

# MAKING IT HAPPEN



*Grandhome, Bridge of Don.*



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## Willie's Welcome

At a time of year associated with family and celebration it is with deep sadness that I received news that one of our longest standing employees, David Duncan, had passed away after a short illness. David lived for two things: his family and his work. He thrived under pressure. When a job just had to happen, you could rely on him to see it through. It is often said that W M Donald retains the feel and positive ethos of a family company. The downside is that when a much-loved and respected member of that family is no longer there, it hits you hard. David will be greatly missed by all those who had the privilege to work with him over the years.

David was a 'doer' and W M Donald is a company of doers. In market conditions that are increasingly challenging, our reputation for getting the job done will stand us in good stead. The region's construction economy is currently buoyed by major projects like the AWPR, exhibition centre and South Harbour development. I believe these projects obscure underlying conditions in which only serious and dedicated contractors will thrive. I am confident that W M Donald is one of these.

Over recent years we have worked on an increasing number of large projects in the public eye. To achieve this we have made, and continue to make, significant investments in health and safety, and in our quality systems. This is what clients are looking for, and it is what our employees have the right to expect. The recent appointment of Fraser Morrison as our onsite HSEQ Adviser shows our commitment to continuous improvement in this area. After the Christmas break we return to work on Monday 8th January, a day dedicated to health and safety training for all employees.

Moving from sombre to positive, we are currently at tender stage for works on our new operations and administration centre which should start on site early in 2018. This building will complement our new workshop, warehouse and yard.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped with the preparations for our 40th Anniversary celebrations in August. In particular I would like to thank my wife, Elaine, and my daughter, Karen. The celebrations proved to me that it is never too late to learn. The latest lesson? Never leave your daughter in charge of the chequebook!

I look forward to meeting you all at the Annual Dinner and Dance at the Altens Thistle Hotel on Friday 22nd December, and I wish our clients, suppliers, sub-contractors, employees and their families a merry Christmas and a happy Hogmanay.

Willie

# 60 for 40

**W M Donald celebrated its 40th Anniversary in August this year. The event was formally marked by an evening of festivities in a huge marquee on Willie and Elaine's lawn.**



*Jim Milne, Friends of ANCHOR Chairman, receives the cheque for £60,000*

During the year, the company had set itself the target of raising £40,000 for 'The Friends of ANCHOR' (Aberdeen and North Centre for Haematology, Oncology and Radiology): 40for40. Prior to the celebrations, the W M Donald workforce had already raised over £31,000 by running, walking, cycling, golfing and various other activities. On the night, auctions and donations took the final sum to £60,000.

**Sarah-Jane Hogg, Fundraising Manager for Friend of ANCHOR, explains how the money will benefit ANCHOR patients:**

*"Thanks to the incredible support from W M Donald, a new Olympus ENT Head and Neck Video system will be delivered to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary - the first of its kind in the North-East.*

*Early diagnosis of head and neck cancers is crucial to a patient's survival and, importantly, this revolutionary piece of equipment allows greater visibility of cancerous tissue. Thanks to this potentially life-saving equipment the probability of detecting and diagnosing a head and neck cancer is significantly increased.*



*Olympus Head and Neck Video System*

*The technology also allows for more accurate surgical planning and it is hoped that it will prevent extensive surgery which can affect a patient's life permanently. The system will also play a vital role in monitoring patients post-surgery. £43,000 of the funds raised by the company have gone directly towards purchasing this hugely important medical equipment."*

# DREAM BIG

"As part of our milestone 20th anniversary, Friends of ANCHOR has launched its biggest fundraising appeal ever- Dream Big- by pledging £1 million to the University of Aberdeen's ambitious £4.5m project to attract and recruit a world-class cancer research team to the North-east. The remaining monies raised by W M Donald has gone to support this pioneering appeal.

*Dream Big supports a huge investment that will ultimately significantly advance clinical care for cancer patients in the region. Research team members will allocate clinical hours to boost the overall oncology consultant hours dedicated to the ANCHOR Unit. This will enhance patient care within the wards. The team will also facilitate access and participation in clinical trials for North-east cancer patients."*



Willie, Elaine and Sarah-Jane Hogg (Friends of ANCHOR)



The Dream Big campaign has just reached its £1m target!



