

# Cheap Thrill reigns again

by Jamie Willis  
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Crowds at the Mull and Morvern Agricultural Society's annual Salen Show were treated to a rare mix: peak summer weather, outstanding agriculture, and a day of family entertainment.

The show, held on Thursday August 10 at the Showfield at Aros Bridge, also provided them a rare achievement: a victorious return for the reigning Champion of Champions.

Cheap Thrill, a Limousin cross in calf heifer, retained the top trophy for David and Robert Wright of Woodend Farm, Ardour, after first claiming the overall cattle title and then getting the nod above the best of the sheep, horse and dog competitions.

Bred by John and Craig Robertson, and sired by Glenrock Inferno, Cheap Thrill has become a serial prize winner. In 2022 it was named Champion of Champions at both the Salen and Sunart and District Shows, and the



**Champion of Champions: David Wright with Cheap Thrill, the Limousin cross heifer that retained its title; and right, Darcy Watson (left) and Heidi Poulton with Nora, the 11-month-old Labrador who won overall champion dog honours.**

week prior to this year's Salen contest took the cattle title at Lorn Show.

With another sash and rosette added to the collection, a pleased David Wright said: "She has done us well. We are over the moon."

The reserve champion was Abby MacKenzie with her

horse Golden Grove Tempress. A long day in the saddle had seen the horses as one of the first to enter the ring, and the equestrian performances still pleasing crowds into the late afternoon.

Equally early in starting was the sheep

showings, where the chevots, blackies and rare breeds all took their turn beside a table lined with trophies. Although judging in one ring was temporarily suspended in the middle of the day by a heat-induced medical matter, and shade was needed above some of the

animals as protection from the worst temperatures, there were plenty of pleased faces as the silverware was distributed.

Seven trophies went to the Tom Nelson and the team from Glangernon. This included overall champion for Spritz, a 4,000 dyke blackhouse mother gimmer that was shown by Ross Shaw and Alexander Craig.

With some participants showing in both sheep and cattle competitions, the latter was one of the final groups to start. After an incident last year after a Highland cow was spooked by a dog, there was obvious caution in both keeping the animals separate and moving the more temperamental entries.

This year, too, a Highland heifer became agitated, breaking its snitch and nearly toppling one side of the ring. The crowd was asked to stand back, a new snitch acquired, and the cow taken out to calm down.

The unscheduled drama resolved, business returned

to normal, with the Wrights winning above reserve Kerrie MacGillivray, who was showing Bunnassan Champion of Champions 2022 Glangarnock Rosalie and won champion pure breed here.

After picking up her trophy, Kerrie said: "The heifers have done us proud. We're delighted."

With no poultry shown this year due to on-going concerns about avian flu, the dogs were the final animals to enter the ring. A large field of 75 was comprised of seasoned veterans and locals giving their pets a day in the sun.

Amongst the winners was Anna-May Woodhouse and two-year-old terrier Etive, another Lorn Show victor. Top dog, however, went to 11-month black Labrador Nora, a novice shown by children Darcy and Edie Watson and Heidi Poulton.

Meanwhile the produce tent awarded a variety of classes, including eggs, beans, onions and Potatoes. A collection by

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## Cheap Thrill reigns again at Salen Show

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Arran Skinner of Treshnish caught the judges' eyes, as did begins by Revl Hart. Winners were also chosen from the jams and huge selection of colourful cakes submitted.

In more light-hearted competition, Alfie Brassington overcame all-comers in the wellie throwing, winning a certificate to buy himself some wellies of his own. A hill race and a concluding sheaf toss also tested participants' athletic abilities. Others chose to spend the day trying the food and drink stands, plus activities such as a bucking bull and laser clay pigeon shoot.

Speaking during the afternoon, first time Salen Show president Tom Corbett was pleased with the turnout and the weather.

He said: "We have done well for all sheep classes, and the cattle entries were well attended. An excellent turnout for the horses, and 75 dogs in the dog show. Raffle tickets are selling well, and we have



Alfie Brassington shows off his prize for winning the wellie throw: a voucher for goodies.



good drinks and food stands," in appreciation he added: "This year we have bought our own tent for the marquee with help from the Waterfall Fund. I need to thank them, the first aiders, and the organisers. And we have had great contributions from local businesses which have all helped to make it a successful day."



Clockwise from above left: Abby MacKenzie rides Golden Grove Temptress, overall champion horse and reserve Champion of Champions; The champion vegetable basket by Arran Skinner; Brian Abnett and Dudley Doughnut, the dachshund who took home champion puppy; excellent eggs and jam; a competitor gets it game face on.

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Big winners in the sheep competitions: Pamela MacColl, left, Alexander Craig, Tom Nelson, and Ross Shaw with Spritz, the overall champion sheep.



Clockwise from top left: Certificates galore at the sheep pen; Erin MacLennan and Archie, her Shetland pony; there was a brilliant selection of prize-winning cakes; Kerrie MacGillivray, winner of champion pure breed and reserve overall for cattle; sweet times at Kenneth McDermott's Highland Confectionery; and Shelagh Reade of Isle of Mull Cheese serves her farm's new whey spirit.

All photographs: Jamie Wells.

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**Eye to eye** with John Wallace

**Failed by the System**

Recently I have experienced extreme anger, frustration and intense joy. All with the same patient: a youngster brought to me by a concerned family. Their child was struggling very badly at school; unable to read, concentrate on school work and participate meaningfully in class. To make matters worse the child was being labelled with a variety of learning related disabilities. Some of which could easily lead to the child being put on powerful medication. The family knew I had a special interest in children's reading problems and asked me to help. When examined the youngster could not see even the largest letter on my chart and could not read print of any size. Because this poor child had never experienced clear vision their severely blurred world was their norm and the child just accepted that

blurred view of their world and never complained. The reason for my anger and frustration; this child has had several years of schooling and their inability to read and perform in class was put down to learning related difficulties. No educational professional had considered the child's inability to perform might be a vision related issue. In this case it was an extreme vision related issue! My moment of intense joy? Yesterday I dispensed the child's first pair of glasses. The youngster's face lit up, the parents and my staff were in tears and I was given a massive hug by the child. Unless your child's vision system is fully functional your child will never achieve their full potential in life. Have your children's vision checked by an optometrist. If your child is still failing to perform at school always seek the advice of a neuro-developmental or behavioural optometrist. Without a specialist reading disorder vision assessment it is always unsafe to assume the child has learning related problems.

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