

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Review of 2011

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Independent Schools

Feature on page 12

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Injuries as Cowal caravan park hit by stormforce winds

STORMFORCE winds flipped over caravans at a Cowal caravan park on Tuesday morning, injuring five people. Three had to be airlifted to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley for treatment to injuries as a result of the incident at the Stratheck Caravan Park, Loch Eck, shortly after 8am.

17,000 homes without power in Argyll and Bute

AROUND 17,000 homes were without power across Argyll and Bute as *The Oban Times* went to press after galeforce winds on Tuesday caused 'significant damage' to the overhead supply network. While some supplies were restored by the afternoon after an evening of intermittent failures, around 400 engineers were working throughout the day to remove fallen trees from lines and make branches damaged in the wind safe. Meanwhile, there was widespread disruption to transport, with fallen trees causing delays on many roads - particularly on the Oban to Lochgilphead, and Oban to Connell routes - while trains throughout the region also suffered from fallen trees on the tracks. Ferries were badly disrupted because of the weather, however Caledonian MacBrayne expected most services to return to normal by the end of the week.

Oban lifeboat book sells out again

A BOOK being sold to raise money for Oban Lifeboat Station has sold out at Christmas for the second year running. The Story of Oban Lifeboat, written by RNLI Oban volunteer Willie Melville, continues to sell well into its third year of being published. The book is sold from Oban's Waterstones and ran out of copies over the Christmas period for the second year running. Willie has, from the proceeds of sales, donated another £500 to Oban Lifeboat Station.

Argyll men on Queen's honours list

Services to community, sport and education rewarded in New Year announcement

OBAN men Graham MacQueen and Cameron Black are among seven people with connections to Argyll and the Islands recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours.



Graham MacQueen, who will be made an MBE in recognition of his charitable work in Oban and Lorn.

Lochgilphead's Bill MacCallum is also named on the list, while there are honours for Isle of Harris man Donald John MacKay, Dunoon's Duncan McGarry plus John McAslan, and Maureen Shepherd of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

The awards will be presented to those honoured later in the year, possibly during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Tour. Graham MacQueen, 59, is to be appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to charity in the Oban and Lorn area, having played a significant part in raising hundreds of thousands of pounds for local causes over the years. His philanthropy started more than a decade ago when he started selling old furniture through his MacQueen Brothers' business to raise funds for local charities. He then established the MacQueen Brothers' Charitable Trust just over two years ago, with the community shop at the North Pier's White Building currently generating around £100,000 a year for good causes. Mr MacQueen, originally from Seil, said: 'Initially, I thought it was a joke, I just kept re-reading the letter. It is an absolute privilege.'

'I would particularly like to say thank you to Her Majesty the Queen. She is a shining example for everyone in our communities.'



Cameron Black, originally from Mull, receives the Queen's Fire Medal in recognition of his dedication to improving road safety across the world.

'I like to think I'm receiving this award on behalf of all the people who are part of the organisations I'm part of, in particular those volunteers at the charity shop and the directors and staff of my own business.'

Improving road safety
Strathclyde Fire and Rescue's Cameron Black, 51, originally from Oban, receives the Queen's Fire Medal in recognition of his dedication to improving road safety across the world. Group Commander at the service's headquarters in Hamilton, he is currently project manager for its new state-of-the-art training centre. Joining the fire service in 1978, he travelled to South Africa in 1999 to share his knowledge on road safety with international partner agencies, becoming a founding member of the World Rescue Organisation. Eighteen months later, he became its secretary, a position he still holds. He also helped develop the International Development Programme to improve capabilities of fire and rescue services at responding to road collisions, which has been adopted by 10 countries so far. Cameron said: 'It certainly is not something I ever expected - a complete bolt out of the blue. 'I've been really surprised by the amount of people getting in touch to wish me congratulations. The work I have done over the years has been achieved through the support of my family and therefore I also see this as recognition of that support.'



Simon and Kimberly Thomson with New Year baby Charlotte.

Charlotte surprise for New Year

IT WAS a surprising start to the New Year for mother Kimberly Thomson when her baby became the first born in the Oban area in 2012. Kimberly and husband Simon brought in the New Year at their flat in Branksome Park, Oban, before 32-year-old Kimberly went into labour at around 10.30am on New Year's Day. The midwives were called and within 20 minutes of their arrival baby Charlotte was safely delivered, weighing

in at a healthy 8lb 14ozs. Kimberly, who is from West Virginia, had planned for a water birth at Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital but after quickly going into labour, there was no choice but to give birth at home. 'We spent Hogmanay at home watching TV because we knew Charlotte could arrive at anytime,' she said. 'Her due date was December 28. I ate a curry and pineapple that night, because we heard that could hurry things along. Something must have worked!

I was surprised at how quickly it happened but the midwives were great. They were so helpful.' Charlotte is a sister for one-year-old Callum, who celebrated his first birthday yesterday. Simon, a 38-year-old tree surveyor with Scottish and Southern Energy, has been working from the company's Oban base for a few months but the family only moved to Oban a month ago.

Lochgilphead athletics coach Bill MacCallum accepted the MBE - but only after mulling it over for a few days.



Bill MacCallum, originally from the Isle of Mull, and now living in Lochgilphead receives an MBE for services to athletics throughout Argyll.

The 64-year-old, who was born and raised on Mull, was recognised for his services to the sport. Following a long career, he has coached youngsters for more than 30 years, officially forming Mid Argyll Athletics Club in 1984. Bill, a former BT employee, said: 'When I opened the letter, I just looked at it in shock. 'At first I thought it was a very good hoax. 'When I realised it was genuine I still took a few days to get back to them because I thought there were so many people more deserving of it. 'I do feel very honoured to be included in the list of MBEs and I want to thank all the parents and volunteers who have helped me over the years.' Also appointed MBEs will

be Donald John MacKay, of Luskenytre Harris Tweed, for services to the Harris Tweed Industry, and Dunoon's Duncan McGarry, a family liaison adviser with the National Policing Improvement Agency for services to the police. Maureen Shepherd, a director of the University of the Highlands and Islands and lately chair of Inverness College's board of management, received an MBE for services to education. **Architecture** John McAslan, founder and executive chairman of the John McAslan and Partners architecture firm who has strong Dunoon connections primarily through the John McAslan Family Trust, will be named a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to architecture.

Lifeboat called to rescue of sinking fishing boat

A FISHING boat that had taken on an estimated two tonnes of water following storm damage near Oban was rescued thanks to help from Oban Lifeboat crew. In response to a request from Clyde Coastguard, Oban's RNLI lifeboat, the *Mora Edith Macdonald*, was called out on Tuesday to the aid of the small fishing vessel, *Condor*, with one person aboard in Cardingmill Bay. The lifeboat launched and was on scene seven minutes later. With weather conditions improving, the lifeboat managed to get two crew members aboard with a salvage pump and the water was cleared after 20 minutes.

Council 'technical error' leads to disabled people receiving demands for money back

DISABLED residents in Argyll and Bute, who were overpaid more than £600 each over a seven month period as a result of a 'technical error', were then told to pay back the full amount at once. Three people have been affected by the 'technical error' within Argyll and Bute Council's Direct Payment Allowance (DPA) scheme, which saw a total of £1,836 overpaid to the affected parties between April 1 and October 3 2011. However, rather than write off the error which was entirely the council's fault, the authority wrote to the recipients demanding repayment of 100 per cent of the overpayment in one lump sum.

EXCLUSIVE
by Steven Flanagan
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The council's approach has prompted distress and anger, with Lawrence Nugent of Glencruitten Road, Oban, told he would have just £123 to see him through a month as a direct result. Mr Nugent, who is physically disabled and a mental health service user, was notified of the error in a letter advising him that he had been overpaid by £587.57 - and that the sum would be deducted from his next monthly payment of £710.92. In his case, a waiver of £34.87 had been agreed.

When he complained, he was told he would have to submit a form to prove hardship. But Mr Nugent has refused to do that, saying it was 'degrading'. He said: 'This kind of error shouldn't happen. 'There are thousands of people across the county who get these direct payments. 'What would happen if everyone who receives them suffered the same error? Would everyone have to repay? 'I don't see why I'm being asked to pay for the council's mistake.' Mr Nugent believes it is imperative those who receive DPA are treated

properly because they may not be able to properly scrutinise what monies are paid into their account. The *Oban Times* originally contacted Argyll and Bute Council about the overpayments on December 9 last year, but the council remain unable to provide a full response. However, regarding Mr Nugent's situation, the council said: 'He was advised to make the banking changes necessary to ensure that he had enough funds to pay his personal assistant. 'The council regrets the technical error which led to the overpayment but has made every effort to make sure that Mr Nugent has not been caused financial difficulty.'

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Rare species recorded off west coast

Marine surveys discover a colourful and curious underwater world around the coast



Colourful flame shells in Loch Linnhe were among the finds made during this year's marine surveys. Picture - Goatchurch.

VIBRANT flame shells and huge fan mussels were among those rare species recorded during government-funded surveys of Scotland's west coast waters last year.

Underwater video, acoustic and three dimensional recordings of the species were made as part of work carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage and Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University, among others.

Vessels from the Northern Lighthouse Board, Marine Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) were used in the research.

Around the small isles, more than 100 specimens of marine life were noted. Off the west coast, fan mussels were found. Growing up to 48cm long, the mussels are Scotland's largest sea shell, but are endangered and protected.

Meanwhile, flame shell beds were found in Loch Linnhe in Argyll, while a new community of northern feather star - a type of echinoderms - was found off the Sound of Cana.

Elsewhere, other discoveries included a faceless, brainless fish near Orkney.

Susan Davies, director of policy and advice with Scottish Natural Heritage, said: 'The findings from these surveys will help us to manage them sustainably and ensure future generations can also enjoy the benefits of a healthy and diverse marine environment.'

Top bands to play at Lewis and Harris meet



Clach Mhic Leoid: the scenic Harris location for the 'Meeting of the Bands' Picture - Peter Boyle, Menevia, Wales.

ISLE OF Skye, Uist and Lewis pipe bands are to get 2012 off to an exciting start - by playing alongside the 2010 Grade 1 world champions, the St. Lawrence O'Toole Pipe Band from Dublin.

The massed pipes and drums will assemble for the 'Meeting of the Bands' in Lewis and Harris on March 2-3.

The stirring musical spectacular will feature an evening concert on both days in the Lewis Sports Centre in Stornoway, and an early afternoon performance in Harris on the Saturday.

Organiser, Stornoway man Tony Robson, said it was hoped to hold the Harris event at Clach Mhic Leoid (The MacLeod Stone), an ancient megalith overlooking Nisabost beach, west of Tarbert.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It is an incredibly scenic location. The idea would be to have the

bands converging there. The Uist main and junior pipe bands will come with the St Lawrence O'Toole from the south along the beach, while Lewis will arrive from the north and Skye from the east.

'But it all depends on the ferry times - and if we can't do it there, we'll hold the event in Tarbert.'

Landing the St Lawrence O'Toole represents a major coup for the event, Mr Robson said.

'It's taken over a year to persuade them to fix a date. They were very keen to come, but it was just a matter of getting the arrangements sorted out for bringing the 40 band members over here.'

All proceeds from 'Meeting of the Bands', which is supported by Scotland's Islands, will go to the Stornoway Amenity Trust. Tickets will be available online at The Booth.

Isle of Skye-born poet to be honoured

THE GLENDALE Burns Supper has been a regular feature in Glendale Hall for more than a quarter of a century.

But this year the event will have a Skye and Gaelic theme as well as the traditional speeches.

Gaelic literature

Organisers The Glendale Trust have decided that for the first time they will also honour renowned Gaelic poet Neil MacLeod, who was born in Glendale.

Next year marks the 100th anniversary of MacLeod's death and the trust wanted to mark his contribution to Gaelic literature.

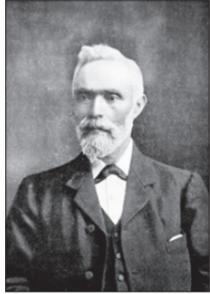
The Glendale Bard, as he became known, had the first edition of an anthology of his work, *Clàrsach an Doire* published in 1883. He lived to see the fourth edition of the work in 1909.

In a letter to the August 1954 edition of the *Clarion* of Skye, Donald MacKenzie described MacLeod as 'a worthy son of Skye and a great Highland patriot'.

Speaking ahead of the supper, chairman of The Glendale Trust, Ian Blackford said:

'Whilst The Glendale Burns Supper is very popular we wanted to adapt the format to honour the Glendale Bard, Neil MacLeod, as well as Robert Burns.'

'This allows us to give a particular Glendale and Gaelic slant to the traditional Burns Supper. We will have the usual Burns speeches' in addition we will also incorporate an address



To be honoured: Neil MacLeod, The Glendale Bard

on Neil MacLeod to be given by Norman Macdonald as well as hearing the songs of Neil MacLeod being sung by Arthur Cormack.