# 25 and 40



Willie, Elaine and Ewan Riddoch (Technical Director) and the other team members who were with W M Donald when it celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2002

# IT'S ALL WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE!

Back in 2015 the Hogmanay celebrations were hampered by the heavy rains and gusting winds of Storm Frank. The River Ythan reached a record high and burst its banks. Several homes in Ellon were evacuated.

One of the planned actions to minimise the risk of a reoccurrence was the removal of silt deposited because of the floods. W M Donald used its suction excavator to remove deposits from the River Ythan near Methlick where part of the riverbank had broken away. This was the first time Willie Donald had worked with the suction excavator on site:

*"The central span of the bridge was clear, but the auxiliary arches had choked up. The riverbank was fragile and access was limited, so we decided to use the suction excavator. The hose was fed over the parapet and 'hoovered' up the silt. Once the excavator's tank was full, it drove to a recycling centre. We extracted 50 tonnes of material in one morning.*

*The suction excavator was impressive, even for someone like myself who has worked with mechanical excavators all their lives. It almost felt like an optical illusion. Standing on the bridge it didn't appear to be collecting much soil or silt, and then suddenly you became aware of how much material had been removed."*



## KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

**W M Donald has recently become members of the Freight Transport Association ([www.fta.co.uk](http://www.fta.co.uk)). The FTA is one of the UK's largest trade associations and describes its mission as '...representing the transport interests of companies moving goods by road, rail, sea and air.'**

**Lindsay Dall is W M Donald's Transport & Plant Manager:**

*'With the recent purchase of two Volvo FMX Series trucks, we now have a fleet of 8 HGVs. This includes our suction excavator and Kaiser Whale sewer cleaning unit with continuous dirty water recycling. On top of this we also have 75 vans and 10 4x4 vehicles in the fleet. It's critical that we maintain compliance and keep abreast of legislation. Membership of the FTA is an excellent way of doing this.'*



**Member**

# WMD DRAINAGE SERVICES: A SUCCESSFUL FIRST 12 MONTHS



*The Kaiser Whale*

**Whereas W M Donald has just celebrated its 40th anniversary, WMD Drainage Services has just reached the one-year milestone. Under the leadership of Mike Meldrum and Jim Strang, Drainage Services has achieved a turnover of almost £1mn and grown to the point where it now employs ten men 'on the tools'.**

Jim Strang himself started 'on the tools' many years ago down in Essex. Employed by Lanes for Drains, Jim rose to become Regional Manager for Southern England.



*Jim Strang (left) with the Drainage Services site team.*

After a break, Jim returned to Lanes and ran their Aberdeen branch providing services for, amongst others, W M Donald.

Jim joined W M Donald to run the operations and business development arms of the Drainage Services business:

*'Business is often made to appear more complicated than it really is. We are growing by simply doing what we say we are going to do, at a competitive price. I believe the quality of our work sets us apart and that is testament to the skill and commitment of our teams and the significant investments we have made in plant and equipment.'*

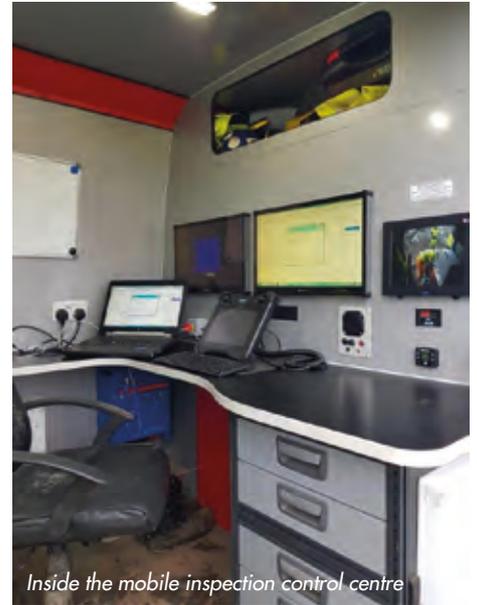
*There are now two CCTV vans, a reactive choke and repair unit, and four tankers in our fleet covering all eventualities; from the 32t Kaiser Whale all the way down to our CityFlex unit that is ideal for urban areas where space is at a premium.*



