tickets. Please be aware that tickets are extremely limited and are issued on a first come, first served basis.

VOTE FOR HEBRIDEAN AT THE BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2017

We are proud to announce that we have been nominated in the prestigious British Travel Awards 2017 in the category of Best Luxury Cruise Line.

The British Travel Awards is the largest poll of consumer opinion on the performance of companies and enterprises operating in the travel and tourism industry.

The winner of each category is decided entirely by the public and we know we can count on your support!

Voting is now open - Every vote counts and it could be yours that makes the difference. To cast your vote please visit britishtravelawards.com before 30th September and click on the ‘VOTE’ button.
**SIX GO FOOTLOOSE** by Lucille Jones

With special wedding anniversaries and special birthdays for all of us, 2017 is a very special year for my husband, myself and also our good friends, Christine & Alan and Pam & Peter. We decided to include a *Hebridean Princess* Footloose holiday in our various celebrations as it was on these holidays that we all first met each other.

What fun the six of us had on ‘Footloose to Barra Head’ in May. Tudor and I have been enjoying these holidays since 2002 and we were thrilled to find quite a number of people whom we had met previously aboard the ship in Oban, as well as Captain Trevor Bailey, Chief Purser Dave Indge, Purser Louise Campbell and Ted Heath, Pat Cannings and John Bowness, the guides. The other guests turned out to be a lovely group and the staff were as attentive and friendly as ever.

We enjoyed a wonderful week and none of us will forget the day of the beach landing on uninhabited Pabbay and later huddling together on the top deck to watch the sun set over Canna. Magic!

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**HEBRIDEAN CORNER** by Geoff Dixon

This is my “Hebridean” corner where I keep a model of *Hebridean Princess* to remind me of previous trips and inspire me to save for the next one.

From time to time I change the background photograph - this one (taken from the deck of *Hebridean Princess*) is of the Garvellach Islands and the lighthouse on Fladda in the Sound of Luing.

I also keep some of my favourite malts close to hand, purchased on distillery visits – my favourite type of shore excursion!
A Norwegian Adventure

As we move towards September and Hebridean Princess makes her way back to her home port of Oban, there is still plenty cruising left this season before she heads south to the Clyde for her last two cruises and her winter home in Greenock.

I have just left the ship in Norway as she heads back across the North Sea at the end of her Nordic adventure.

This was our first visit in three years as the last time we sailed in Norwegian waters was in 2014.

This year we operated three new cruises combining new ports of call and ports we have not visited in many years, along with some of our regular Norwegian stops such as Bergen. In our first port of call, Sandnes, not far from Stavanger, we were further south than we have ever been in Norway and with the second cruise heading as far as Geiranger Fjord this was the furthest north we had been since 2000.

Norway is always special with the generally calm waters of the fjords and their towering steep sides providing a wonderful back drop where Hebridean Princess feels quite at home.

We had the pleasure of having Captain Frank Bondø, the former captain of the Norwegian Royal Yacht, on board as our pilot throughout our time in Norway. You will hear more from Captain Bondø in our next issue as he has promised to write an article following his adventures on board Hebridean Princess.
We also had the pleasure of having local guides on board. Lars Jensen joined us for the first cruise and Kirsti Asbjørnsen accompanied the last cruise as we visited the more remote locations between Bergen and Sandnes. Lars and Kirsti, along with the other local guides we met at our various ports of call, complemented our own on board guides who had additional duties accompanying guests on their flights to and from Norway.

With Norway experiencing its worst summer weather for over 50 years with lower temperatures and more rain than is the norm, this was a concern. However, the sun shone for most of the first cruise and we still managed the odd Champagne reception on the Skye Deck with each of the cruises experiencing some very warm days mixed with occasional showers.

Our shore excursions were a mixture of visits to glaciers, museums, city tours, various churches and wonderful scenery, interspersed with spectacular, picture-postcard cruising.

Logistics always play an important part when we are away from our home waters in the West of Scotland and this Norwegian adventure was no different.

While we are used to booking domestic flights, rail and car transfers, the office had to take on the challenge of international flights and our guides assisted with meeting and travelling with most guests from Heathrow, while others departed from regional airports and were met in Stavanger or Bergen by our local agents, who we have worked with over a number of years when visiting Norway.