'We have a line up of accomplished Burns speakers whilst our Gaelic theme is also enhanced by having the Mod Gold medallist Mairi Sine Chaimbeul delivering the reply on behalf of the lassies.'

'Mairi Sine will also sing on the evening accompanied by her sister Catherine and her husband Andy Will. Giving the toast to the lassies will be Sunday Post writer Campbell Gunn who many will recall appearing on the radio circuit in Skye in the past in a band with Mairi Sine Chaimbeul and our chairman for the evening Allan Campbell.'

Call for free ferry trips during Islands' Year of Culture

REPORT

by
 STEPHEN NORRIS
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HIGHLAND Council leader Michael Foxley has written to First Minister Alex Salmond and Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism Fergus Ewing suggesting that everybody in Scotland receive a voucher providing free passenger travel on a ferry to an island.

The Lochaber councillor claims the move would boost tourism and is especially appropriate now, given that 2012 is the Islands Year of Culture.

Councillor Foxley also says the move would allow thousands of Scots the chance to visit remote communities by sea for the first time.

His letter states: 'I continue to be surprised at how many people in Scotland have never visited a Scottish island. Indeed, when I worked in general practice in Fort William, over half of our staff had not crossed the Corran Ferry.'

to mainland ports as people will require food, drink and accommodation.'

Councillor Foxley suggests targeting the scheme at those finishing S4 at school to broaden their knowledge of their own country. The vouchers, he states, could be open-ended and could number 100,000 per year.

He wrote to Mr Ewing: 'I believe this move would encourage more people to travel and explore the Scottish Highlands and Islands and would boost tourism in these areas.'

'I would therefore be grateful if you could raise this idea with your colleague Keith Brown, Minister for Housing and Transport.'

'And to Mr Salmond he said: 'I know that you are personally very keen for Scots to explore more of their own country and would therefore be grateful if you could consider this matter.'

MSP calls for more support for rural Post Offices

SKYE, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson has called on the UK Government to offer improved support for struggling rural post offices following news that 2,000 will close from this summer.

Mr Thompson highlighted the success of the Scottish Government's Post Office Diversification Fund and said a similar initiative was needed on a UK scale.

He said: 'The Scottish Government is doing what it can to assist these businesses but its actions are in stark contrast to the hands-off approach of the Coalition Government at Westminster.'

US beef ban lifted

A STANDOFF between the EU and the US over the use of hormone treated beef has been brought to an end.

A deal struck by MEPs last month means imports of US beef are to increase by 25,000 tonnes per year, in return for the US dropping all trade sanctions imposed in retaliation for an EU ban on the imports of hormone treated beef.

However, the importation of hormone treated beef is still banned.

The move came after MEPs backed a report drawn up by Liberal Democrat MEP, George Lyon.

Meanwhile, Mr Lyon said there has been a 'substantial' step forward in lifting the de-facto ban on beef imports to the US from the EU caused by BSE rules. New rules have been published and will go to public consultation next year.



Highland dance teacher Eilidh MacInnes, far right, with pupils from her school pictured at the annual dance display in Glenclutten Church Hall. See also Page 9, 16, 152eillidh01



To mark his retirement as chief executive of the Fishermen's Mission, Captain Dan Conley, originally from Campbeltown, was presented with a painting of the *Golden Dawn*, his father's ring-net fishing boat. Captain Conley, who has been with the mission for 11 years, was presented with the gift by his successor Commodore David Dickens CBE. The painting was created by Tarbert artist Stuart Herd as a gift from the Council of the Fishermen's Mission.

Anniversary school exchange

PREPARATIONS are being made on both sides of the pond ahead of a special 20th anniversary school exchange trip between Oban and Laurinburg, North Carolina (NC).

The exchange sees Scotland High School students from the North Carolina town visit Oban in June, with Oban High School pupils making the return trip in the October holidays.

In 2012, however, the duration of each visit will be extended from two weeks to 20 days in the landmark anniversary year.

The exchange is likely to begin with a June 13 departure from NC and a July 3 return. The Oban students and chaperons are expected to be in NC from October 4 to October 24.

The Oban students will arrive in Laurinburg prior to the 2012 Scotland County Highland Games, where they will be special guests.

They will also attend classes at Scotland High School, visit the North Carolina mountains, Ocean Isle Beach, the North Carolina State Fair, and participate in various group activities.

In Scotland, the students will visit historical sites in Edinburgh, the Isle of Iona, Glencoe and several local primary schools, concluding with a final night's ceilidh.

Preparations are also being made in Oban and Laurinburg for special activities to commemorate the 20th anniversary exchange.

Past students involved in the exchange are expected to cross the Atlantic once more and visit their long-time friends.

The Laurinburg-Oban programme receives financial support from the Laurinburg Rotary Club, the Oban Rotary Club, and the Jane M. Purcell Memorial Scholarship.

'Connections' Big Top in Skye welcomed

ROSS, SKYE and Lochaber MSP Charles Kennedy has welcomed news that the world-famous Celtic Connections festival will be bringing its Big Top to Skye in Spring next year for a special two-day music festival.

Celtic Connections is Scotland's premier folk and Gaelic music festival, and has been based in Glasgow since it was launched in 1994. Mr Kennedy said: 'This is a wonderful opportunity, both for Skye and Celtic Connections. I'm glad that people around Scotland will have the chance to take in our culture at its home in the Highlands.'

The Big Top will be at Broadford Airfield on March 23 and 24.

Islands hit by mobile phone faults

MOBILE phone coverage to Tiree and Coll was partially repaired last Wednesday after two faults developed with the local mast.

However, another fault is limiting coverage and its hoped a repair can be effected quickly.

A spokesperson for Vodafone said: 'Our engineers are aware of the problems. They have been caused by two faults - one has been fixed already and we are negotiating access to the other site to assess and remedy.'



Beachd Ailein
 Ailean Caimbeul

BLIADHNA mhath ùr dhuibh uile agus gach soirbheachadh innte!

Air an t-seachdain a chaidh thug mi iomradh air an dòchas a th'air Banca Shasainn agus an Rìghaltas gun sìolaidh ire na h-atmhorachd thar na bliadhna seo agus gun cuidich sin beagan is mòr-shluagh na dùthcha a' sabaid ri teannachadh na h-eaconamaidh, dìth cosnadh agus fiachan. Dealradh beag dòchais 's dòcha ach theagmhan nas fheumail mar gheis dha luchd-poillitigs na bhios e ann an seadh practaiceach sam bith dhan mhòr-shluagh!

'S tàmaidh fhìrinneach a th'ann gum bheil àm na Nollaige is na Bliadh'n Ùire a' cur ri iomagain is eallach mòran theaghlachan is pàrantan a' feuchainn ri rùn na cloinne a choinneachadh. 'S e buil a th'ann glè thrìc gum bheil fiachan an teaghlach a' dol am meud agus a' rèir coltais, tha cuid a' toirt gu Nollaig na h-ath-bhliadhna a' pàigheadh dheth nan cuntasan sin. Suidheachadh ubhasach a th'air a dèanamh mòran nas miosa far nach eil fiù 's àrdachadh atmhorachd ann an tuarastal nam feadhainn a tha fortanach gu leòr obair a bhith aca. 'S e dorainn cagallach a th'ann dha na truaghain a dh'fheumas iasadann a shireadh is iad nan èiginn agus tha luchd-liubhairt nam fiachan gun truas! Bha mi a' leughadh gum bheil buidhnean ag obrachadh 'gu laghail' ann am Breatainn agus a' tairginn iasadann air suas ri 2000 per cent de riadh! Tha sin a' ciallachadh gun tigeadh air nach dam b' fheudar ceud no a ghabhail air iasad ann an èiginn suas ri dà cheud mìle a phàigheadh air ais! Bhiodh leithid sin dìreach do-chreidsinneach aingidh ach a rèir coltais, tha e a' tachairt agus nach bu mhath an t-amas Bliadh'n Ùire dha luchd-riaghlaidh na dùthcha gun cuirte às dha leithid a' chleachdadh gum mhaill.

Mo bheannachd aig Seonag NicLaomhainn, ceannard ùr Phartaigh Làbarach na h-Alba, is eise a' moladh gun tèid smachd a ghabhail air fiachan pearsanta ann an Alba le fion de dh'Aonaidhean-Creideis gan stèidheachadh feadh na dùthcha mar aon fhreagairt. Bha uair ann a bha sinn uile a' creidsinn gun robh adhbhar dìreach againn dha bancaichean is seirbheisean eile, ach tha eachdraidh air dearbhadh nach eil iadsan a-nise a' cur luach sam bith air luchd-cleachdaidh agus gum feum sinn a bhith daonnan a' trussadh na seirbheis as fheàrr. Tha deagh theisteanas aig Aonaidhean-Creideis ann a bhith a' gleidheadh ionmhas gu h-ionadail agus aig an aon àm a' tairginn dòigh dha daoine aig am bheil feum air, iasadann a ghabhail air cùmhnantann ris an cothaich iad.

A GOOD and prosperous New Year! Sadly the modern Christmas and New Year festivals force many into the increased stress of debt, and for some these debts take until the following Christmas to clear!

When some loan agencies can apparently legally offer loans at up to 2,000 per cent interest I applaud the new Scottish Labour leader Johan Lamont's proposal that a network of credit unions be established across Scotland to provide people with a fair solution to managing borrowing.

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell) ailean@obantimes.co.uk.



Former Oban man John Wilson is the new chief executive at NHS Fife.

Former Oban man in top health job

A FORMER Oban High School pupil has been given the top job at NHS Fife.

John Wilson, currently deputy board chief executive and chief executive of NHS Fife Operational Division, will take up the chief executive's position on April 1 this year, following the retirement of George Brechin.

Mr Wilson, who left Oban in 1975 to study at university, said: 'I am delighted to accept this appointment and look forward to working with the staff of NHS Fife and our partners across the public services to further improve health and social care services for the people of Fife.'

'2012 marks the end of the 10-year strategy set out by Fife Health Board in 2002. There is more to be done and many challenges ahead. It is by working together that we will make similar advances in the next 10 years and I look forward to being part of that process.'

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said: 'Mr Wilson has over 30 years experience of working in NHS Scotland and his wealth of experience will be greatly valued in leading and moving the work of NHS Fife as we go into 2012.'



Sara-Maria Barton is to reprise her role as the Black Swan.

Taynuilt ballet star back as Black Swan

TAYNUILT ballet dancer Sara Maria Smith will again play the role of the Black Swan, for which she won an international award, in Ballet West's latest production.

Sara Maria, daughter of the school's principal Gillian Barton, won a Genée bronze medal in 1997 for her performance for her portrayal of the Black Swan in Swan Lake.

Also performing will be 2011 Genée finalist, Sarah Mortimer. The 19 year old has spent the past three years at Ballet West studying for her BA in Classical Ballet and Dance Performance.

Both dancers are part of a 60-strong company for the ballet school's Scottish tour, which will take in eight venues over 12 dates between January and March.

The Swan Lake tour begins on January 20 in Oban, and travels to Stirling, Musselburgh, Cumbernauld, Giffnock and Pitlochry, before finishing in Greenock. The production will be on tour in China in early summer.

Carbon count down at Loch Fyne

AN ARGYLL company has dramatically reduced its carbon footprint and cut CO2 emissions by 160 tonnes in three years.

At the end of 2011 Loch Fyne Oysters was using 306,562 kWh less than in 2008, which is the equivalent to using 160 tonnes less CO2 a year.

At their base on Loch Fyne, the company has achieved this by changing its light bulbs and fittings to low energy appliances, installing motion sensors in the chills, putting timers on the underfloor heating and removing the use of shrink wrappers and replacing with strapping machines.

There has also been support from workers, who have contributed by introducing more efficient work processes.

The Scottish Government has a stated aim to deliver a 30 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions by 2020.

Sad end for Lady Evelyn

Council purchase old vessel for £1

A FISHING vessel that was being restored on Oban's North Pier finally met its end last week after the council ordered it be removed.

A small crowd gathered to watch as the *Lady Evelyn's* wheelhouse was uncerimoniously ripped off by contractors acting on the instructions of Argyll and Bute Council, with much of the engine and interior machinery also torn out.

At the time of going to press, the hull remains in place.

Derek Grier, who had spent more than a year restoring the boat before December's winds struck it down again, agreed to sell the boat to the authority for just £1 in return for its removal.

However, he was left frustrated after contractors moved in early, destroying more than £1,000 of equipment and materials he had stored in the wheelhouse in the process.

Derek estimates he spent upwards of £3,000 restoring the boat since buying it in October 2010. While the events leading up to the boat's demise have left a sour taste in his mouth, he says he won't pursue the council for the costs if they honour their bargain of waiving berthing fees they had tried to force him to pay in recent months.

He said: 'It is very sad to see it go. Significant progress had been made before the storm in early December knocked it off its legs again.'

'The council bought it for a pound, saying it would no longer be my problem. They told me I had until January 7 to get all my stuff off the boat, but they moved in early and now it's all been destroyed.'

'They had to organise police and the cordoning off of the car park so it's not something they could organise in a whim.'