*The new ATEX inspection rig being prepared for action*

*Our latest purchase is a Zone 1 ATEX CCTV inspection rig. The ATEX rig enables us to undertake surveys in areas where there is the potential for the build up of an explosive atmosphere due to gas or vapour.*

*We can't confirm it for certain, but we believe we may be the only company in the area to have this capability.*



*Inside the mobile inspection control centre*

*The variety of clients we have picked up and their geographical spread has been a real positive. Unsurprisingly there has been work on the AWPR, but we have also worked for the local universities, leading property management companies and undertaken pre-adoption surveys for builders on Orkney. We hope to be announcing some major contract wins early in 2018 too.*

*'Jim is a self-confessed 'golf fanatic'; he currently plays off 9. The truly amazing thing about this achievement, however, is that Jim didn't start playing golf until he was 50. There is hope for us all!*

## DID YOU KNOW?!

The abbreviation ATEX comes from the French version of the European Directive which describes the equipment allowed in a work environment with a potentially explosive atmosphere:

Appareils destinés à être utilisés en **AT**mosphères **EX**plosibles.

# GRANDHOME



**Grandhome is a major development near Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. A long term project based around seven sustainable neighbourhoods, Grandhome will eventually provide almost 7,000 homes, retail centres, four schools and a network of green spaces for recreational use.**

W M Donald has delivered the infrastructure for the first neighbourhood named Laverock Braes. Whilst this phase of work is coming to an end, W M Donald is now delivering the groundworks and substructures for, initially, 80 high-specification homes being built by CALA Homes.

The infrastructure contract was extensive. It included earthworks, foul and storm-water drainage, the construction of a one kilometre road network, diversion of existing overhead power lines, construction of two gas governors, two electrical substations, two water pumping stations complete with water storage tank, and associated underground mains pipework and cables. The storm water drainage is directed into a series of SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) ponds and swales that are located in green parkland with access paths extending over a seven acre area where 1200 new trees have been planted.

## **Ian Downie is the Project Manager:**

*"The quality of finish is very high. There has been extensive landscaping around the SuDS features and there is a beautiful gateway to the development with trees and bench at the entrance."*

*We are looking forward to working with CALA Homes. In addition to the groundworks, we are responsible for the plot drainage, concrete floors and hard landscaping.*

*The target is to complete the initial phase by February 2020. It's a great project to work on and I hope we can continue to play a key role in delivering future phases."*





Excavator at full reach



Completed excavation

## PITTODRIE PROJECT: 'WE HAD TO DIG DEEP TO WIN!'

**In June and July 2017, W M Donald successfully completed a challenging sewer diversion near Aberdeen F.C.'s Pittodrie stadium. If only there was scope for humour in that sentence!**

The main contractor, Robertson Construction, was contracted to build student accommodation on a brownfield site situated at the intersection of Pittodrie Street and Pittodrie Lane. Before works could start, an existing combined brick sewer that ran diagonally across the site had to be diverted to remove it from the footprint of the proposed accommodation. The sewer diversion ran under both Pittodrie Street and Pittodrie Lane, and where the two roads met required an excavation



almost 7m in depth; this may not sound much, but it is equivalent to digging down to a depth equivalent to the height of a typical two-storey house! Whilst the excavation was challenging in its own right, it was further complicated by restricted access with the carriageway being less than 5m wide at one point.

The W M Donald team was led by Technical Director, Ewan Riddoch, and site operations were managed and delivered by Michael Ferrier:

*"I believe we won the job because of the extensive work we did in collaboration with the client at tender stage. We developed a detailed understanding of the project and what needed to be done to bring it to a successful conclusion. Michael made a fantastic job of delivering an extremely complex sewer diversion job with many constraints. By being so organised and efficient Michael and his team made the job look easy."*

A detailed GPR survey identified the location of existing utility services and, in discussion with the client, it was agreed to move the line of the proposed sewer to minimise the risk of a utility clash. The presence of existing services, often more than 4m above the

sewer invert level, meant our excavator operators had to use great skill to reach the designed invert level. At 7m deep the 30t excavator was often at maximum reach.

*The health and safety of site personnel and the general public was paramount. In particular, great care was taken in the development of the shoring design and excavation methodology.*



*As there were foul and surface water flows running through the culvert, the timing of the successful final connection was dependent on the prevailing weather conditions. Robertson Construction was so impressed by the planning and implementation that they asked us to run two 'night schools' for key personnel from across Scotland. There was particular interest in the suction excavator and confined space trailer we incorporated into the sessions."*

# The BIG Interview

Richard Campbell,  
A&R Services.



