

Gillian pipes up for 'Come Dine With Me'

POPULAR Channel 4 programme "Come Dine With Me", now into its 30th series, will be of particular interest to Sutherland folk next week.

It's set in the Highlands and one of the contestants is Gillian Sutherland (33), who hails from Dornoch but now lives in Ardgay.

Gillian, known by the family moniker as "Gilly the Bee", is a programme office administrator with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and works out of the group's Golspie and Inverness offices.

It was through her membership of the Inverness British Legion Pipe Band that she came to be on "Come Dine With Me". Producers approached the pipe band in the hope of finding people from the north willing to take part in the programme.

"Fellow band members told me 'Gillian, you're quite mad, you'd be perfect for this!'", she recalled.

Each contestant cooks dinner and provides entertainment on consecutive weeknights and is scored by the others with a £1000 prize for the winner.

It's famed not so much for the food dished up but for the clashes between the contestants and the psychological insights into their characters.

Gillian, who lives with her

partner Richard MacLean at Oykel Place, Ardgay, picked a Taste of Tartan theme.

Guests were greeted by her dad William Sutherland (Willie the Bee), playing the pipes. Mr Sutherland, Rearquhar, Dornoch, plays with Sutherland Caledonian Pipe Band.

Gillian made sure that local produce featured strongly on her menu.

Her starter was smoked salmon pate with home-made oatcakes, followed by a fillet of Alladale Estate venison with roasted vegetables and cheese and chive mash with red wine jus. For dessert, she served whisky and honey cream with raspberries and white chocolate shavings and home-made shortbread.

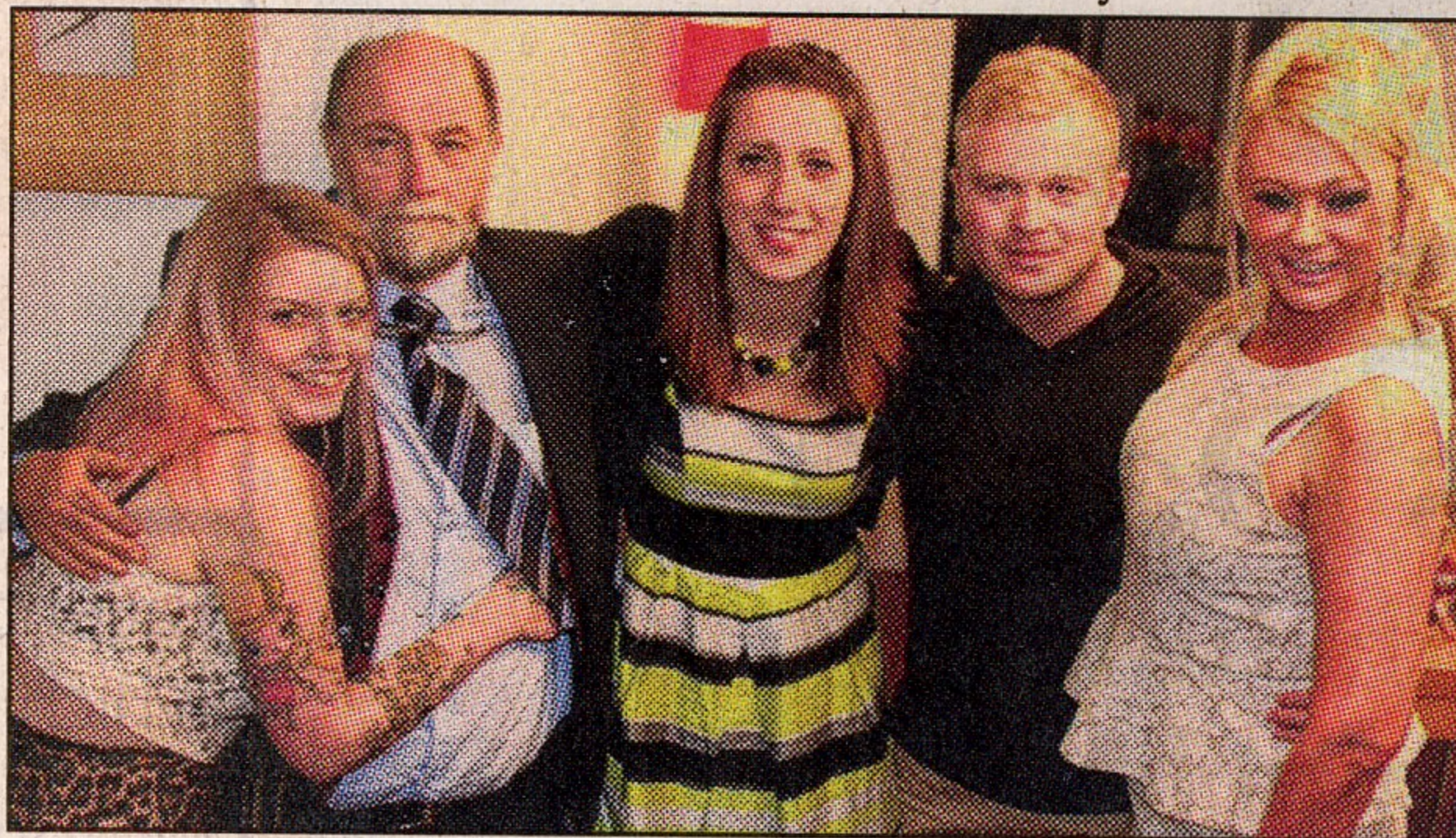
She says the dinner went well, although the day, which began at 8.30am and lasted until 2.30am the following morning, was exhausting.

Gillian hadn't told the other contestants that she was a piper, so took them by surprise when she did a turn.

Gillian is remaining tight-lipped about who won, but says the whole experience was great fun.

The programme goes out on Channel 4 at 5.30pm each weeknight.

Gillian is the host on Monday, with Melissa Kirby, Inverness, on Tuesday; David Edes, Dingwall, on Wednesday; Zarina Ainsley, Nairn, on Thursday; and Jamie Tulloch, Tornagrain, on Friday.



Gillian with her fellow Come Dine With Me competitors. She is wearing her favourite yellow and black dress which she bought because her family are known locally by the nickname "Bee".