'A quick phone call to tell me they were doing it last week would have been enough for me to nip in and grab my stuff.'

Derek still believes the experience was worthwhile though, thanking those volunteers who helped him along the way.

He now hopes to secure another boat to work on - albeit maybe not quite as big a challenge - to put to good use the skills he has learned and to reward his children, who worked with him throughout the doomed restoration.

He said: 'Hopefully I can get something that needs a few hours work in the morning that allows me to go fishing with the kids. It's the least they deserve for their help.'



Isle of Seil Golf Clubhouse was sent flying over a fence and flipped over by a gust of wind.

More 'a gusta' than Augusta

ISLE of Seil Golf Club was made 'homeless' by the recent stormy weather when its clubhouse flipped upside down after being caught up in 'a gusta' wind.

Club members are counting the cost of the damage and early inspections of the hut suggest it cannot be salvaged.

In gales of almost 100mph, the eight-year-old clubhouse was ripped from its foundations and flipped over a fence before crashing down on its roof.

Only a few days before a gust of wind had turned the clubhouse on its concrete base.

John Blackstock, the club's vice-captain, said on Tuesday:

'I think the clubhouse will be a write-off.'

'It has been very gusty here and I know of one garden shed and a greenhouse that were damaged the same day.'

'We will be getting together soon to discuss getting another one but we are homeless at the moment.'

John stressed the Isle of Seil course was still open, but admitted the current weather did not make for ideal golfing conditions.

The stricken clubhouse, which was photographed following its demise by Steve Hines, contained course scorecards and noticeboards.

Oban's Argyll Hotel finally comes down after four years of discussion

AFTER four years of negotiations between Argyll and Bute Council and the developers to allow the replacement on the Argyll Hotel, the demolition job has begun in earnest.

Developers Alan and Callum MacLeod of Ee-Usk said they had mixed emotions about the building finally coming down: relief their planning ordeal was over, excitement about the prospect of a new hotel in its place, but also a sense of trepidation about the demolition work in Oban's town centre.

After contractors speedily, yet thoroughly, picked apart the roof and top floor of the building, a small gathering of onlookers was there to see the gable end chimney knocked down last Friday.

Now begins the delicate work of removing the remainder of the building from the neighbouring Oban Inn and Regent Hotel.

Alan MacLeod said: 'We are excited about the project moving ahead and the plans for the new hotel are almost complete, but there is still work to be done.'

'Not least the intricate work needed in the final part of the demolition, so that the Oban Inn is not damaged.'

Mr MacLeod was also quick to rubbish rumours that the rubble from the demolition was being fly-tipped at the old Rare Breeds Park site.

In a response, posted on The Oban Times Facebook page, he said: 'Untrue. Obviously, Enough said. Fly tipping over 2,000 tonnes of rubble isn't going to happen is it?'

While many have expressed

their sadness at seeing such an iconic building gone from the town, there is an acceptance too that change is needed. Others are already discussing what the new hotel should be like.

Prior to demolition, the MacLeods had commissioned an engineer's report that stated the building may not have lasted another winter, such was the deterioration in the structure.



Video of this available online OBANTIMES.CO.UK

Man charged with attempted rape

A 25-YEAR-old man appeared in private and from custody at Oban Sheriff Court last Wednesday on a petition alleging attempted rape and sexual assault.

There was no plea or declaration. Bail was granted and the case continued for further investigation.

Unwelcome first-footer injured

AN UNWELCOME first-footer in Oban's Combie Street suffered facial injuries after an alleged assault.

The 33-year-old man was taken to Lorn and Islands Hospital, following the incident in the early hours of New Year's Day.

Three men were detained by police and one of them, a 23 year old, has been charged with assault.

Pensioners urged to claim benefits

PENSIONERS are being urged to ensure they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to as wintery weather continues.

Housing minister, Keith Brown, said the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Hotline has now referred more than 34,000 people to services maximising their income through checking eligibility for benefits.

The average increase for pensioner households who get an increase is £1,681 per year.

Mr Brown said: 'Many people fail to claim for what they are entitled to in benefits and tax credits simply because they don't know it's there.'

The Home Energy Scotland Hotline can be contacted on 0800 512 012 or visit www.homeenergyscotland.org.uk.

Drugs found

A SEARCH of a residence in Oban's Longdale Terrace on New Year's Day by police officers resulted in the seizure of diazepam and heroin.

As a result, a 30-year-old man will appear in court on a possession charge.

Following another search on December 30 in Cawdor Place, Shore Street, Oban, a quantity of diazepam was seized.

A 47-year-old woman has been reported to the procurator fiscal.



A crane claw ripped the *Lady Evelyn* apart on Thursday of last week, prompting a small crowd to ignore the elements to witness the vessel's final moments. 15_1011adyev2

2011 was 'quieter' year for Oban's lifeboat crew

OBAN Lifeboat had a 'quieter' year for call-outs in 2011, but a turnover in crew and committee and the passing of honorary member Sir Jimmy Savile meant it was far from uneventful.

The lifeboat, helmed by coxswain Ronnie MacKillop, had a total of 47 calls, compared with 57 in 2010.

However, medical evacuations from Mull were down from 17 to five, meaning the lifeboat was busier with non-medical incidents.

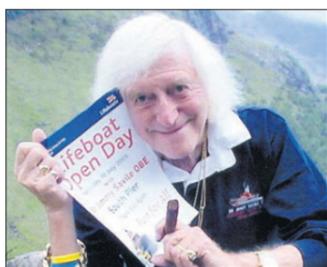
To highlight the variety of 'shouts' the crew has to deal with, there were 18 different categories of call-outs among the 47 calls.

Call-outs have reduced steadily in recent years from a peak of 104 in 1999 and the RNLI believes this may be, in part, down to its Sea Safety initiative, which commenced around that time.

Reflecting on the year, coxswain MacKillop praised the enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment of his volunteer officers and crew, without whom the service could not operate.

He also paid tribute to former crewmember and station mechanic, Jim Watson, who retired recently.

Over a 23-year period Jim served on more than 1,000



Oban Lifeboat crew were saddened by the death of Sir Jimmy Savile

services, not to mention numerous exercises and passages.

The crew are delighted that Jim's position is now filled by Peter MacKinnon, a crewmember of some 10 years service.

Further changes have been made with the retirement on December 31 of Oban's Lifeboat Operations Manager (LOM), Douglas Craig.

Douglas served for 23 years as crewmember, second coxswain and, latterly, as LOM.

All at the station wish him well and are pleased to welcome his successor, Billy Fortieth.

Billy has served as crewmember, deputy coxswain and, latterly, as Deputy Launching Authority over a period of 36 years.

The station was greatly saddened by the death of Sir Jimmy Savile, who had twice turned up to support Oban Lifeboat's open day.

He was the only person ever to have been made an honorary member of Oban Lifeboat crew.

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Fergie's Folk
with Fergie MacDonald

'Shooting for real' in World War 1

OK, WE all know about John MacDonald from Moidart, Acharacle, British champion and ranked number one Great Britain clay target champion and also ranked number 21 in the world. Impressive indeed.



Accolades around the world, from glossy sporting magazines to TV documentaries.

It's probably in the genes and dates back a very long way.

Yet the exploits of his grandfather, John are conveniently swept under the carpet and whispered in low key conversations.

John MacDonald joined the Lovat Scouts Territorials in 1912 and mobilised for war in August 1914. The Lovat Scouts became infantry in 1915 and their first taste of action was an assault landing on the beaches of Sulva Bay, Gallipoli, on August 5 1915.

Having landed, the advance ground to a halt and resulted in trench warfare. The British and Turk front lines varied from 100 to 300 yards apart.

This cat and mouse existence lasted for four months, during which time John MacDonald was to become a battalion sniper. A deadly game at which he excelled and made a name for himself, if that's what you call it.

When the British Army pulled out from the Dardanelles, the Lovat Scouts remained in the Middle East, but John MacDonald was sent back to Beaulieu, where his exploits in Gallipoli were noted and he was drafted into a new unit which was being formed.

This elite unit was called the Lovat Scout Sharpshooter or LSS and indeed the forerunners of today's SAS units.

The snipers course consisted of six months intensive training. Candidates were hand picked crackshot marksmen, but even at that, the pass rate was lower than 10 per cent from each intake.

Snipers worked in pairs. John's partner was Willie Boa from Glen Affric. This sniper unit consisting of 25 snipers operated on the Somme front. Their officer was Captain John MacGillivray from Nigg and their sector was the notorious Bapaume, Cambrai, St Quentin sector.

The routine was 48 hours on and 48 hours off. There was no leave for 18 months. Forty eight hours on was usually spent between the German and British lines - known in military jargon as no man's land. Sneaking in at night and coming out two nights later, the game was deadly. Collecting identity discs or dog tags was the order of the day.

In another article I shall tell you how Willie Boa and my father John, got the military medal mentioned in dispatches respectively. German and British snipers had a massive mutual respect for each other. My father would never hear a bad word said in relation to a German sniper.

He did, however, having nothing but contempt for the idiotic politicians who put these brave men from both sides in direct confrontation.

I remember one evening after a shooting match at Mingarry, a young crackshot, James MacLellan was showing everyone his new .22 rifle.

We all wanted a shot to test the rifle. A match was placed on a fence post at around 50 yards. After much shooting by all the crackshots, the match was still there. John, my father was 92 years of age. He said: 'Give me a shot', shooting off the shoulder, the match was blown off the post - on fire! He refused to shoot again. The sniper training had kicked in. One shot!

Interesting point. Can the present John MacDonald attribute his success on the world stage of Olympic trap shooting to a rub off from his grandfather's documented exploits as a deadly sniper? Personally I would be more satisfied with winning championships rather than dog tags.

Interesting note: Glenmorangie sent a case of whisky to Captain John MacGillivray every month to clean the telescopes and rifle scope lenses.

The snipers billet was well behind British lines, so every month the party would start with the case of whisky. No lens ever saw whisky for cleaning purposes! Instead, the whisky was used to toast whatever sniper was top of the league. They held their own private league.

Fish farm rent rise will fund research and development

A RISE in salmon farm rents will pay for an increase in annual investment in aquaculture research and development from 2013, Crown Estates has announced.

Salmon rents rise from 1.7p to 2.25p per harvested, gutted weight in kilos, while the vacant

rent threshold for leases with no production rises from £500 to £1,000 per year, but retains the existing two-yearly doubling to encourage relinquishing unused sites.

However, rents for sea-grown trout and species such as halibut remain unchanged, while the 10

per cent discount on rents in the Outer Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney remains in place.

The measures will see the annual research and development budget increased to over £250,000, with research targeted at sea lice and consideration of fish farm development

opportunities in offshore locations. Crown Estate say the changes will be implemented in 2013.

The move follows an independent fin fish rent review carried out by valuation expert Stephen Pollock of James Barr Ltd and industry

expert Professor Graeme Dear. Reviews of fish farm rents and lease terms are carried out every five years and The Crown Estate undertakes to implement all of their recommendations.

Crown Estate's aquaculture operations manager Alex Adrian said: 'Aquaculture forms part of

one of the growth sectors within the Scottish Government's economic strategy. Last year salmon alone made up 36 per cent of all Scotland's food exports. We are proud of our role in the development of Scottish aquaculture, an industry that supports more than 6,000 jobs.'



Angela Coll, right, Healthy Working Lives advisor, presents the gold award to Lochaber Housing Association staff, left to right, Blair Allan, Dawn Callison and Jenny MacKay.

Housing association gains gold for good health

LOCHABER Housing Association (LHA) has rounded off 2011 with a gold award from Healthy Working Lives (HWL), a scheme to reward employers committed to improving the health, safety and wellbeing of their staff, contributing to the health of the local community and taking care of the environment.

LHA registered for the HWL award in July 2007 and achieved a bronze award in March 2008.

A silver award followed in June 2009 and was presented with the gold just before the New Year by HWL advisor Angela Coll.

Walking to work
To earn a gold, LHA undertook health promotion activities and provided information on diabetes, breast cancer and men's health.

'Walk to Work' week was embraced and several staff have continued walking to

work every day. Staff were also given the opportunity to have a health check, while the association hosted the HWL Mentally Healthy Workplace training for managers of local businesses.

Other initiatives included a newsletter to tenants and staff on ways to save energy and building community links by inviting local school pupils to design a Christmas card.

Also, LHA Property Serv-

ices' modern apprenticeship programme for 16-19 year olds reached the finals of the Scottish Modern Apprenticeship awards, where LHA was shortlisted in the Small Employer of the Year category.

LHA Chief Executive Officer Blair Allan said: 'I am very proud of the staff and note that the HWL Gold Award is richly deserved and a real credit to the organisation.'

Scientists call to watch the coastline

Rarest of turtles turns up on Tiree

SCIENTISTS are asking islanders to be on the lookout for unusual appearances on the coastline after one of the world's rarest marine turtles washed up on a beach on the Isle of Tiree.