The chefs were challenged with coordinating supplies as we shipped much of the food from our regular suppliers in Scotland so that we could maintain the quality, but supplemented this with some local produce to give a slight Nordic twist to our usual fayre.

Even our laundry had to be shipped across from Scotland for each cruise as the ship does not have the capacity to carry enough linen or to launder it on board.

I hope everyone who cruised with us in Norway enjoyed the experience and I would like to thank all the staff and crew for the extra efforts required to operate away from our home waters, most of whom rose to the challenge admirably.
If you haven’t experienced a Hebridean Footloose-style cruise before, I hope you will join us for a real treat.

The walking part works like this: at each port of call, there is a guided walk you can choose to join. Each is outlined in the brochure, and the on-board guides will also give a short briefing the previous evening on what to expect, and answer guests’ questions.

We sometimes walk directly from the harbour, or use a hired coach or mini-bus to reach the starting point. Some morning or afternoon walks may only last a couple of hours, but on others we spend most of the day exploring - carrying our own packed lunch supplied by the ship, or calling into a local hotel along the route where lunch has been booked.

How difficult is it? Well although some routes will cross rough ground, or ascend fairly steeply at times, we are not taking you mountain-climbing! If you have already enjoyed walking off-road in areas like the Lake District or Peak District, you will be more than ready for this. During an all-day exploration we may cover as far as 8 miles or so, but other walks are much shorter. The guides’ briefing in the Tiree Lounge the night before will fill in the details. And of course there are also other options for those who would prefer a more leisurely experience.

So, where will the walks take us?

The first is from the attractive Argyll village of Tayvallich on Loch Sween. We may cross an isthmus to Carsaig Bay with views towards Jura, or explore ancient oak woodland at Tàinsh National Nature Reserve by traversing its rugged 400-foot ridge and dropping down to a ruined mill.

That afternoon we will call at our first island destination, Gigha (pronounced “Gear”) where its summit hill Creag Bhan reaches only a little over 300 feet, but affords spectacular views of the island and the Kintyre peninsula beyond.

From Campbeltown on our first all-day visit, we will head for the Carradale area on the east side of Kintyre. As well as covering a small fraction of the Kintyre Way long-distance route on forest paths, we may reach the rugged Carradale Point with its iron age vitrified fort, herd of feral goats, and seaward views towards the Isle of Arran only three miles away.
Arran is our next port of call for another full day, where the north coast of the island offers one of the cruise’s more challenging walks, on a coastal path that at one point gains more than 800 feet in a little over a mile. As well as the view, we hope there will be other compensations to enjoy when we reach the distillery in Lochranza.

There are two visits the next day, including one island. From Largs on the Ayrshire coast, we will walk on the Ardgowan estate, designed partly by the Scottish equivalent of Capability Brown. In the afternoon we will be on Great Cumbrae, our final island of this cruise. From Millport, with its Cathedral of the Isles known as the smallest in Europe, we will ascend 400 feet or so on a minor road to the all-round viewpoint at Barbay Hill.

Back on the mainland we land at Holy Loch on the Cowal Peninsula and take a short coach trip north to tackle the dramatic forest walk known as Puck’s Glen. On gravel tracks, on pine needles under the trees, with steep steps and some soft sections, a rocky gorge poses some challenges but is also very rewarding.

On our final day we land at Gourock and take a coach to the Loch Thom visitor centre on the Inverclyde Hills, for an upland walk partly following the virtually level route of the 19th-century Greenock Cut aqueduct. Extensive views over the Clyde should let us see from afar some of the places we have already visited, to round off an active and rewarding cruise.

What to bring?
For the walks you will need your own equipment, including a small rucksack and clothing to cope with rapidly-changing weather. Late October in Scotland can vary hugely, from mild and sunny as Summer delays the onset of Autumn, to cold and crisp with a nip in the air and a spectacular dusting of white on the summits. If you have walking poles, please bring them as they are invaluable when the terrain gets a bit rougher.

I hope you can join us in October to go Footloose to the Clyde. And finally, don’t forget your boots!
During June of this year *Hebridean Princess* welcomed a small film crew on board for the filming of a special documentary to be shown on More4.

