

THE SCOOP

MOWI[®]



Gabriel Sykora



Alan Brown

Modern Apprenticeship in Aquaculture now available

26 members of staff form the first cohort to begin a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) with West Highland College UHI.

The programme, which started in December, attracted staff from both hatcheries at Lochailort and Inchmore as well as from our farms across the whole of our region including Portnalong, Muck, Leven, Cheesebay, Maclean's Nose, Gorsten and Carradale.

The Scoop spoke to Donald Waring, Learning and Development Manager, to find out more: "We are thrilled with the uptake for the MA. This new programme is a significant part of the training and development programme we are looking to enhance at Mowi. The beauty of a Modern Apprenticeship is that it is vocational, on the job training. Everything is carried out in the workplace with no requirement to go into college. Assessors come onsite to check how our staff are progressing, although for the time being these visits will obviously be carried out using video due to COVID restrictions. Managers are also involved in the MA and are mentoring members of their team who are following the MA programme."

The MA in Aquaculture, now run by West Highland College UHI, also incorporates SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) units in numeracy and literacy. It has been designed to cover all aspects of aquaculture which means that staff can tailor it to make it as relevant to their role as possible.

Donald explains: "The MA is a mix of core units which are compulsory as well as optional units to choose from. This means that a member of staff based in a hatchery will likely select different modules to a farm technician but both will qualify with the MA."

He continues: "There is of course a time commitment required from staff to follow the MA but the programme is fully funded so there is no cost involved. We already have a lot of interest in the second intake for the programme in April, so it is clear to me that our employees are embracing the opportunity to develop a career path here at Mowi and gain a vocational qualification. In turn this will lead to higher levels of staff retention."

The MA in Aquaculture comes following a successful pilot of a 16-week NQ (National Qualification) in Maritime and Aquaculture skills, also offered by West Highland College UHI. This course brought academia and industry together with Mowi guaranteeing an interview for every student. It resulted in Mowi hiring three new members of staff directly from the programme.

Speaking about the ongoing collaboration with Mowi, Nigel Patterson, Business Development Manager from West Highland College UHI, adds: Working in partnership with Mowi to develop programmes is part of the strategic aim of the college to support the economy of the West Highlands. Plans are already being progressed for the next phase of collaborative working to upskill Mowi staff."

The next cohort on the NQ in Maritime and Aquaculture skills will begin again in April.

Developing a career path at Mowi

Congratulations to Alan Brown, who recently gained his Practitioner's Certificate with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Alan's professional development since he joined Mowi in 2015 is a great example of how you can follow a career path here.

Alan started at Consumer Products UK as a fresh salmon planner, helping the business successfully launch the Sainsbury's account. He then became a planning manager, expanding his knowledge to include smoked salmon, hot smoked salmon and Business to Business products, before being asked to move to a training and development role. This final move proved to be a turning point and Alan discovered a passion for training.

Alan explains: "When I first moved into the training and development role, I had to create a centralised system to hold all relevant information, such as who was trained, who needed training and plan in refreshers whenever they were due. I built an Excel based system to do this. In the past year, I've focused on an ongoing programme of digitisation of our training modules, as well as a greater alignment between our overall business strategy and our corresponding training requirements. The result is a much better quality of training, enhanced flexibility and access of that training which can literally be done via a smartphone, and training that is much more relevant."

Thanks to Alan's efforts onboarding for new staff or indeed agencies can be done online, and all staff can access Mowi Academy, including those who do not have a Mowi email address.

As for Alan himself, he is keen to continue his professional development and is hoping to study for his diploma. The Scoop will of course follow his progress.

Supporting communities in 2020

This year, like every year, we have continued to support the communities where we operate as much as we possibly can. As you might expect, the nature of the requests for support we have received have been different and, of course, led by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic across our region.

The Highlands is known for the many great events staged by communities across the region and the Mowi Salmon Wagon had been booked for several of these. As events inevitably were cancelled, we were pleased that we were able to make financial donations to those charities and community groups that missed out on a key fundraising opportunity in the summer.

Our enduring support for Scotland's iconic sport of shinty through our sponsorship of the Camanachd Association continued, in what was a challenging year for all sport. We celebrated at the end of September when shinty was played for the first time since games were forced to cancel and we were

proud to support the Mowi Shinty Hour sessions, a series of online sessions designed to develop coaching skills.

It was a year of thinking out of the box and we were delighted that Outward Bound, an organisation we have supported for a while, revised its plans and launched 'In School Adventures', which brought the team to the school rather than the planned residential workshops.

More than ever before do young people need help to develop key skills such as resilience, self-confidence and positivity.

From much needed personal protection equipment, repairs to community buildings, defibrillators in some of our most rural locations to fresh and smoked salmon to feed communities, we were pleased to support through more than 80 donations in 2020. Below are examples of just some of these.

As we start 2021, here is a reminder to all readers of The Scoop about how to approach Mowi for support in your community <https://mowiscotland.co.uk/about/community-donations/>



Lewis & Harris

Purchase of material to make scrubs and face masks for Western Isles care staff.