A young Kemp's Ridley's turtle was found dead on at Baugh on Tiree not long after the hurricane-force winds that battered the west coast of Scotland in December had dissipated.

Critically endangered
A warm water species, Kemp's Ridley's are considered critically endangered, nesting on only two beaches in the Gulf of Mexico.



The extremely rare Kemp's Ridley's turtle found washed up at Baugh on the Isle of Tiree. The Marine Conservation Society is urging islanders to be on the lookout for further strandings following recent high winds. Photo - John Bowler/Marine Conservation Society.

It was only the 36th discovery of the species ever recorded on UK shores. Days later, another turtle was discovered on a beach in Wales.

Dr Peter Richardson, biodiversity programme manager with the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), believes that the turtles could have been sucked from the warm waters they need to survive by the strong south westerly winds.

With similar weather felt last week and yet more blustery conditions likely, it's feared more could end up on Scotland's beaches. He said: 'The Kemp's Ridley's require warm water and stop feeding at 15°C, they then more or less shut down at 10°C. In this case, turtles may have been sucked into colder waters by the winds.'

Such is the turtles' reaction to colder water that even when they

appear dead when washed up, they could still be alive. 'Sometimes they do wash up alive,' Dr Richardson said. 'So if you find a turtle, don't throw it back into the water. For one, it might kill the animal if it is still alive. Even if it is dead, we can carry out a post mortem and find out what went wrong. So if you do find a turtle follow the UK Turtle Code which has all the numbers and information you need to report the animal's condition.'

The SSPCA has a 24 hour hotline on 0300999999 if you find a beached turtle and suspect it to be alive. Dead strandings can be reported to the Scottish Agricultural College on 01463 243030. All records of strandings can also be reported to Laura Clark, marine monitoring officer at Scottish Natural Heritage on 01463 725237.

Dental nurse to put career down in print

A RETIRED island dental nurse is using her spare time to write a book about her career.

Mary McMillan retired on December 15 last year - just two days before her 61st birthday - after 24 years working from the mobile dental surgery with Tobermory dentist Chris Price.

The Mull woman visited the islands of Tiree, Coll and Colonsay, as well as the villages of Mull, during nearly a quarter of a century of service.

She said: 'I started as a dental nurse on October 8 1987 after replying to a job advert in *The Oban Times*.

'Chris and I started the mobile dental service in a rickety old van - I didn't even have a uniform at first.

'It went really well the first year, so we eventually got newer vans but we had our fair share of breakdowns and burst tyres over the years.

'I am working on a book about



Retired dental nurse Mary McMillan is writing her own book.

my career as an island dental nurse because there were no two days the same.

'That's why I have decided to write the book.'

Mary thanked her former colleagues Chris Price and Elizabeth MacFarlane for their leaving gifts.

Lewis drink driver crashed stolen joy ride car into tree

Three 17-year-old girls and a young man escape injury

A DRINK driver crashed a car carrying four young passengers into a tree while being pursued by police in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Michael Roderick Mitchell, aged 20, had stolen car keys to go on a joy ride around the island with friends last Thursday, despite having no licence, no insurance and being under the influence.

At Stornoway Sheriff Court on Friday, Mitchell pled guilty to six charges of stealing car keys, taking a car without the owner's consent, driving without a licence, having no insurance,

dangerous driving and drink driving. Bail was refused, and Mitchell was remanded in custody for background reports until January 18, when he will be sentenced.

Police had received reports that a car had been stolen from outside a house in the Bragar area around 2.45pm, the court heard.

Officers spotted the car, which took off at speed. After a short pursuit Mitchell lost control and the vehicle collided with a tree.

Four passengers, a 20-year-old male and three 17-year-old females, were uninjured.

UHI gets £5.6 million of European funding to meet demand

THE UNIVERSITY of the Highlands and Islands has been given £5.6 million of European funding towards its Investing in Recovery project.

The cash will help meet

higher than anticipated demand for places up to 2013. Inverness College also received £100,000 to meet demand from young people for college places and Lews Castle College £38,748

to improve skill levels locally.

Welcome
Welcoming the funding, UHI principal and vice chancellor, James Fraser said: 'This is excellent news for the University,

particularly as we approach our first birthday.

'Investment in Scotland's new university will help us have a transformational impact on the development and prospects of

the Highlands and Islands, its people and its communities.'

Minister for Youth Employment Angela Constance said the investment was 'a significant financial boost'.

Plockton crofting conference

A ONE-DAY conference organised by Skye and Lochalsh Environment forum, the National Trust for Scotland and the Scottish Crofting Federation was held in Plockton Hall on December 12.

Entitled 'Support for crofting agriculture - what next?' it was attended by more than 50 people from all over the Highlands.

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Rescue team lead walkers to safety

FOUR Armenian men had to call for help after getting lost on Ben Nevis on Friday. Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team got a phone call for help in the late afternoon after the men lost their way on the path around halfway up the summit. Two team members went up and met the group and led them down the path. Team leader John Stevenson told *The Oban Times*: 'The conditions were terrible and they were unprepared. None of them were injured.'

Rockfall closes A890 'indefinitely'

A ROCKFALL on the A890 at Stromeferry early on Hogmanay morning means the road will remain closed 'indefinitely', Northern Constabulary has said. The route, which links the A87 through Lochalsh to the A835 Ullapool to Inverness road, was shut by a landslide on December 21.

Investigation into staff absence

HIGHLAND Council's social services department has launched an investigation after a large number of home care staff called in sick during the festive period, leaving some elderly Fort William residents without carers.

Madeleine MacCallum of Camanachd Crescent was forced to cancel her Christmas Day plans after no-one showed up at her house to dress her.

Ms MacCallum said: 'Highland Council social services home care failed to arrange a morning visit to assist me in getting up and getting dressed - on Christmas Day!' She made a number of phone calls to the out-of-hours service which were not returned. 'My friend has phoned four times and left a message each time, and he has still not had his call returned.'

Councillor Bren Gormley told *The Oban Times* the social work system needed to be flexible enough to handle staff shortages.

He said: 'There wasn't the resilience in the system to pick up the slack.'



Firth of Lorn heroes: Gladys and Jimmy Johnston show their photo album of the dramatic rescue. 20_f01glady501

Premonition that saved five lives

Hero Gladys reveals story behind dramatic Firth of Lorn rescue

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

THE ADVENT of the New Year has prompted a Spean Bridge woman to speak publicly for the first time about how her premonition saved the lives of five men in a dramatic sea rescue.

Gladys Johnston, husband Jimmy and friends Tommy and Edie Stevenson from Newcastle were hailed as heroes after they plucked the men from the Firth of Lorn on August 20 1960.

The fishing party's tiny craft had capsized in worsening weather and Donald Cameron, *Oban Times* owner Waverley Cameron, his son Waverley Cameron Jnr, Michael Acheson and Ned Fingland were at the end of their strength after clinging to the upturned boat for 40 minutes.

Word of the rescue reached Oban and by the time Jimmy's converted lifeboat, the *Silver Wave*, reached port huge crowds lined the quayside.

Waverley Cameron Jnr was so hypothermic and disorientated he jumped back into the sea and had to be pulled out a second time. Rescuers and rescued were revived at Mr Fingland's hotel, The Great Western.

But had it not been for Gladys' uneasy feeling hours earlier on the tiny quayside at Salen, Ardnamurchan, the episode would have ended in tragedy.

Jimmy was getting the boat ready for the short sail to Tobermory, when to his astonishment Gladys began loading up piles of provisions. The couple's six-month old



The plaque from the binoculars presented to Gladys and Jimmy. 20_f01glady502

daughter Fiona was also aboard, in a Moses basket. Gladys, 70, who was four months pregnant with her second child at the time, recalled: 'I'm always told I'm psychic. I do things instinctively and put on extra food, homemade soup, took towels, blankets and extra water. Jimmy asked 'why are you taking all that - we're just going to Tobermory!' 'I think we might need it', I said, yet when we got there, it was a lovely day. 'Then, and I don't know why, I suggested going to Oban for a wee sail, and Jimmy said 'Aye, okay.' So if it had not been for that those people would have drowned. They were about to try to swim the three miles back to Oban, but they would never have made it. We wrapped them in the blankets and we had to rub them down the whole time - they were blue with cold.'

By bizarre coincidence, Waverley Cameron's grandfather, also Waverley, then editor of *The Oban Times*, drowned in a boating accident in the same stretch of water in June 1891. Mr Cameron later presented Jimmy and Gladys with inscribed binoculars as a token of thanks.

Gladys said: 'Somebody said it's not very fair that you saved those people from drowning and got nothing. But the reward was that we had saved them at all - that's what made us happy. 'We were amazed when we found out that another Waverley Cameron had drowned off Lismore in 1891. I thought 'Good God, that's a coincidence - or a premonition'. I could not believe we had saved the next two generations. It was a similar situation and in the same area - it was scary. But after all, the Johnston motto is *semper paratus* - always prepared.'

Ardnamurchan residents demand action on 'antiquated' power lines

ARDNAMURCHAN residents are demanding Scottish Hydro Electric upgrades 'antiquated' electricity lines after storms again blacked out large parts of the peninsula.

The lights went out in over 1,000 homes at lunchtime last Wednesday as hurricane-force winds wrecked overhead cables. It took over 400 engineers 36 hours to restore power supplies to all affected households.

The power cut follows widespread damage caused to the electricity distribution network by the December 8 storm.

Subpostmistress and Marilyn MacGillivray said Kilchoan's isolation was no excuse for the constant breaks in supply.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'It's getting ridiculous. 'There's a new baby in the village - how's the family supposed to manage? We are getting back to the days of

relying on generators to provide electricity. 'I have had to buy a gas fire, paraffin lamps and a gas primus stove. It's just shocking - and it cost a fortune. 'If it's out for days you have no water either, because the pumping system relies on electricity. We pay the same price as everybody else - so why can't we get updated as well? 'They won't cover the cost of the food we have lost, either. I have already thrown out two freezer loads and they told me just to claim off household insurance - but I don't want my premiums going up. 'Why don't they get decent poles with stays to keep them up in a storm? 'There's poles lying at all angles here. Everyone here thinks it is a disgrace and is sick of the whole situation.'

sort the lines. They are the ones taking their lives in their hands trying to keep us on. A wind speed of 110mph was recorded on an anemometer in Kilchoan during last Wednesday's violent storm, said Jon Haylett of West Ardnamurchan Community Council, adding that the outages would be discussed at the next meeting.

He said: 'I would not fault the engineers, the trouble is the line - the wires are literally falling off the top of the poles. The whole thing is antiquated and they really need to think about replacing the whole system. 'It makes sense to do that because it must be costing them a fortune - to say nothing about the risk to the men. People here are really fed up with it.'

A spokesperson from Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution said the majority of faults were a result of flying

debris such as tree branches coming into contact with overhead lines. Winspeeds of over 80mph throughout the day made it 'too dangerous' to effect repairs, which were also hampered by trees blocking access roads.

Over 400 engineers worked to restore power, 100 of which were brought in advance of and during the storm.

The spokesperson said: 'We would like to thank our customers for their patience whilst we repair the damage to the electricity network caused by the extreme weather we have recently experienced.'

'As part of our ongoing multi-million pound investment programme to strengthen and improve the electricity network in Argyll, we will focus on areas of the network badly affected by the extreme weather this year to help prevent re-occurrences in the future.'

NEWSDESK
01631 568000

Swimmers enjoy dip in icy Loch Shiel waters

Around 30 'loony dookers' braved the near-freezing waters of Loch Shiel at Glenfinnan for the traditional New Year's Day swim.

For the first time in several years snow and ice were absent, but at only 4C the loch's water temperature was anything but Mediterranean. Revellers warmed up with drinks next to the Glenfinnan House Hotel after their invigorating dip. f01swim01



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APPIN

PRIMARY 4-7 pupils at Strath of Appin Primary School sang a selection of popular festive songs at their Christmas concert while Pre-school children and pupils in Primary 1, 2 and 3 performed 'The Little Red Robin' to a capacity crowd.

The pupils also entertained residents at Lynn of Lorne Care Home and members of Appin's Rowan Club with their rousing singing.



Strath of Appin Primary School P4-7 Pupils get ready to perform When Santa got Stuck up the Chimney.

BALLACHULISH

BALLACHULISH residents are fuming after the village's Christmas tree was vandalised just days before Christmas.

The tree, situated outside the Army Hall, had the lights ripped off and a nearby electrical box was also damaged. Police have been notified.

Ballachulish Community Council chairman Mel MacAskill told *The Oban Times*: 'People here are really quite upset. Such a lot of work has been ruined by these mindless morons.'

CONNEL

CONNEL Community Council will next meet at the Village Hall on Tuesday January 10 at 7.30pm.

SUNART

SUNART Community Council will hold its first meeting since the recent elections next Thursday evening.

Councillor Bren Gormley will chair the meeting, where a new chairperson, secretary and treasurer will be voted in.

The meeting, which will be held in Strontian Village Hall, was originally scheduled for December 8 but was postponed after the west Highlands were hit by heavy storms.