We were approached by STV Productions seeking a unique filming opportunity that would showcase some of Scotland’s beautiful highland attractions, whilst at the same time focussing on a well-known television personality fulfilling a long-held ambition to explore his native Scotland.

Just like the audiences of fly on the wall documentaries, we were intrigued by the proposal put forward by STV Productions and after a series of meetings and ship visits in Oban the cruise chosen for the shoot was 20th June – Historic Castles and Glorious Gardens.

We were asked to keep the identity of the personality close to our chests until filming had ended, but can now reveal that this was Greenock born Richard Wilson, best known for his role as Victor Meldrew in the BBC sitcom One Foot in the Grave and Gaius, the court physician of Camelot, in the BBC drama Merlin.

During the cruise, Richard visited gardens, historic castles and the holy Isle of Iona, with the cruise culminating in a Champagne farewell reception at Duart Castle on the island of Mull.

We will update you with a viewing date once this is known – keep an eye on our website for further information.

Finally, our grateful thanks go to all our guests who gave their kind permission to be filmed as part of the documentary, as well as all the crew on board *Hebridean Princess*. 
The sixty minute programme, Highland Odyssey with Richard Wilson, followed Richard as he returned to Scotland to embark on a once in a lifetime tour of the north of the country. At 80, the voyage proved a fascinating journey of discovery and personal reflection. The one-off documentary captured Scotland’s hidden gems as Richard travelled in style from Edinburgh to Mull – first by train on the iconic Royal Scotsman, before taking to the water on Hebridean Princess with visits to Oban, Iona, Rum and Skye.

Mick McAvoy, head of documentaries at STV Productions, said: “Richard is one of Britain’s most recognised actors with a successful career spanning several decades. This documentary for More4 gave him the opportunity to explore a part of the world where he has always wanted to spend time, while giving the viewer an insight into the unique history and stunning scenery, all through the eyes of the iconic actor.”

Lizi Wootton, Commissioning Editor for Features at Channel 4 adds: “It’s wonderful to have Richard back on our screens, with a project that’s especially personal to him. This promises to be a loving exploration of one of the most captivating expanses of the British Isles.”

PRESS RELEASE

STV Productions were commissioned to make a documentary for More4 following actor, director and broadcaster Richard Wilson as he fulfilled a lifelong ambition to explore the Highlands and Islands of his native Scotland.
The MacDonalds, or Clan Donald, were Lords of the Isles until the forfeiture of the Lordship in 1493, and their kingdom covered vast swathes of Scotland including the Western Isles and the Isle of Skye, as well as territory on the western mainland. The clan played an essential role in the history of the Highlands, from clan warfare to the Jacobite Rising, and the ultimate breakdown of the traditional clan system.

The MacDonalds first established themselves on Skye in the 15th century, where they occupied castles at Duntulm, Knock, Dunscaith, and Armadale. Clan chiefs began to stay at Armadale from around 1650, and the mansion house later became a dower house for the widows of clan chiefs.

A number of famous historical figures visited the old mansion house at Armadale, most notably Flora MacDonald, known for her role in helping Bonnie Prince Charlie escape capture, who was married at the castle in 1750. Later visitors included Samuel Johnson and his biographer, James Boswell, who visited in 1773 as part of their famous journey through the Western Isles.

Around 1790 a new mansion house was built. This was extended in 1815 to form the present Armadale Castle, designed by the renowned architect James Gillespie Graham, who created a wonderful Gothic fantasy castle, a statement of the clan’s wealth and prestige. In 1855 much of the castle was destroyed by fire. The central section was rebuilt, leaving the remainder a picturesque ruin. The MacDonald family moved to a smaller house on the estate in 1925, and today the remains of Armadale Castle are only romantic facade, set within a beautiful garden.

The magnificent gardens are the result of a mild climate, aided by the warm Gulf Stream. There are terraced walks, woodland trails and quiet streams running through the 40 acres, which include 200 year old trees looking down on a lush carpet of bluebells, orchids, and wildflowers. The gardens are a sheltered haven for plants from around the world, including birch from the Himalayas, New Zealand giant daisies, and the colourful Chilean Fire Bush (Embothrium).