**W M Donald's ability to respond effectively to project challenges is a combination of our in-house expertise and resources and the strength of our supply chain. Many of our specialist sub-contractors have worked closely with us for many years; in the case of A&R Services for almost 40 years.**

Richard Campbell is the founder of A&R Services and still works on the tools today.

## What types of work does A&R Services undertake for W M Donald?

I trained as an electrician back in the 1970s and electrical works are still our major activity. Whilst we undertake occasional minor electrical works for W M Donald such as installing connections for site cabins, the vast majority of our work revolves around installing, maintaining and repairing street lighting. More recently we also undertook all of the electrical works on W M Donald's new build warehouse and plant workshop.

## How long have you worked with W M Donald?

I've worked with Willie for the best part of 40 years. My first recollection is a project at the fish precinct in Aberdeen near Union Square. This has now been demolished. It's a reflection of the evolution of Aberdeen's industrial base from fishing to oil during my lifetime. For many years I was a one-man band. Over the years I've gradually grown to an annual turnover of around £1.5m and

now employ 5 qualified electricians and 2 heating engineers.

## What is it like working as a sub-contractor on W M Donald projects?

In most years W M Donald is our largest client. The best way of describing the relationship is that it has felt like being part of an extended family. Don't get me wrong, like any family we've had our disagreements and fallings out; civil engineering projects are rarely straightforward. However, we've always managed to resolve our disputes without issuing divorce proceedings! I think Willie and his team recognise and respect our skill, knowledge and passion for street lighting. The key to success has been working closely with W M Donald's engineering and planning teams to ensure co-ordination on site.

## How has working with W M Donald changed over the years?

I'm not as ambitious or as brave as Willie. I've been really impressed with the way he has taken the business forward. For many years I knew virtually every member of the W M Donald team – in the office and on site – by name. Obviously as the company has become larger and diversified this is no longer possible. However, to Willie's credit, the company still retains the same family feel and welcome. The biggest general change over the years in the electrical sector has been the increased focus on health and

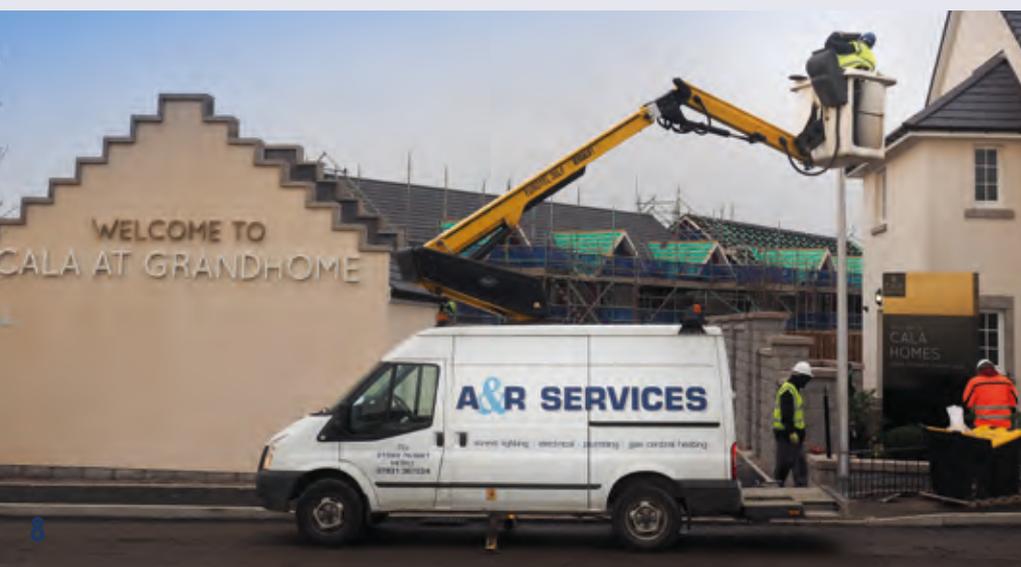
safety: method statements, risk assessments, COSHH. Ladders, for example, are now largely a thing of the past.