TIREE

TIREE Tech Wave's third meeting will be held between March 22-26, giving the event an opportunity to celebrate its first birthday.

Organised to give electronic engineers and software developers a chance to get away from it all and experiment free from the pressures of modern life, it has proved a tremendous success, with delegates attending from across the UK.

Tiree Tech Wave was held twice last year, firstly in March then in November.

ROYBRIDGE

SENIOR citizens from Brae Lochaber are being treated to a visit to the Christmas pantomime 'Cinderella' at Eden Court, Inverness, tomorrow (Friday).

KILLIN

POLICE seized a vehicle in Killin on Boxing Day after officers found the driver didn't hold a UK driving licence or valid insurance.

Community Constable Andrew Ward said: 'The driver had driven from the south east area of England to get to Killin. 'If he had been involved in a collision then the likelihood of the other party being able to make a claim would have been non-existent.'

Awards were presented as follows:
 Player of the Year - Duncan James;
 Young Player of the Year - Liam Grimm;
 Top Goalscorer - Mark Evans.

WITH very frosty and slippery pavements over the weekend Mary Gollan operated the new snow clearer which the village bought and kept the pavements clear. Main snow clearing operator Annan Dryburgh junior was not well.

TYNDRUM

LOCALS have been urged to keep their homes secure over the festive season after two Tyndrum properties were broken into in the lead up to Christmas.

Described by police as a 'mobile opportunist', the burglar first broke in to an insecure house before forcing entry into a nearby holiday chalet. A number of electrical items were taken as result. The incidents were caught on CCTV and enquiries are continuing to trace the culprit. Constable Craig Murray said: 'I assure people that thefts of this nature are extremely rare in the area, however, being on the main trunk roads we are not immune to vehicle-based opportunist thieves.'

Anyone with information on the robberies, can contact Constable Murray on 01786 456000.

SKYE and Lochalsh Sports Council met in Kyleakin hall on Monday December 12.

Funds are very low but financial assistance totalling £608 was awarded to Skye and Lochalsh Junior Football Association (start up grant), Lochalsh Hockey Club towards the cost of two players attending Scottish Hockey girls under-16 Inter District Tournament and to Skye and Lochalsh Cricket Club towards the cost of a practice net.

Schools co-ordinator June Sanderson gave an update on her work, while Skye young swimmers were congratulated on their continued success at various events.

Albert Loades from Kinloch-shiel Shinty Club outlined the club's proposals for a new pitch and clubhouse and showed pictures of the initial plans.

The sports council unanimously backed the proposals and hoped they would be successful in securing funding. The next meeting is in Portree on March 12 with the AGM in Kyleakin on April 23.

LOCHEARNHEAD

BOGUS callers have been operating in Lochearnhead, police are warning.

The alert comes after an elderly woman living in Ravenscroft Road was approached by a man who told her a tile was missing from her roof.

He said he would show her the tile, on the other side of the house, but she refused to move from her front door, despite being asked repeatedly.

She then refused an offer from the man to fix the tile for a fee.

Alarmed, she told friends and called the police.

The man was described as being in his late 30s, slightly built, around 5'2-5'4 tall and driving a light coloured van.

Anyone with information should contact police.

PLOCKTON and District Community Council held its inaugural meeting in Plockton Hall on December 13.

Discussion items:
 □ Road safety - access from Burnside to the road is still a major problem and it is hoped that Plockton High School Parent Council will get funds in the New Year to make improvements. The primary school has complained about the speed of traffic passing the school.
 □ Achmore road closure - the road will be open until January 9 but it will be closed for a further 10 weeks after that with completion date now March 31. Scottish Water has complained that some people are knocking down the barriers and driving along the road when the contractor is not on site.
 □ Loch Lundie - despite the objections of the community council, work on drawing down the loch by up to two metres began December 12.
 □ Duirinish bridge - a resident has requested that the state of the bridge should be investigated as heavy timber lorries with trailers have been using it recently.
 □ Tree felling at Dunraig - the forestry department has said it will tidy up trees blown down in the recent gales.
 □ Station roads at Plockton and Duirinish - both these roads are badly in need of repair.
 □ The next meeting is in Plockton Hall on February 28.

GLENGARRY

GLENGARRY Community Hall will host the local pantomime next Saturday night.

Invergarry-based drama group Great Glen Drama will perform their version of 'A Laddin', with a matinee performance at 3pm followed by an evening performance at 7.30pm.

SLEAT

CAMUSCROSS couple Graeme and Ann MacKenzie were one of the last to drive to Inverness via the A890 to Achnasheen and on to Garve before the road was closed by a landslide on December 22.

The MacKenzies' return journey from their shopping trip to the Highland capital ended in a lengthy detour when they were advised by a sign at Rogie Falls on the A835 that their way back home was blocked.

Graeme and Ann had to turn back towards Inverness and travelled home via the A82 to Invermoriston and the A87.

PLOCKTON Amateur Dramatic Society presented a night of Christmas sketches in Plockton Hall on December 15 which were enjoyed by the large crowd.

A DANCE in aid of Achmore hall funds was held in the hall the following night with music from the Big Field Blues Band.

PLOCKTON

PLOCKTON FC held its annual dinner in the Plockton Inn on Saturday December 17.

Email your district news to editor@obantimes.co.uk



Invergarry Primary School and Nursery treated friends, family and staff to a performance of 'Christmas around the world' just before the festive break.



Pupils entertained at the Morar senior citizens lunch and at the MacKintosh Centre in the week leading up to Christmas. The children performed on a variety of musical instruments and sang Christmas carols.



The children of Barcaldine Primary School visited Lynn of Lorne Care Home to entertain the residents over the festive period.

15 Years Ago

Those Were The Days
 The Oban Times

Thursday, January 9, 1997

Army to the rescue on Coll

THE PETROL-STARVED Isle of Coll had emergency supplies delivered by the army at the weekend, and islanders now plan to set up their own petrol station to end their fuel crisis.

The problem began when the island's only supply of petrol closed because it was not economically viable.

On Saturday, when islanders filled up fuel tanks and jerry cans, they were delighted to have petrol again, even at a cost of £1.17 a litre.

The island community council organised a steering committee to get to grips with keeping petrol supplies flowing to the island; diesel is available.

The result was an emergency supply delivered by the army tanker on the *MV Lord of the Isles* ferry on Saturday and the establishment of a community company, Coll Fuel Supplies Limited.

Jo Davies, chairman of the newly formed company, told *The Oban Times* how they had been hard at work applying for grants to help build the petrol station, raising the £6,000 the island must contribute to costs to get a permanent supply back onto the island.

'Coll people are resolved not to let the island grind to a halt,' she said.

'There's been a very good community spirit over Christmas and Hogmanay with people sharing cars and going first-footing on foot.'

Jo said that Caledonian MacBrayne had gener-

ously offered a site near the ferry terminal and that islanders had been heartened by the amount of support they had received, not just from the Coll Association in Glasgow but from people who spend their holidays on the island.

'Tenders have already gone out. It is our intention to have the supply in place by spring,' said Jo.

Islanders in call for better ferry link

THE PEOPLE of Eriskay have hit out at their local authority, claiming they are getting a raw deal over the island's ferry service.

The council-operated ferry, which links Eriskay to Barra, has been criticised as inadequate and at a recent public meeting the local community council demanded an improved service based on the island, providing essential emergency cover and safeguarding local employment. Western Isles Council, which has shelved plans to fund a causeway between Eriskay and South Uist, is proposing to change the existing ferry route to a triangular service linking Eriskay, Uist and Barra. There is a strong possibility that the ferry could be based at a new terminal on Eriskay and will be handed over to Caledonian MacBrayne by 1999.

But community council chairman Patrick Forbes believes the local authority is ignoring the needs of the 160 islanders and the island which Western Isles Council had outlined as

'ultra fragile and requiring special initiatives'. 'We fully expect the council to wash its hands of the problems it has failed to tackle itself by handing over the responsibility for sorting them out to CalMac,' he said.

New Year honours for Argyll stalwarts

TWO HONOURS came to Argyll in the New Year's Honours List.

At the age of 85, Donald Fergusson Morrison, who is awarded an MBE, is not only the longest serving Registrar in Scotland but almost certainly the oldest.

Mr Morrison, who lives in Strachur, was to extend a family connection with the office when he became Assistant Registrar to his father Malcolm in 1930 at the age of 19. Malcolm had held the post - a part-time one - since 1910 and when he died in 1933 Donald was appointed his successor. For 67 years he has recorded the ebb and flow of life in Strachur.

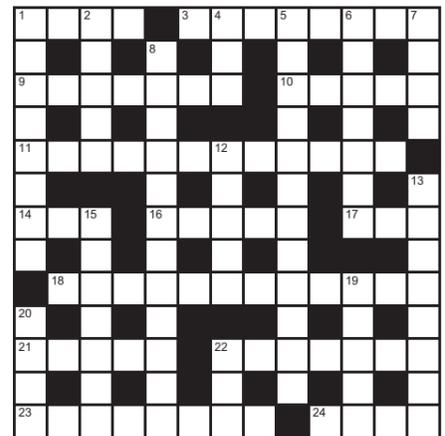
Angus VP MacKay has been awarded an OBE for services to medicine. Mr MacKay is physician superintendent and consultant psychiatrist for Argyll and Bute Mental Health Service.

Mr MacKay held the posts of clinical tutor in pharmacology at Trinity College, Cambridge, and deputy director of the neurochemical pharmacology unit, Cambridge, before coming to Lochgilphead as physician superintendent in 1980.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- Across**
- Down with something... (4)
 - ...passed on by this method? (8)
 - A follower (7)
 - Loosen bow (5)
 - Give praise to (12)
 - 252 wine gallons (3)
 - Instrument, rubbed with a stick (5)
 - As well (3)
 - Meaning (12)
 - Horned beast (5)
 - Vulgar... (7)
 - ...one who does nothing (8)
 - Cut (4)

- Down**
- Detached notes (8)
 - Fool (5)
 - Anger (3)
 - Flavourer (8,4)
 - Knock (3-1-3)
 - Jug (4)
 - Mighty exploder (8,4)
 - Taker (5)
 - Fairly (8)
 - Loudly (7)
 - Young dragonfly (5)
 - Spoken exam (4)
 - The other person if not me! (3)



Last week's solution



Community pull together for Drimnin Village Hall refurbishment

A MORVERN community has pulled together to pay for renovations to a local village hall which will allow it to hold larger events in future. Drimnin Village Hall currently only has one toilet, meaning the venue's commit-

tee has been unsuccessful in applying to Highland Council for an entertainment licence as the building does not meet the minimum requirements. But a new toilet is set to be constructed, meaning the hall will be able to play host to gath-

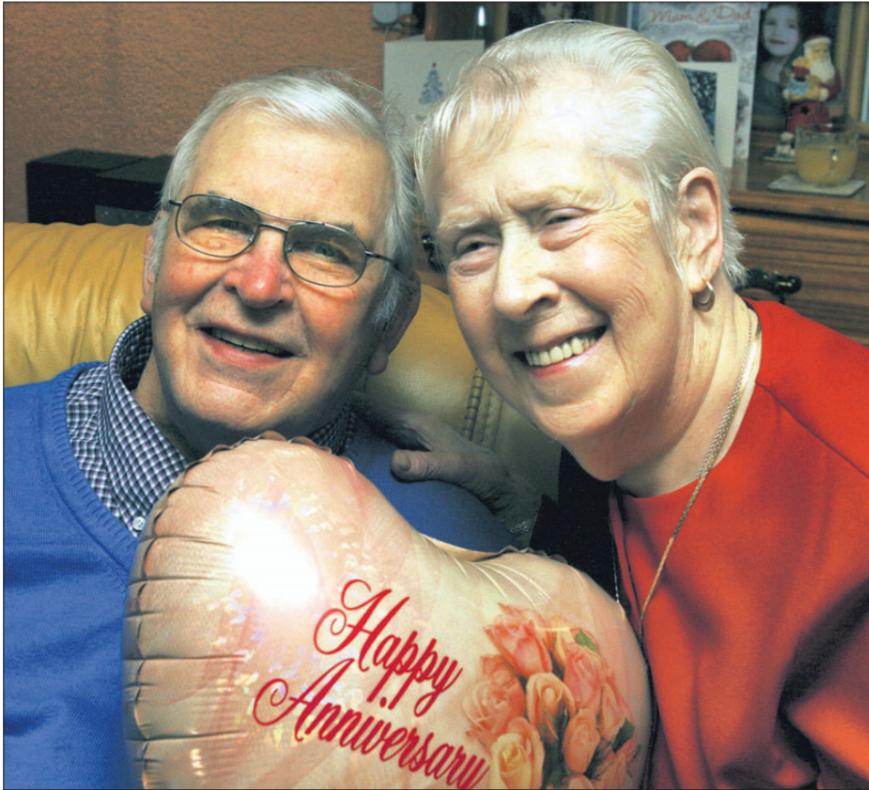
erings of around 60 people. The local community has pitched in to pay for the new facility, with Morvern Community Trust donating money from their Glensanda quarry funds. Local man David Campbell will provide the labour free

of cost and architect Roderick James has drawn up plans at cost. A grant from Highland Council also went towards the price tag of around £3,000. Hall committee chair David Shore told *The Oban Times* the new toilet would be a big boost

for the venue. He said: 'We couldn't get an entertainment licence issued because we only had one toilet. That meant we could only have 30 people in the hall at any time, but the hall can easily carry about 60 people.'