The award-winning Museum of the Isles, which is set within the grounds of the castle, charts the story of Clan Donald and its powerful influence on the islands history. It traces the legends of the clan through triumph, bloodshed and trauma from the demise of the Lordship of the Isles to the sweeping cultural changes where clansmen became crofters and chiefs became landlords.

The Estate was purchased by the Clan Donald Lands Trust in 1971. The Trust was established to promote an understanding of the history and traditions of Clan Donald and the Lordship of the Isles. As custodians of this wonderful estate, the Trust has worked tirelessly to save and develop this important resource for the benefit of visitors to Skye, members of the clan worldwide and the local community to provide them with the opportunity of learning about their individual and shared heritage in a beautiful setting overlooking the Sound of Sleat.

**Hebridean Princess is due to visit Armadale Castle on the following cruises:**

**YEAR OF HISTORY, HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY**
commencing 26th September 2017 for 7 nights

**EXPLORING THE SMALL ISLES AND INNER SOUND**
commencing 10th October 2017 for 7 nights

**WEST COAST WONDERS**
commencing 3rd April 2018 for 7 nights

**THE RUGGED NORTH WEST WILDERNESS**
commencing 1st May 2018 for 7 nights

**FOOTLOOSE THROUGH THE LONG ISLE**
commencing 8th May 2018 for 7 nights

**CYCLING OVER THE MINCH**
commencing 9th October 2018 for 7 nights

Prices from £2,475 per person based on 2 people sharing an inside double/twin cabin.
We are delighted to launch our 2018 European River Cruise Collection on board Royal Crown, our seventh season of relaxing itineraries which transport you to the very heart of the continent.

Our 2018 river cruise collection has been meticulously planned to allow you to discover the highlights of the meandering Dutch and Belgian waterways, the majestic Main and Rhine and the serenely scenic Moselle. All itineraries are enriched by entertaining and renowned guest speakers, in addition to our very own Cruise Director, Tour Manager, Chief Purser and Musician to ensure you are cared for in true Hebridean style.

To add that extra special ingredient, each of our 2018 cruises feature a ‘Hebridean Gem’ – a truly unique and exclusive experience to further enhance your enjoyment of the holiday, such as private visits, receptions and recitals in inspiring locations.

Not only will you experience the highest standards of service and comfort, each Hebridean river cruise is fully inclusive. Carefully thought out flight and rail options make joining and departing the ship as stress free as possible. Not only are the travel arrangements included in the cruise fare, you will be accompanied by Hebridean’s own representatives, meaning that you can relax safe in the knowledge that you are taken care of from the very start to the very end of your cruise.

All of our 2018 cruise have been designed to offer the opportunity to combine cruises with the minimum of repetition, presenting guests with a selection of stunning Grand Voyages that discover the very best of what Europe’s majestic waterways have to offer.

With just four exciting new itineraries in 2018 demand is expected to be high and we are delighted to announce that we have extended our launch offers until 30th September 2017 so all new bookings will qualify for an early booking saving of 10% on the published cruise fares.

**LAND OF WATERWAYS AND WINDMILLS**
20th May to 27th May 2018
Amsterdam to Amsterdam

**HISTORIC CITIES OF THE LOW LANDS**
27th May to 3rd June 2018
Amsterdam to Amsterdam

**FROM BAVARIA TO THE MOSELLE**
13th July to 24th July 2018
Regensburg to Trier

**THE MOSELLE TO THE BLACK FOREST**
24th July to 3rd August 2018
Trier to Basel

If you have not yet received your copy of our 2018 European River Cruise Collection brochure, or to make your booking please call our experienced reservations team on 01756 704704 or email reservations@hebridean.co.uk

Prices from £2,990* per person based on 2 people sharing a deluxe twin cabin

* Price shown includes 10% early booking saving
What our guests say

The Hebridean team worked very effectively with the Royal Crown crew to provide a truly memorable river cruise. Nothing was too much trouble and their professional, discreet and friendly manner ensured all guests mixed well together. The open seating policy in the dining room worked well and helped all guests integrate.

Mr H, Glasgow

“As always the Hebridean team made the trip wonderful, they are so helpful. All the crew are cheerful. The music was very good and the speaker excellent. I could not fault the trip.”