## What have been the major changes in street lighting since you set up A&R?

In years gone by each council had different street lighting specifications. A key skill was understanding these specifications and ensuring that the right materials and techniques were used. Whilst there has been a move towards greater standardisation, it's still critical to keep abreast of the latest regulations and specifications. Council's and utilities have become far more demanding in terms of testing and certification prior to adopting street lighting installations. From an innovation perspective, street lighting is now virtually all based on LED systems. LEDs use far less energy and can be dimmed to change light intensity at different times of the day and night. Central Management Systems (CMS) are becoming standard. CMS enable councils to control each individual head. We have installed CMS controlled LED street lighting on many of W M Donald's recent projects such as Chapelton of Elsick and Grandhome. Over recent years there have been major programmes to replace galvanised steel and concrete lighting columns with aluminium. Aluminium is lighter, less prone to corrosion which means it comes with a 40 year warranty, and is designed to behave more sympathetically in the event of a collision.

## How do you see your sector changing in coming years?

At a personal level I am gradually handing over the reins of the business to my daughter and stepson. General electrical contracting is becoming more competitive. As the oil sector struggles, many of the guys who used to work on the rigs are setting up businesses and looking for work onshore. A&R Services is protected to a certain degree from these changes through our reputation, our longevity and our experience of working in specialist niche sectors such as street lighting.



# THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THERE SVQs!

# W M DONALD'S LATEST QS TEAM MEMBER IS BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL!



The Scottish Government has recognised both the importance of the construction sector to the national economy, and the need to improve skills across the sector.

As a result, it is providing 100% funding for Modern Apprenticeships in Occupational Work Supervision. The programme leads to an SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualifications) Level 3 qualification, equivalent to a Higher. More importantly, in practical terms, it is a path to achieving a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) Gold Card at Supervisory level by proving competency.

Five of W M Donald's site supervisors started the programme in October. Delivered by leading construction training provider Esteem (esteem.uk.com), the course runs over a four-month period. Learning is through a combination of four half-day workshops in Glasgow, one-to-one's with tutors, and telephone support. The site supervisors compile an online e-portfolio to provide proof they have achieved the learning outcomes.

## **Eilidh Cameron is W M Donald's HR & HSEQ Compliance Manager:**

'This Modern Apprenticeship is just one example of how we are using a combination of practical site-based and classroom training to upgrade the skills base of our workforce. The half-day workshops are particularly useful as they provide our site supervisors with an opportunity to reflect on and review the way they operate away from the day-to-day pressures on site.

Claire Robertson has joined the QS team at W M Donald at the same time as studying for a BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying at Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen.



Now in her second year at RGU, Claire initially undertook a 16 week placement with W M Donald during her summer break. She now combines her university commitments with 25 hours of hands-on practical quantity surveying:

*"During term time the workload can be pretty demanding and assignments do mean occasional midnight finishes.*

*However, the mix of academic and practical experience is invaluable. It really helps to be able to put your academic studies in context. I am also finding that I have already dealt with some of the topics we are covering this term. I am sure my work with W M Donald will help me achieve my goal of a first class honours degree."*

Claire's path into quantity surveying is rather unusual in that she started out training to be a hairdresser. She subsequently moved into property management and progressed to negotiating prices and contracts. It was her partner who suggested that she would enjoy being a QS:

*"When I first left school I had had enough of studying. University wasn't even on my radar. Now, however, I am loving it. My advice for other mature students thinking of going to university is to find a subject you are genuinely interested in and go for it. It's a big jump, but you won't regret it.*

*I find construction fascinating and the best bit about my job with W M Donald is that each day is different."*

# MEET W M DONALD'S NEW SAFETY ADVISOR

Murder enquiries, drugs fatalities and fatal accident investigations: the perfect grounding for a career in construction health and safety.

Fraser Morrison, who joined W M Donald as Onsite Safety Advisor in August, spent 9 and a half years in the Police, mainly in the CID, after leaving university with a degree in 'Politics and International Relations'. Fraser ended up as an acting Detective Sergeant before deciding he needed a change of direction. He self-financed his NEBOSH qualification whilst still in the Police and in January 2014 started working in health and safety for a company in the oil industry.