Uist & Barra

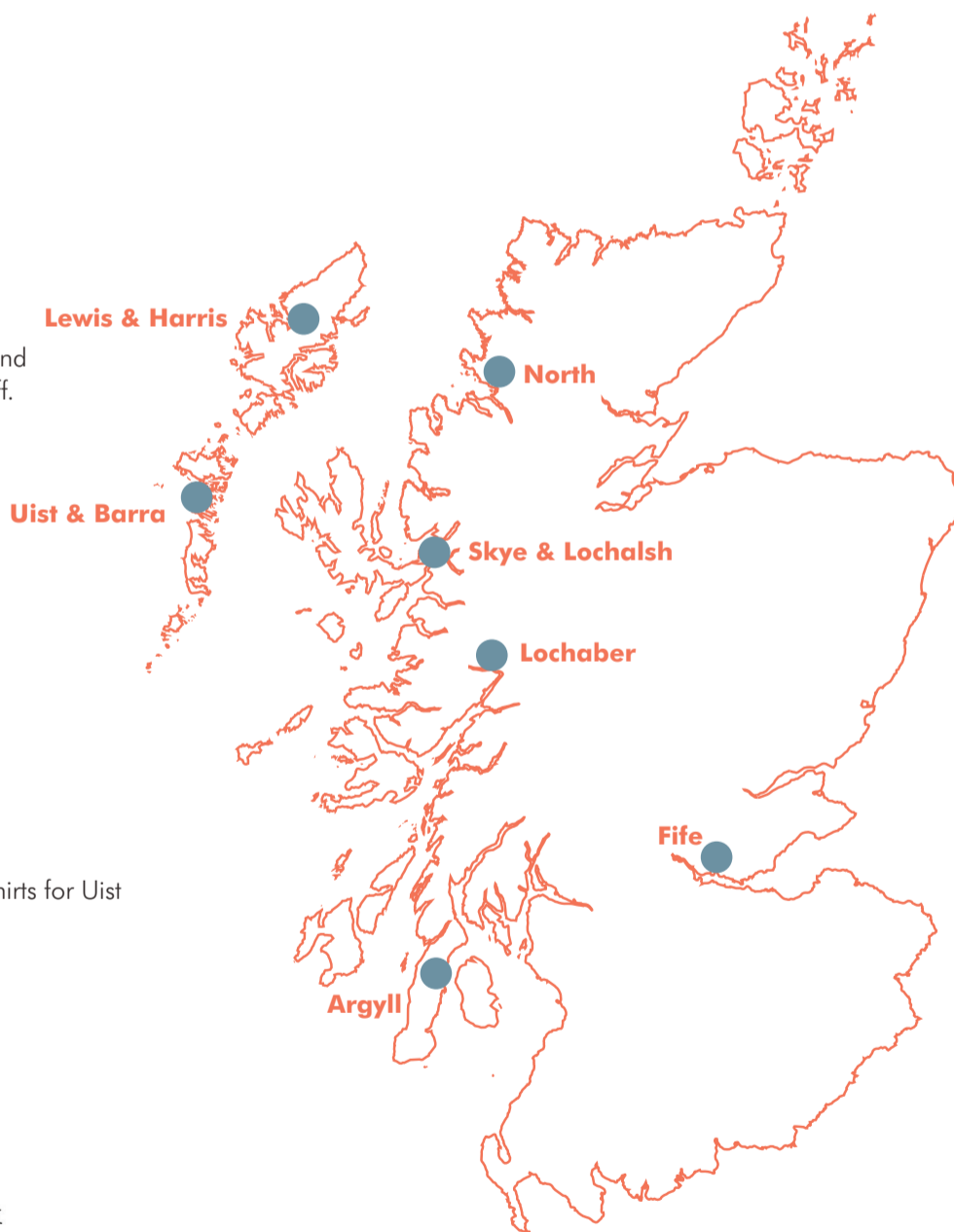
Safety riding hats and branded sweatshirts for Uist Community Riding School.



Lochalsh Arts Network

Skye & Lochalsh

Lochalsh Arts Network - refurbishment of stage system Summer 2020 and support for a mobile trailer.



North

Donation to RNLI Lochinver station.



Lochaber

Caol Primary school - donation towards cost of building outside pod for nursery.



Fife

Sponsorship of Rosyth FC.



Argyll

Donation of defibrillator to Carradale surgery and uniforms for first responders.

Bumper year for cleaner fish

The team at Ocean Matters in Anglesey is celebrating a bumper year, having reared three million lumpfish.

This means that Ocean Matters has been able to meet all lumpfish requirements for Mowi in Scotland, Ireland and the Faroe Islands, as well as supply to external customers. Managing Director Dougie Hunter commented: "The hatchery team has worked extremely hard in what has been a very difficult year for obvious reasons so this really is a tremendous achievement from all our colleagues in Wales and I'd like to thank them all again for this."

It has also been a successful first year for rearing ballan wrasse, as Dougie explains: "This is also the first year we have started to rear ballan wrasse. Following a significant investment in a new facility which is also based in Anglesey, we began to rear

ballan wrasse back in February. We take the eggs and larvae from our broodstock site in Machrihanish and then transfer them down to the recirculation facility at Anglesey for their grow-out stages. It takes around twice as long to rear ballan wrasse compared to lumpfish, (17 months compared to eight), but our strategy for wrasse will mirror that of lumpfish in that we will be able to meet all our internal Mowi requirements for wrasse from our production at Anglesey and also aim to supply other companies."