Miss H, Esher

Meet the Team

Abigail Stevens - Sales Consultant

Abigail is the newest member of the reservations team. Born and bred in Yorkshire, she studied Travel and Tourism at Craven College in Skipton. Abigail originally joined Hebridean as maternity cover in February 2016 and was offered a permanent position later the same year.

Since joining the team Abigail has become one of our travel experts, booking flights, trains, hotels and chauffeur cars on behalf of guests, as well as taking cruise reservations and completing many of the administrative tasks within the sales department.

Abigail has a close family connection with Hebridean as our Reservations Manager Lisa White is her auntie!

Abigail has previous experience in a customer service environment having worked in a number of local restaurants whilst studying at school and college.

What have been the most enjoyable aspects of the job so far?

I enjoy talking to guests on the telephone and also the opportunity of meeting as many guests as possible at events such as the Ilkley Literature Festival and cruise shows.

I also greatly enjoyed the opportunity to visit Hebridean Princess last year, it makes the job much easier when you have experienced the product. I took great pleasure from the atmosphere and ambience of the ship, the delicious cuisine and meeting all the crew, in particular Chief Purser Dave Indge and his bad jokes!
This Hebridean Princess cruise has been a very happy experience for me. Professional, friendly and helpful staff. Good conversations with guests. I've felt thoroughly spoilt, thank you.

Mrs B, Sevenoaks

The most amazing holiday. Ship, crew, food, scenery, even the weather was fantastic! See you next year!

Miss F, Ilkley

As usual a wonderful holiday. The attention to detail, the help given and the friendliness of the crew reflects on the guests. It is quite unique.

Mrs P, York

Always a wonderful few days. Excellent company and a lovely atmosphere. A very special holiday.

Mrs S, Bookham

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I like to keep fit at the local gym after work and also enjoy travelling abroad, dining out and music festivals.

I have recently passed my driving test and love driving my new car around the scenic Yorkshire roads.

What do you think are the most rewarding aspects of the job?

The most satisfying part of the job for me is building a rapport with the guests and helping to ensure that they have a truly memorable holiday and return to cruise with us time after time.
CROSSWORD COMPETITION

As the crossword in our last edition was so popular, we have devised another one for this issue, this time based around the theme of Scottish Food and Drink. Once you have solved all the clues in the grid, rearrange the letters in the shaded squares to reveal the name of a Scottish soup consisting of leeks, chicken stock, barley and prunes (4, 1, 6).

ACROSS
1. Traditional dessert of cream, whisky, raspberries, honey and oatmeal (9)
3. Traditional Scottish breakfast fayre (8)
4. A brand of Scottish green ginger wine (8)
6. Farmed fish which is often smoked (6)
8. Confectionary similar to fudge (6)
9. The whisky Isle, home to 8 working distilleries (4, 2, 5)
10. Traditional accompaniments to haggis (5, 3, 7)
11. The island which supplies Hebridean Princess with oysters (8)
12. Newly opened distillery in the Outer Hebrides producing an award winning gin (4, 2, 6)
14. World famous breed of beef cattle (8)
15. Made from 70 year old recipe by MacLeods of Stornoway (5, 7)
16. Type of flatbread made of oatmeal and cooked on a griddle (7)
17. Sea loch which is home to a renowned seafood farm and restaurant (4, 4)

DOWN
2. Whole wood-smoked haddock (8, 7)
4. Spiced fruit pudding cooked in a cloth (7, 8)
5. The oldest working distillery on the Isle of Skye (8)
7. Soft cheese rolled in pinhead oatmeal and crushed peppercorns (5, 7)
13. Also known as petticoat tails (10)

Please send the name of the Scottish soup, together with your full name, address and post code by email to louise.pratt@hebridean.co.uk by Friday 27th October 2017. One lucky winner will be chosen at random from all the correct entries and will receive a luxury Scottish hamper.

* Please note email addresses may be used for marketing purposes. If you would prefer not to receive email communications from Hebridean Island Cruises, please state this in your entry.

Many thanks to all who entered the crossword competition in the last issue and congratulations to everyone who correctly deduced that the important figure in Scottish history was Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Three names were randomly selected from all the correct entries and a Hebridean rucksack was sent to the lucky winners - June Pitcher of Stevenage, Simon Fleet of Broadstairs and Jill Campbell of Sevenoaks.