'This means we can charge for events and cover our costs. Before we had to rely on donations. It also means we will be able to hold more functions - maybe more people will want to use the hall if we can get 60 people in.'

The new convenience will also have disabled access. The work is expected to start in mid-January and will last for around one week. The hall is set to hold the local Christmas and New Year party tomorrow (Friday).



Diamond couple: John and Mary MacDonald.

Fort William couple have 60 reasons to celebrate

FORT William couple John and Mary MacDonald had 60 reasons to celebrate this Christmas as they marked their diamond wedding anniversary. 'A lovely surprise' The couple married on December 21, 1951, and commemorated their 60 years of marriage surrounded by family. They were surprised with a meal at their daughter Gail's

house in Inverloch with their three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Mary told *The Oban Times*: 'It was completely unexpected, and a lovely surprise. 'All the family were there and we got some lovely presents.' Lord Provost Allan Henderson visited the couple's home on Alma Road to deliver flowers from Highland Council, and

Deputy Lieutenant of Invernesshire Iain Thornber delivered a card from the Queen. John, originally from Bathgate, met his future wife when visiting his brother at an RAF base in Wiltshire in the south of England. Romance quickly flourished and the couple were married just six months later. They then moved back to Mary's home town of Fort

William, where she took up employment in Black and Campbell's shop before working at the Belford Hospital. John had a variety of jobs including delivering milk and a job at the BA Factory. Asked how they have stayed together for so long, Mary said: 'We've had our ups and our downs, but we all have, haven't we?'



Sleaf - the 'Garden of Skye': now the local Grow to Eat is determined the peninsula will live up to its name

Skye local food project set to grow

A SLEAT project set up to encourage local food production is to expand its activities in 2012. In what will be its second year of operation, Grow to Eat is planning another series of gardening and food-based skills events. Co-ordinator Claire Nicolson said fruit growing and another bread-making workshop are being lined up for the first few months of the year. And following the success of a tractor skills workshop last summer, a tractor maintenance skills workshop will run too. Meanwhile, Ms Nicolson was 'delighted' to confirm that Grow to Eat has secured the use of croft land for another 12 months for local vegetable, herb and fruit growers. The news means the established community croft at Cruard, Camuscross, is set to produce even more local food with the addition of a number of fruit trees, which are due to arrive in early February. Ms Nicolson told *The Oban Times*: 'A good growing season will allow excess produce to be sold - or bartered - at regu-

lar local crofters' markets throughout the summer and autumn months.' She added: 'The community as a whole has shown a strong interest in living in a more sustainable way. 'Growing more food locally is one way to achieve this as it ultimately means fewer trips to Broadford - a round trip of 18 miles for some - and fewer food miles, which is great news for meeting carbon reduction aims. 'However, creating a sustainable community demands far more than increasing the production of local food and cutting car journeys, and Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative's ambitious plans for a community hub - a shop, café and meeting space, powered by the community's own hydro scheme - are developing apace.' A 'very successful' community workshop in November gave community members a chance to voice their ideas and hopes for the venture, Ms Nicolson said. A further event is scheduled for January 21, when the first designs and models produced by the architects will be on show.

CAP roadshow for crofters comes to Portree

A SCOTTISH Government roadshow to explain the potential impact of reforms to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on farmers, crofters and rural communities is coming to Portree later this month. Reform negotiations Government officials will explain the reforms, answer questions about the changes and give comments on the proposals at Skye Camanachd's clubhouse on Struan Road, Portree on January 18 at 7.30pm. Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson urged all those with an interest to make their views known so Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Rich-

ard Lochhead could make 'the strongest possible case' to Brussels. Mr Lochhead said: 'We're determined to get a fair deal for Scotland's farmers in the current CAP reform negotiations. The formal negotiations have begun in earnest and the Scottish Government is working hard to ensure that Scotland's voice is heard - both in Brussels and Westminster.' The roadshow will visit more than a dozen rural locations around Scotland. Those unable to attend the Isle of Skye evening event will be able to view a podcast of an event to ensure information is available to all who would like to learn more.

Lochaber rescue team chosen for conference in Austria

A LOCHABER Mountain Rescue Team volunteer has been chosen to be part of a Scottish delegation travelling to a conference on avalanche safety in Austria. Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRCofS) has selected John Sutherland to be one of 10 people from Scotland's 27 mountain rescue teams to go to a five day avalanche rescue instructor's programme hosted by the Austrian Mountain Rescue Service in Voralberg from January 11-16. The course will provide advanced avalanche rescue training techniques, highlighting best practise in subjects such as helicopter-assisted rescue, use of search dogs and multiple rescue team scenarios as well as advanced cold and hypothermic casualty care techniques. Lochaber Mountain Rescue will play host to a Scottish national avalanche rescue course at the end of the month, where Mr Sutherland and the other volunteers will report back. MRCofS chair Jonathan Hart said: 'They will be bringing back knowledge from Austria to improve the courses we already run here in Scotland.' Some 45 people died on Scottish hills in 2010, while 255 people were injured.

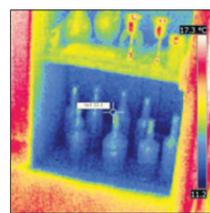
Revamp for Skye and Lochalsh visitor centre

VISITOR information services in Skye and Lochalsh are in for a New Year revamp, VisitScotland has announced. From Easter, a new seasonal information point will open at Dunvegan Castle's St Kilda retail outlet, replacing the service provided by the Visitor Information Centre in Dunvegan. And at the Uig ferry terminal, Visit Scotland is also piloting an accommodation free-phone service in partnership with CalMac. If the trial proves successful, future expansion of visitor services at Uig could follow. Meanwhile, a longstanding arrangement with the Cluanie Inn in Glen Shiel to provide visitor information is to be formalised.

Free thermal imaging cut Lochaber's energy bills

Charity reduces costs for 40 homes

A LOCHABER charity's bid to reduce heating bills for local residents has already reached around 40 homes across the area. Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) are halfway through a six month campaign to carry out free thermal imaging surveys which show where buildings are losing their heat. LEG has four cameras which can take 20-30 images of a house, both inside and out. The cameras normally cost around £1,400 each, but the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) is covering the costs for the scheme. Project officer Robert Dunn told *The Oban Times* LEG currently has 90 houses on the waiting list. Mr Dunn said: 'It's gone quite well and we've had a lot of good feedback from people. We didn't get as many done as we would have liked in December because of the weather and the Christmas period, but we're hoping to hit the ground running in the New Year.'



A thermal image can show cold air entering through a drafty cupboard

warm and reduce their household bills.' Funding for the project ends in March but LEG has applied to CCF for a three-year extension and expect to hear back in February. For more information, contact Robert or Justine Dunn on 01967 402453, or email life@lochaber-environmental-group.org.uk. Meanwhile, LEG has started a campaign in Lochaber primary and secondary school to educate pupils about energy saving using OWL monitors - wireless energy monitors which show how much electricity is being used. Mr Dunn said: 'We are lending OWL energy monitors to the pupils, and they take them home and do different tasks round the house looking at what the appliances do. 'The kids are made aware when you leave a large TV on standby how much power you use or how much difference there is between a five minute and a 10 minute shower.'

Showstoppers searching for an 'Oliver'

LOCHABER Showstoppers are looking towards their spring show 'Oliver!' - and are inviting boys and girls from Primary 6 upwards to take part. Any youngsters out there who would consider themselves to be an Oliver, Artful Dodger or street urchins are encouraged to come along to an open workshop/information session to be held in the Nevis Centre Studio on January 15 at 2pm. Auditions will be held on January 22.

Torlundy energy company look forward to 2012

HWEnergy at Torlundy is expecting a busy year thanks to the Renewable Heat Incentive, a bonus scheme for small-scale energy projects. Managing director Bruno Berardelli said new contract awards under the RHI would ensure 'a busy programme' for the first quarter. He added: 'We have expanded our capacity in 2011 introducing new people, processes and systems. Staff levels have nearly doubled to a total of almost 40 staff, and we are ready to take on the demand for 2012.'

Councillors wages put on hold

HIGHLAND councillors will see their wages frozen for the next year following a Scottish Government review. The Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee recommended the Government enact a number of changes to councillors salaries, but Local Government Minister Derek Mackay said a 'background of unprecedented cuts to Scotland's budget' meant there would be no increase for councillors across the country. Mr Mackay said: 'Any increase in pay would put additional pressure on local authority budgets and I have decided that councillor's pay will remain frozen.'

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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

If parents are teachers, should parents be more involved with education?

A REPORT this week from The Prince's Trust highlights the impact of regular meal times and bedtimes during our formative years and the affect that direct parental control has in making us who we are - or end up becoming.

Perhaps in today's world, parental support, guidance, direction, or whatever else you want to call it, walks a very thin line between child education and domination.

The other side of the argument is that, therefore, the child is what the parent(s) make it.

Parents are currently being encouraged take part in the more formal aspects of their child's education through local authority education committees. While all Scottish authorities are obliged to have a religious element on their committee, and most include a number of teachers in its quorum, parent representation is few and far between. The National Parent Forum tell us that there are only three local authorities in Scotland which allow parent representatives on such committees to vote in decisions affecting schools. It is little wonder that parents feel isolated from decisions - often taken for very valid but not very well explained reasons - which directly affect their children's schools. If a number of parents were directly involved throughout the decision making process, they would perhaps have a greater understanding of the difficult road that some local authorities have to take - or may offer a more acceptable compromise which is practical to both parties.

If parents are to shoulder the blame for their children's beliefs and development then perhaps they need to be in control of a higher percentage of the education input.

Congratulations to those behind efforts to develop Oban's first new hotel for more years than anyone can remember. The long overdue demolishing of the sad eyesore that had become the Argyll Hotel marks a start of a positive era. The developers made a promise that the decaying and derelict building would be down before 2012 and that promise was kept. Now Oban should take heart and build its future alongside a new 'Argyll'.

GLASGOW LETTER

Christmas Songbook

SIX OR seven years ago Phil Cunningham and his friends decided that a 'Songbook' evening would provide the ideal opportunity for them to get together and for the first time, on December 21, it was staged in Glasgow.

The evening started in traditional festive fashion with a brass band playing well-known carols and then Phil and his friends, Eddi Reader, Karen Matheson, John McCusker, Kris Drever, James MacIntosh and Kevin McGuire, took to the stage.

Karen treated the audience to beautiful Gaelic singing and Eddi Reader and Kris Drever sang some of their favourites as well as seasonal songs. Phil Cunningham, from the outset of the evening, ensured this would be an evening of relaxed musical fun. Many of those present - and the hall was packed - would not normally attend traditional music concerts but by the end of the concert many of them were converted.

The sensitive fiddle playing of John McCusker and the sets of tunes played by all the instrumentalists showcased the very best of our traditional music.

Celtic Connections

OVER the next few weeks I shall try to highlight as many Celtic Connections gigs with west coast connections although that only tells part of the story of what the festival is all about.

Gaelic makes an early entry, on Friday January 20, when Cuairt nan Eilean, featuring Jenna Cumming, Linda MacLeod and Darren MacLean, supported by an array of musicians, takes place in St Andrew's in the Square at 7.30pm. Then at 9.30pm in the Old Fruitmarket there will be a performance of Lochaber Gold, a 50-year celebration of the new Lochaber High School, which was a highlight of Blas 2011.

The following evening Blair Douglas's Gaelic Mass will be performed in St Mary's Cathedral at 7.30pm. Soloists will be Maggie MacDonald and Paul MacCallum and Inverness Gaelic Choir will also take part. In the Tron Theatre, at 8pm, there will be a night of Scots and Irish Gaelic. Ailie Robertson Traditional Spirit and Grainne Holland with, among the well known musicians, Adam Sutherland, Fraser Fife, Patsy Reid and James Ross.

On Sunday January 21, in St Andrew's in the Square at 7.30pm, there will be the opportunity to hear a new combination of musicians when James Graham, Fiona

MacKenzie, Brian O'hEadhra and Rachel Walker will perform.

I recently mentioned Celtic Connections would be moving out of Glasgow to Skye but later in 2012 they are going further afield when they will perform as part of the Ryder Cup in Chicago as part of the year of Creative Scotland.

Comunn an Taobh an Iar

THE ANNUAL Highland Ball of the above association will be held in Milngavie Town Hall at 7pm on Friday January 13.

Music will be provided by the Stuart McKeown Band and the guest singer will be Joy Dunlop. Tickets must be bought in advance.

Paisley Highlanders

INCLEMENT weather resulted in a reduced attendance at the December ceilidh/dance of the Paisley 'Buddies' but it did not deter from the enjoyment of the evening.