Fraser soon moved to Morrison Construction, part of the Galliford Try Group, working most recently on the AWPR:

*'I loved being out on site talking to the guys. I was shocked at the difference in the health and safety performance across sub-contractors. It was a real eye-opener.'*

*Galliford Try is such a large organisation that it is very difficult at a junior level to affect change. I joined W M Donald because it offered me the opportunity to make an immediate and positive difference onsite. I'm trusted by Eilidh (HR and HSEQ Compliance Manager) and the rest of the team to get on with the job of implementing changes to make jobs easier and safer. I really feel appreciated.'*

*The key to lasting improvements in health and safety performance is behavioural change.*



*It's about everybody on site looking out for each other and not being afraid to step in if they see something being done wrong.'*

Fraser is working towards becoming a chartered member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and has already completed several training courses including gaining his Level 5 NVQ in health and safety practice, temporary works, fire co-ordinator and appointed person for lifting.

A talented rugby player when he was younger, Fraser is now a CrossFit enthusiast. CrossFit is a scarily intense training programme that will make you want to lie down just reading about it. Mind you Fraser needs the energy.

He has three children, and is getting married next year!

# Bryan Sandison: done DONG digs Donald

**Bryan joined W M Donald as a Technical Project Engineer in September. He works alongside Technical Director, Ewan Riddoch, providing internal project support to the many W M Donald projects across the region.**

Born and bred in Orkney, Bryan studied Civil Engineering at Napier University in Edinburgh. Building a portfolio of project experience with medium and larger national contractors, Bryan moved into the subsea sector for 6 years. Prior to his move to W M Donald, Bryan spent 18 months on the AWPR project focussing on bridge structures.

Bryan's work on oil and gas subsea structures, pipes and infrastructure included periods in Vietnam, Norway and Denmark. A particularly challenging project was the strengthening of the DONG Siri oil platform:

*"A similar platform had already been decommissioned due to structural design flaws and the challenge was to find a solution that enabled the Siri platform to continue production without interruption. The challenge was resolved through a combination of clamps on the legs of the platform and cable stay technology as used on bridges like the new Queensferry Crossing. This approach had never been attempted before in a subsea context."*

Although only with W M Donald for a short period of time, Bryan has already encountered a variety of engineering scenarios:

*"My previous work has given me a broad base of technical and practical know-how. I'm enjoying the opportunity to apply this in new specialisms such as drainage and housebuilding. Over time, one of my goals is to streamline processes so we can remain efficient and effective in what are likely to be tough market conditions."*

Outside work, Bryan's time is primarily devoted to his family, particularly his two-year old son, Einar; a Norse name meaning leader or fighter. He may be tempting fate!

## ANCHOR VOYAGE

**20 anchors have been 'decorated' by Scottish artists. W M Donald sponsored the 'North Sea Sucker' anchor decorated by Kate Guthrie and this will greet visitors to W M Donald's new operations building when it is opened in 2018.**

All 20 anchors were on display in Aberdeen recently and Jack and Archie, budding art critics and Willie and Elaine's grandchildren, paid them a visit.



# DAVID DUNCAN



**David Duncan, a much loved and valued member of the W M Donald team, recently passed away. David had been diagnosed as recently as August with Amyloidosis, a rare condition in which bone marrow produces an abnormal protein (Amyloid) that interferes with normal organ function.**

David joined W M Donald in March 2001. He was a foreman ganger with a particular expertise in sewer laying. David really enjoyed his work and could always be relied on to 'get the job done'. He enjoyed passing on his knowledge and was a valued mentor of younger team members.

Whilst David was incredibly focussed and conscientious, he always had time for a laugh and a joke.

One of the W M Donald team described David as a 'quantity surveyor's dream' because of the detail he provided when reporting on site activities.

A true family man, David is survived by his wife, Brenda, and by his two sons and daughter. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.



Willie, Elaine, Ewan and all the staff at W M Donald

# CAPTION COMPETITION



## Example:

*Is it just me, or can anyone else smell carrots?*

## Funny? Mildly humorous? Sad!?

Whatever you think, we're sure you can do much better. Text your caption to us by 31st January to be in with a chance of winning a meal for two at the Lairhilllock Inn.

**Text WMDONALD to 60777 followed by your name and caption.**

## Christmas holidays

A brief reminder that the last working day before the Christmas holidays is Friday 22nd December.

We return to work on Monday 8th January.



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