

## Positive outlook for farms

SHEEP trade has proven positive in the north-east, according to a report.

Farming company Aberdeen & Northern Mats has announced trade is ahead of last year where store lambs were selling in the region of £40 per head and is now selling at an average of £61.62 per head.

Colin Slessor, deputy head of livestock at ANM, said: "Sheep trade at Thainstone and Caithness has been satisfactory and the improved weather has certainly helped all sectors of the industry.

"Assuming all goes well with Brexit negotiations, the future of the sheep industry looks optimistic."

The grass situation is still a concern for farmers, and there are some who are finishing off lambs using concentrate.

In Aberdeenshire, the grazing situation has stabilised, and many farmers have been able to take second and third cuts of silage.

The area received rain at the right time, stimulating grass growth.

## Probe into harbour seal death

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after a seal was found dead near the Aberdeen harbour redevelopment site.

The body of a young grey seal was found near the Nigg Bay site of the £350 million project.

Marine Scotland, which is responsible for the protection of Scotland's coastal waters, has said it is investigating.

The group will look into whether blasting work from the site caused the seal's death.

A spokesman for Marine Scotland said: "Marine Scotland is investigating the reports of a dead grey seal at Aberdeen harbour expansion project, with support from Scottish Natural Heritage.

"Marine Scotland continues to work with Aberdeen Harbour Board to ensure environmental standards are maintained during the works."

Councillor Catriona Mackenzie said: "It's important that the facts are established as to what exactly happened to cause this death."

# Mum trusts 'golden age of treatment' to cure her cancer

BY ANA DA SILVA

A WOMAN who has been told her cancer is incurable today said she won't give up fighting for her life.

Claire Bothwell, 40, was diagnosed with stage four bowel cancer in 2017 and has called a form of experimental therapy her "great white hope" to becoming cancer-free.

The cancer spread to her lungs and in April this year she was told she had a second unrelated blood cancer - follicular lymphoma.

Yet the mum-of-three is intent on proving her doctors wrong.

So far Claire's friends and family have raised close to £20,000 of a £100,000 target through fundraising efforts.

Claire, from Muchalls, said: "I think there's a lot of hope out there - people with stage four have a 10% chance of being alive in five years. So, it's really grim.

"And those that are alive in five years, I don't know how long they live after that.

"It's like the golden age for research, treatment and medicine - I'm lucky to have it now. I totally think they're going to find a cure."

Claire, who is married to Liam, said the response to the fundraising bid has made her "really emotional" and it has been "touching" to see people reaching out to help.

Six months prior to her diagnosis, Claire had been having what she called "all the classic symptoms" of bowel cancer.

Claire, mother to Mora, eight, Christy, five, and two-year-old Indy McArdle, said: "I had first gone to the GP in January 2017 and I had been to see them half a dozen times with increasing pain.

"It was all the classic symptoms of colon cancer, except my age.

"I was a bit anaemic, but because I had just given birth to Indy, I just thought it was residual anaemia from being vegetarian and breast-feeding.

"I was referred to see a gastroenterologist and there was a five-month wait for that because I wasn't over 50. If I had been over 50 I would have had a colonoscopy within two weeks.

"At that point, I felt like I was struggling. I had a little baby that was learning to walk and I was running to the toilet 14 times a day.

"There was blood one out of three of those times. I knew something was wrong. I thought



Claire Bothwell with her children Christy, five, Indy, two, and Mora, eight.  
Picture by Chris Sumner

it was going to be bowel disease like Crohn's or colitis."

When Claire went in for her colonoscopy, the doctor found the camera only made it 25cm in before they found the tumour.

"I knew something was very wrong when the nurse specialist held my hand before they told me anything. I knew I was about to be told something really awful.

"I kinda didn't believe it at first, because it's so far away from what I thought was going to be wrong."

A few days later, a biopsy showed that the tumour was malignant.

The BBC Scotland assistant producer was given a "red carpet" treatment and had her surgery 13 days later to remove the tumour.

She added: "I remember waking up and feeling delighted that it was gone and I could go home and tell my daughter I had had cancer."

However, in October, just four months after she was diagnosed, she found out her cancer had spread.

She said: "The first scan after the surgery found that there were tumours in my lung that had grown."

Thirteen months later, Claire travelled to London to remove the five tumours in her lungs. Three weeks later, a sixth and seventh tumour were found. Claire said: "It was devastating because that's when they said to

me it's probably not going to be curable - I'm latching on to the word probably and I'm intending to prove them wrong."

Claire was diagnosed with a second unrelated blood cancer - follicular lymphoma in April.

Although the lymphoma is not terminal, having two types of cancer excludes her from taking part in most medical trials in the NHS and Claire is looking to pay for any experimental treatment herself.

She said: "I've still got a couple of lines of chemotherapy left, but they're not going to cure me - they're just going to extend my life.

"So the world of trials is where I want to look for a cure.

"My great white hope is this case, this woman in America, who got TIL therapy - Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocyte. She's cured of the cancer."

The therapy would see white blood cells taken out of her body, reprogrammed to genetically go for tumour cells.

Once they're put back in the body, the white blood cells would then function as an "army" and rid the body of the tumours.

She said: "Ultimately, I know that it's inside and it's growing and I have to make plans to deal with it. I think I have to be this way otherwise I would really despair."

To help her cause visit [www.cureclairescanter.org](http://www.cureclairescanter.org)

## Police warning after pensioner transfers £20,000 to fraudsters

A NORTH-EAST pensioner was scammed out of £20,000 after fraudsters convinced him to go to the bank and transfer funds.

The 71-year-old, from Brechin, was conned when criminals claiming to be from his internet service provider telephoned him and claimed to have accidentally put £10,000 into his bank account.

They asked him to reverse the "error" by going to his bank and depositing £10,000 into their account in return for a reward.

The transfer went through, but the fraudsters told their victim it had failed, so he authorised a second payment of almost £10,000.

Scammers told the victim to tell bank staff the money was being transferred for home improvements.

Police are warning residents to be on their guard against such incidents. "Scammers carry out this fraud by

impersonating internet service providers, computer companies, banks and software firms," said a Police Scotland spokeswoman.

"To avoid falling victim, you should be wary of unsolicited approaches by phone claiming to offer a refund."

Brechin Councillor Gavin Nicol said: "Anyone can fall victim to this scam and I would echo the police advice. I have had the same call - I called the Angus Council IT department and was advised it was a scam. "It is terrible they target vulnerable people."

Another Brechin Councillor Bob Myles said: "These criminals are particularly devious. They are very cold-hearted and have no regard for the effects their crimes have on victims. I would urge people to be very cautious and, if they think they are on the phone to someone who is scamming them, to hang up immediately."

## Workshops for children

HUNDREDS of youngsters with learning difficulties are being given the opportunity to enjoy live theatre through a charity.

Happy Days is using funding from Aberdeen Standard Investments' Charitable Foundation to provide fairytale performances and African-themed music and dance workshop for young audiences.

Around 200 children from Fraserburgh, Aberdeen and Inverurie aged between three and 17 with severe learning difficulties will be treated to various shows and workshops held in November, January and May.

Ryan Sinclair, chief executive of Happy Days, said: "A very generous donation from Aberdeen Standard Investments' Charity Committee will enable us to arrange shows in the Grampian area."



Claire with her husband Liam on their wedding day earlier this year. Picture by The Carlys

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