Those present were in festive mood and they now look forward to their first event of the New Year on Saturday January 14.

Na Mo Chuid Aodaich

ALL OF the organisations involved in the recent Na Mo Chuid Aodaich in Glasgow thank everyone who supported the event.

A wonderful £1,939.70 was raised for the Beatson Oncology Unit.

Diary dates

Friday January 6: Glasgow Fiddle Workshop Winter Ceilidh, Glasgow University Union, 7.30pm to 11.30pm. **Saturday January 7:** Glasgow Skye Association Family Ceilidh, Crawford Hall, Beith Street, Partick, 7.30pm. **Friday January 13:** Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 7.30pm. **Comunn an Taobh an Iar Highland Ball - see above.** **Saturday January 14:** Paisley and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh Dance, Elderslie Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Pub scene
WILLIE Cameron and Martin Pottinger will provide the music in the Park Bar on Friday, Deoch'n Dorus on Saturday and Nicky McMichan on Sunday while in the Islay Inn it will be Penny Dogs on Friday and Parting Glass on Saturday. **Neil Murray, Telephone 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.**

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Oban Licensed Trade Ball - 1950s

Anthony Boni submitted this week's flashback photograph which shows some of the guests attending the Oban Licensed Trade Ball in the Royal Hotel, Oban, in the early 1950s. Anthony thinks the photo was taken in either 1951 or 1953. We invite readers to send in flashback photographs. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Power workers go the extra mile

Can I take this opportunity to praise the commitment and professionalism of the workers of Scottish and Southern Energy who have gone the extra mile to get the power restored on Mull as quickly as possible.

The staff were out in all weather over the past three weeks during the series of power cuts.

We are not always very good at saying thank you but their efforts are gratefully appreciated.

Councillor Mary Jean Devon, Isle of Mull.

Ferry review needs reviewed

The publication of the Scottish Ferries Review is welcome but the wait has led to some elements of the information upon which it was based becoming almost historical.

I write as a resident of Islay and specifically of Port Ellen, which appears to be the only place which is to receive a reduced ferry service, not because of reduced need but 'just because'.

For almost a year the pier has been closed for re-development, which is to be completed within three months - and paid for by CMAL. Port Askaig is described as having 'an ideal geographical location for the communities of Islay and Jura' but I fail to see how this is so; for Port Ellen, population 1,000, it is 20 miles distant and the two ports are equidistant for the rest of Islay.

The troubled development of Port Askaig - grossly over-running both in time and budget - has been previously documented, so also the problems of the linkspan, flooding, ice on the approach road, suitability of the Jura ferry ramp, the passenger gangway and the numerous calamities to both boats and pier - with damage at berthing to the *Lord of the Isles, Hebridean Isles, Isle of Arran* and *Eilean Dhruira* - the latter most recently having to

wandered about in the rain and when we returned to the hotel soaked to the skin my husband found that his wallet was missing. He put his wet clothes back on and returned to the Boots store for that was the last time he remembered using it. We were thrilled to find that the girls in the shop had found his wallet on the counter and placed it in the safe. Thank you to the girls in Boots for making our stay a very memorable trip.

Mr and Mrs Slessor, Pitmedden, by Ellon, Aberdeenshire.

Be proud of smiling faces

Sir, I'm up from Harlow, Essex, visiting family at the moment.

I have always noticed the marked difference of people's attitudes and demeanor as opposed to being near London.

While shopping here on Christmas Eve I noticed a big difference to back home and believe the people of Oban should be proud of your smiling faces and hospitable nature that I always notice when I visit.

Declan Mather, Harlow.

Unhelpful attack on UK government

At the last First Minister's Question Time of 2011, I challenged Alex Salmond to respond to the specific concerns of Scotland's nephrop fishermen about the impact of the EU fisheries deal on their livelihoods.

Instead of responding to a precise question of real significance, the First Minister resorted to a wholly inaccurate and unhelpful attack on the UK government.

The facts of the matter are that our Prime Minister gave the Scottish Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead a leading role in the fisheries negotiations. Richard himself talked of his frustration at the outcome of these talks, despite the best efforts of hardworking Scottish and UK officials and Ministers, pointing out that 'commonsense was no match for the legal straightjacket' of the cod recovery plan and that 'lawyers were once again running the show to the detriment of our fishing industry and our stocks'.

David Cameron decided not to agree to a similar example of the worst kind of Brussels officialdom when he correctly vetoed the recent EU treaty change that would have hit Scotland's financial sector in which tens of thousands of Scots work. The First Minister claimed this might adversely affect Scotland in the fisheries negotiations and in response to me he made the ludicrous claim that the Prime Minister's veto had left Scotland and the

west coast of Scotland for hundreds of years.

The new club plans to continue the innovations introduced by the Lagavulin group and these will include rowing events at various locations throughout the island. Members are also willing to share their knowledge and history of the yaws with all interested parties.

Potential mariners are invited to attend the club's annual general meeting which is being held in the St Columba Church Hall at Port Ellen on January 31 2012 at 7pm.

Island-wide festive celebrations

CHURCHES throughout the island marked Christmas with a series of celebrations ranging from carol concerts and Nativity presentations to Christmas morning worship.

All were well attended as were the Watchnight services on Christmas Eve. Groups of carollers also sang to the patients at Islay Hospital and to the residents of Gortanvogie Eventide Home.

Discos, dinners, staff parties and village green events made for more festivities and the mild weather conditions made a pleasant change from last year's icy blast.

And Santa lived up to expectations! **Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Telephone: 01496 810658.**

Alan Cochrane

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH'S
SCOTTISH EDITOR



Political wilderness

HOW IMPORTANT is the countryside to Scotland and to our political parties? It is a question that this column has asked before now but to which there has never been an entirely satisfactory answer - except from the Scottish National Party.

Whilst this observer is not normally a friend of the Nats or of nationalism, there is little doubt that the SNP has shown a clean pair of heels to the other parties when it comes to capturing the rural vote. And as we enter a New Year there are no signs whatsoever that this situation is likely to change.

I don't in any way begrudge the SNP their success in this direction. They have made it their business to present themselves as friends of the countryside and by and large they've succeeded.

Devolution gave virtual total control of rural Scotland to the new parliament and it must be said that the incoming MSPs exercised this control with undisguised relish right from the word 'go'. A ban on fox-hunting went hand-in-glove with dramatic moves on land-reform but whereas with Labour the measures always smacked of outright class war, the SNP approach was much more considered.

This attitude stood them in very good stead when they sneaked a narrow victory in the 2007 Holyrood elections. Richard Lochhead, never really seen by those of us in the cheap seats as much more than a parliamentary plodder, turned into a first class rural affairs minister - or cabinet secretary, to use the Nats' grandiose terms for Alex Salmond's first team. Best of all, as far as the countryside was concerned, is that he stayed there for the entire four-year term, guaranteeing a continuity and consistency of policy formulation.

Whilst he's in overall charge of the ministry he's concentrated, to an extent, on aiding Scotland's hard-pressed fishermen but Mr Lochhead has had under him, as environment ministers, first Mike Russell and then Roseanna Cunningham. To the surprise of many, they've displayed a sensitivity towards land managers and those who made their living in the countryside that was never evident under Labour.

It was no surprise, therefore, that Mr Lochhead stayed in post when the SNP won that astonishing victory last May. And in another sign of a sureness of touch, in his latest venture he's managed to steer a canny middle course over the vexed question of changes to farm tenancies.

Usually only the Free Church or the Presbyterian churches fly the banner of Christianity, be that on Sunday observance, gay marriage or the infiltration of bad practices in the educational system. It looks like any ethnic group, quango or gay-rights organisations can be seen, allowed and protected to argue their case while the ordinary Christian is looked upon as a crackpot if he protests even in a small way. Why the difference in attitudes?

A Campbell, South Uist.

However, all of this is history. What of the future? It's early days, I know, but unless something dramatic occurs, I cannot see this situation changing.

The SNP won the bulk of their rural seats, at both Westminster and Holyrood, from the Tories and, again unless there is some form of political earthquake there is little likelihood of any transformation.

A sign of the times came a couple of months ago when Ruth Davidson, the new Tory leader, was selecting her first front bench team. The less-well-informed newspapers were full of headlines like 'turmoil' and 'rebellion' after Liz Smith, the education spokesman, was said to have rejected a move to shadow the rural affairs minister. Her friends reported that she was aghast by what was clearly seen as a demotion to what they described as the department of 'ag and fish'. This is a huge mistake. Winning back seats in their former heartlands away from the Central Belt is absolutely vital if there is to be any Tory revival in Scotland and regarding the Rural Affairs Department, or 'ag and fish', as some Tories dismissively term it, as a demotion is very bad politics.

It's true that they have two farmers, in Alex Ferguson and Sir Jamie McGrigor - both also Old Etonians by the way - sharing responsibility for rural affairs and fishing, but there simply has to be a higher profile for both the men and their policies. It's true that on the fishing front they were hamstrung by the fact that David Cameron told the Scottish Tories that - unlike SNP policy - they couldn't advocate pulling out of the EU's disastrous Common Fisheries Policy. Ms Davidson bravely says Mr Cameron isn't her boss. Really? Let's see how she deals with this one.

The countryside, as well as what's left of the deep-sea fishing industry, deserve the best that our politicians can offer and, to be frank, neither cares overmuch with party represents their interests. It's who does best for them that matters, irrespective of what's gone before.

It's astonishing how easily, yet how conclusively, the SNP have captured the rural vote and that of the fishing ports but, frankly, they've made a pretty good fist of it. Can the other parties muscle in during 2012? We shall see.

Labour say they're determined to break out of their Central Scotland fastnesses and improve their appeal to rural Scotland. Good luck to them. But I shall let you in on a secret; even an anorak like this one hasn't a clue who is Labour's 'shadow' to Richard Lochhead. Is that my fault - or theirs?

Times Diary

A RECENT flight into Stornoway airport proved a little scary, but amusing, for *Oban Times* reader Colin Anderson.

Strong, blustery winds and driving rain made for difficult flying conditions and the passengers were delighted when the plane quickly descended over the island's runway. However, they were less impressed when the landing proved more of a bone-jarring thud than a smooth glide onto the tarmac.

The muttering passengers filed off without comment to the doorway stewardess, until one elderly lady asked her: 'Can I ask you a question?'

'Of course, what can I do for you?' asked the attentive crew member.

'Did we just land, or were we shot down?' asked the old dear.

OVER the festive holiday period *Times Diary* attended a charity auction in Edinburgh where bidding was, as they say in the trade, 'brisk'.

There was plenty of banter between the audience and the professional auctioneer as he squeezed out another pound or two for a good cause.

However, he then stopped the auction to announce that: 'A lady has lost her handbag containing £500. If returned, she will reward the finder £100. Almost immediately a voice from the back of the room shouted: 'A hundred and five!'

HAVING been named an MBE in the New Year's Honours List, Lochgilphead's Mull-born athletics supremo Bill MacCallum says he is honoured by the recognition but undeserving of the award.

A surprising response from someone so dedicated to the sport, giving up most of his spare time and weekends to diligently take on administration roles, as well as coaching and officiating throughout the competitive seasons. Bill told *The Diary*: 'My wife Mary is more deserving of the award for putting up with me for the past 38+ years!'

Share your humorous gems, comments on life or amusing tales with the *Diary*.
Email editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to
Diary, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

YOUR LETTERS

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

School of dance hosts annual display and prizegiving

AN AUDIENCE of more than 100 attended the sixth annual dance display of the Eilidh MacInnes School of Dance at Glencruitten Church Hall.

Eilidh choreographed the various routines in Highland and national dances in the recent display.

At the end of the display, Eilidh presented certificates, medals and trophies to all the dancers, including the youngest dancer, three-year-old Rowan Gemmell.

The presentation marked the end of a year when 41 Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA) exams took place among the group at Atlantis Leisure.

It has been a busy year for the school with pupils winning trophies at various games and competitions. Janna and Kirsty MacInnes had the privilege to be dancing at this year's Military Tattoo in Edinburgh.

One of the highlights for the group was performing at EuroDisney, when seven pupils performed on the world famous stage in Paris – the only Argyll group to do so.

Trophy winners for 2011: Most promising young dancer – Lili Webster; Most successful competitive dancer – Charlie Nathan; Dancer of the year – Katie MacPherson; Special Achievement – Jenna MacInnes.



Helena Rose, Sarah Johnson and Hannah MacRae lead the choir at St Margaret's, Roy Bridge 20_01roy01

Lochaber Music School entertain at Roy Bridge

A PACKED St Margaret's Church in Roy Bridge enjoyed a varied programme of seasonal music performed by the talented young musicians of Lochaber Music School.

The school's string orchestra played

music by William Boyce and David Stone and also accompanied the large audience in several well-known carols.

Other ensembles included the music school's large choir, its four string quartets, handbell ringers, clarsach ensemble

and traditional music group.