The first of these farmed wrasse will be ready to be deployed to Mowi Scotland farms in the early summer of 2021.



Dave Jones (Site Manager) and Dan Phillips (Cleanerfish Production Manager)



Dan Phillips at wrasse hatchery

Forensic science applied to fish farms

DNA sequencing is to be used to assess the seabed at Loch Ewe which harvested its last crop in November.

Mowi, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC) and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) are collaborating on a project that will use eDNA metabarcoding to assess the recovery of the seabed below Mowi's recently closed salmon farm at Loch Ewe.

The new technique takes samples of the seabed, which are then sent to a lab for analysis. By extracting DNA from the sediment, scientists can identify the organisms or animals present. This can then be extrapolated to understand the health of the ecosystem of that specific marine environment that was used for fish farming. It replaces a more manually intensive process where samples were taken from the seabed, washed and sieved (as shown in the photo) and then sent to a biologist where the animals present were identified and counted manually.

This new methodology is faster, more cost effective and will allow Mowi to monitor the health of the seabed environment around farms in real time.

The Scoop spoke to Stephen MacIntyre, Head of Environment, to find out more: "The post closure environmental monitoring project at Loch Ewe will bring multiple benefits. While there is extensive monitoring undertaken to assess the environmental quality of the seabed at active farms there is currently little information on the dynamics of sediment recovery following cessation of farming. In this case we are starting from a high point given that the site, during its last operational cycle, complied with SEPA's seabed environmental standards.

"Following closure of our Loch Ewe operations we will continue with our environmental monitoring over the next three years and undertake further research into the biodiversity and function of the seabed

ecosystem. This research will be done in a completely new way that will both increase our knowledge and understanding of the impact of aquaculture on the seabed as well as trialling this technique and supporting its transition to becoming an established regulatory tool.

"I am also pleased that this particular project has led to the creation of a funded PhD post for a student to manage this three-year project. The application is live, and the successful candidate will be based at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Oban. We are very proud to be supporting this unique academic opportunity."

For more information about the funded PhD post, visit <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/grad-school/studentships/nerc-super-dtp/assessing-benthic-recovery/>



Photo of the month
Hellisay sunrise by Michael Macintyre

In the community



Fort William FC

We are pleased to continue to sponsor the away transport for Fort William Football Club. It was great that the first game was able to go ahead in November. We look forward to following the progress of the team and especially our sponsored player and employee at Blar Mhor, goalkeeper Mateusz Kulbacki.

Salmon for MacKintosh Centre

We were delighted to provide salmon to the MacKintosh Centre in Mallaig for Christmas. After a tough year for residents and staff at the care home, we hope that everyone was able to enjoy their Christmas party.



Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day

Working from home did not stop Mowi staff taking part in the national Christmas Jumper Day with all funds raised on the day going to Save the Children.

Mowi gets behind the UK's biggest beach clean-up and survey

Beachwatch is an established programme set up and organised by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) to encourage people across the UK to care for their coastline.

Up and down the country, people are encouraged to join a beach clean and help survey litter. In 2020, the Great British Beach Clean saw 459 litter picks take place, with over 2,100 volunteers getting involved to remove over three tonnes of litter.

The Scoop spoke to Jayne MacKay, Mowi's Community Engagement Officer, to find out more about Mowi's contribution to the programme:

"We are privileged to operate in some of the most beautiful coastline locations in Scotland and it is important to look after our beaches. Many of our sites regularly help to clean up local beaches but we think it is important that this feeds into the bigger picture and supports the work that MCS is

trying to do. We're really looking forward to being part of the year round Beachwatch Programme and the Great British Beach Clean flagship event in September.

"Ultimately, our ambition is to get all of our sites registered with Beachwatch. Each site will adopt a beach in the area and then four times a year staff from that site will carry out a beach survey where everything that is found in that particular 100m stretch of beach is recorded on the Beachwatch website. Following the survey, the team will clean the remaining beach. Blar Mhor and Farms Office staff based in Fort William will also be getting involved to assist their farming colleagues with the Caol Beach shoreline."

It is hoped that the first beach cleans will take place in February with one happening in each of our regions – North, Lochaber, Argyll, Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh. Outward Bound will also be involved so it promises to be a real community effort.

This new initiative complements the company's commitment to remove aquaculture equipment that is found to have washed ashore in areas where we have operations, irrespective of the source.

For more information about the initiative, read here <https://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/>

Meet Iman Ismail

What do you do at Mowi?

I am a farm manager at the seawater site Invasion Bay.

What did you do before joining Mowi?

Before joining Mowi I had various jobs ranging from a labourer on building sites to being a swimming pool attendant.

What do you like most about your job?

What I like most about my job is that no two days are same and there are always new ways to run the farm better and improve.

What do you do in your spare time?

I like to spend time with my family and I love being out on trials bikes.

What is your favourite film?

The Hurricane.