Soloists included singers Sarah Johnson and Sally Swanson, as well as the very young glockenspiel player, Georgio Berardelli.

Musical director Peter Rose was delighted with the success of the concert, the

culmination of much hard work by tutors and children throughout the term.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'All proceeds from our popular annual event will help fund classes during the coming year for the 120 children presently on its registers.'



Barcaldine Primary School children, along with the children from Ardcattan Primary, had a cracking time on the ice rink at Atlantis Leisure as part of Oban's Winter Festival.

MacAllisters go down a treat at Inveraray box club

Fiddle playing produces a standing ovation for Archie

INVERARAY and District Accordion and Fiddle Club met in the Argyll Hotel for their last club night of the year.

Guest artistes Chairman, Niall Iain MacLean, welcomed the stalwart supporting players – Fyne Folk – with Alex John MacLeod, Jake MacKay, Agnes Liddell and Allan McIntosh; James MacArthur on melodeon; Janet Graham on accordion, with Donald MacLachlan on drums and Jimmy MacDonald on keyboard; Charlie Saune on fiddle; Margaret Kemp on accordion; Jake MacKay on 'moothie', accompanied by Agnes; Agnes, Jake and Jane MacKay with a lovely rendition of Mary Morrison in harmony, ac-



Archie and Alex MacAllister at Inveraray

companied by Archie MacAllister on fiddle.

Guest artistes were Archie and Alex MacAllister, and what a performance they treated the audience to – a west coast sound at its very best. They played some 10 sets in each half, from lovely waltzes, pipe marches, jigs and reels to a sensational High Level, from Archie on fiddle, which produced a standing ovation – and deservedly so!

Before the chairman thanked all the artistes for a great night of music, he thanked committee member, Roddie MacDiarmid for his recent quiz sheet, which had raised £216 for club funds and to all the outlets who had sold them.

The winners were – 1st – and a bottle of malt whisky (kindly donated by Murdo and Ann MacLeod, Strachur) – Yvonne MacGhie, Lochgilphead; 2nd – Catriona O'Keefe, Portsonachan; 3rd – Edith MacKellar, Furnace.

To see the Club into the New Year, the young, rising stars from Strachur 'Heron Valley' will take centre stage on 11th January. Alex and Arlene MacKechnie are no strangers to the Club, so much look forward to welcoming them again, along with Iain Wilson and Euan MacNab, who are also members of the Grade 1 Inveraray and District Pipe Band.

Come along and give them the encouragement they deserve.

Connel woman wins ACHA shopping voucher

ARGYLL Community Housing Association (ACHA) tenant, Marjory MacNiven of Achaleven Cottages, Connel is the lucky winner of a £25 shopping voucher following a prize draw run by the association.

Service users are asked annually to provide feedback regard-

ing their experience of visits to their local ACHA office and are automatically entered into a prize draw for a £25 voucher.

The surveys are conducted in each of the association's eight area offices spread across Argyll and Bute and the winners were drawn at each of the areas'

bi-monthly local area committee meetings.

Brian Murphy of ACHA said: 'Feedback has been very positive again this year and the survey is a great way to obtain customers' opinions and helps ACHA improve service delivery.'

bonnie babies

babies

competition 2012

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies Competition 2012

We'll soon be printing photographs of the most loveable babies from the west coast for a number of weeks. This time, it will be up to you, our readers, to decide who wins the title of Bonniest Baby! Full details will be announced later this month.

How to enter

We are now open for entries! Bonnie Babies 2012 is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. You can enter a child by posting us a photograph along with a signed entry coupon (see left) to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Please make sure you write the name of the child, date of birth and a contact telephone number on the back of the photo. Should you wish for your photo to be returned, please also enclose a stamped addressed envelope. We will do our best to return your photo but please make a copy just in case.

After you have entered your child into the competition, look out every week in The Oban Times to see when your baby appears. The closing date for entries will be announced in a future issue. You can find all the competition rules and terms and conditions online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies or call 01631 568 000.

ENTRY FORM

Child's name.....

Child's date of birth.....

Tel:

Address:

Name of parent/guardian.....

Signature of parent/guardian.....

I agree to all terms and conditions applied to this competition.....

Please post to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Terms & conditions: The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2012 competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. Only one entry per child. Entrants, and their families entering on their behalf, must live in the area of Argyll and the west Highlands and Islands. By entering the competition and by filling in the parental consent form that is provided with your entry, you – the parent or guardian – consent to the reproduction of your child's photograph in The Oban Times Bonnie Babies features in the paper and online and in any other related Oban Times Bonnie Babies promotions. If you do not wish for your child's photo to appear in the newspaper or online then you should not enter the competition. The Oban Times cannot take responsibility for the safe delivery and safe return of the entrant's photograph. Photos posted in without an enclosed stamped addressed envelope will not be returned. Poor quality photographs, which are out of focus, difficult to see the child's face, ripped, torn or folded, will not be accepted as an entry and will be returned to the sender providing a stamped addressed envelope is supplied by the entrant. By sending us your photograph, you agree that Wyvex Media Ltd and The Oban Times have the right to publish the images and details of the entrant without payment for the purpose of promoting The Oban Times Bonnie Babies campaign (s). The winner must be willing to take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter. Photocopied entry forms will not be accepted.



Paula MacAskill This Is Me

Paula MacAskill's latest release features Country and Scottish songs with backing from an all-star line-up.

Paula MacAskill (vocals), Keith MacLeod (harmony vocals), Manson Grant (piano, bass, strings, harmony vocals), Fiona Taylor (harmony vocals), Gordon Gunn (fiddle), Brandon McPhee (button box), Robert Cameron (drums) Phil Anderson (guitars, mandolin), Richard Nelson (steel, dobro), Alistair MacDonald (piano accordion), Robert Cameron (drums).

Maggie Adamson And Brian Nicholson Hame About

The champion fiddle player from Shetland Maggie Adamson works beautifully with the experienced guitar player Brian Nicholson.

Nineteen toe-tapping tracks, with tunes new and old.

Shona Donaldson Short Nights And Lang Kisses

Bothy ballads from the Greig-Duncan collection set to music by Huntly lass Shona Donaldson.

Some missing lines from the traditional songs have been replaced and some new songs written in traditional style.

A lovely voice, and beautiful accompaniment.

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New Tai Chi beginners classes

starts all on Thursday 12th January

Tai Chi movement classes in Appin
3.30 to 4.30 pm, Port Appin Village Hall

Tai Chi movement classes 5.30 to 6.30
Church of Scotland Centre, Glencruitten Rd

Tai Chi form class 7.45 to 9.00 pm.

For more info contact
 Susanne Lin McCordal 07979860754
 or email: susannemccordal@hotmail.co.uk

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

<p>Comunn Gàidhealach an Òbain</p> <p>Old New Year Buffet Ceilidh</p> <p>Saturday 7th January, 2012 7.00pm</p> <p>Masonic Hall, Oban Admission £8 at door See posters for details</p>	<p>Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club Annual Dance</p> <p>Argyllshire Gathering Hall Friday 13th January 2012 7.30 for 8pm</p> <p>Alan Gardiner Scottish Dance Band Tea and sandwiches Ticket £12 Tel 01631 563914</p>
<p>Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club</p> <p>Argyll Hotel, Inveraray</p> <p>Wednesday 11th January at 8.00pm</p> <p>Guest Artistes From Strachur Heron Valley Quartet Supporting players most welcome</p>	<p>To advertise in the WHAT'S ON COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD</p> <p>Telephone: 01631 568000</p>

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The Oban Times

1861 Celebrating 150 years 2011

Review

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

JANUARY



James Aitchison, right, is presented with his trophy by Amir Khan. His opponent Jack Featherstone, left, was controversially given the decision.

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club competed in its most exciting venture yet at a tri-nations tournament hosted by Amir Khan's amateur club Gloves ABC at the Reebok Stadium, home of Bolton FC. The Lochaber squad stayed at the five-star De Vere hotel at the Reebok, had lunch in an executive box, took in Bolton's FA cup game against York and met Amir Khan, former world champion Robin Reid and boxing hero Michael Gomez. The icing on the cake came when Network Rail donated the £6,000 ring to the Lochaber club.

RIGHT: Racing prospect John McPhee is a step closer to realising his MotoGP ambitions after being snapped up by the development team, Racing Steps Foundation (RSF). RSF will fund John's entry to this season's CEV Spanish 125 Championship, as well as assisting with his general fitness, diet and race tuition.

Impressed

The 16-year-old, who impressed in the British 125cc Championship last season, will also be riding a more competitive Aprilia bike and has set his sights on eventually competing in World Championship MotoGP events.



Right: John racing in Valencia last season. The teenager will be seeing more of Spain.



JANUARY

FEBRUARY



Students at SAMS celebrate the announcement that the UHI Millennium Institute has become the University of the Highlands and Islands. 15_105samuh1

OBAN became a university town in February after an historic announcement confirming the University of the Highlands and Islands' (UHI) Millennium Institute had gained university status. The move was confirmed by the Privy Council and brings the title to the UHI's 13 colleges, specialist institutions and research centres spread across the Highlands and Islands, including Argyll College, which has a campus in Oban, and the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Dunbeg.



Labour of love: Donald John Mackay of Luskentyre, Isle of Harris, and his fellow Harris Tweed weavers will provide the cloth for the Harris Tweed Orb fashion show.

SOME of the UK's leading fashion designers are contributing pieces to a fashion show celebrating 100 years of the Harris Tweed Orb. Vivienne Westwood, Henry Holland, Nigel Caborn, Deryk Walker, Ben Sherman, Topman, Iona Crawford, Joyce Paton, Judy R. Clark and Sara Berman will all show creations featuring the famous cloth at the event in An Lamtair Art Centre, Stornoway. Lorna Macaulay, chief executive of show organisers the Harris Tweed Authority said the unique occasion would help acknowledge 'the skill and support' Harris Tweed has enjoyed from the local community for over a century. She said: 'The resurgence of the fabric as a contemporary cloth is amazing. Who would have thought that 100 years on, this traditional fabric would have developed such a 'sexy' image and be appearing on some of the most famous catwalks around the world?'

FEBRUARY

MARCH



The fishing boat Lady Evelyn may sail again and relieve local concern that she would rot away at her North Pier, Oban, mooring 15_111boat1

A FISHING boat that has lain precariously on its side for more than two years at Oban's North Pier could be on the move. The owner of the eight-metre long, Irish registered Lady Evelyn, Derek Grier, has been working to repair the hull of the decaying vessel for some time, struggling against complications presented by a combination of a bad back and low income. **Perseverance** While the vessel has been described as everything from 'a blight on Oban's harbour' to 'a black mark on the town', Derek is hoping his perseverance to return the vessel to its former glory will pay off. **Footnote:** On December 29 2011 the Lady Evelyn's fate was finally sealed when she was torn up and removed for scrap.

MARCH



Mark Taylor of Rio Tinto Alcan and Lochaber Archaeological Society members David MacFarlane and Robert Cairns inspect the bomb that hit Lochaber Smelter but failed to explode. 10_f13bomb01

LOCHABER Archaeology Society (LAS) has almost completed a project uncovering military installations designed to protect the British Aluminium Company Lochaber smelter during the war.

Society volunteers have mapped out gun positions and army camps around the factory and a decoy factory site at nearby Torlundy, where extensive metal detecting surveys were carried out. The decoy plant was built to draw German bombers away from the real works but was not totally successful, LAS chairman Robert Cairns told *The Oban Times*.

He said: 'During December 1940 a German bomber crew dropped several 500kgs bombs on the aluminium smelter, one of which went through the power house roof and landed next to No.5 generator. Fortunately it failed to explode and the shell of the bomb now sits next to the entrance to the power station.'

RIGHT: A 76-YEAR-old Appin adventurer has won an international award after his team became the first to scale unmapped mountainous routes in Arctic Greenland. Rev Bob Shepton, a retired school chaplain, was in Chamonix, France, and Courmayeur, Italy, to pick up a Piolets d'Or, arguably the most prestigious mountaineering award in the world. Bob took four world-class climbers with him to Greenland on board his 33-foot yacht for the trail-blazing expedition. In total, the team conquered and named nine new rock routes on the west and south coasts of Greenland.



Rev Bob Shepton takes the wheel aboard his yacht Dodo's Delight, with Nico Favresse, as they sail down the Torssukatak in south Greenland.

MAY



Beautiful bride Kirsti Emsley with her shinty-playing brothers Willie, left, and Ewan Neilson.

A SHINTY-fan bride let her usher brothers play in their team's biggest ever match - in the middle of her wedding day. Ewan and Willie Neilson were key players for Taynuilt Shinty Club's Celtic Cup semi-final against favourites Oban

Camanachd - but were also ushers at the wedding of their sister, Kirsti, to Justin Emsley - at the same time on the same day. But after the Oban side agreed to a rescheduling of the match, the brothers were able to attend the ceremony at 2pm, get to Taynuilt for the 3.30pm throw-up and be showered and changed in time for the reception. Kirsti, a club committee member and first aid steward on match days, said: 'No-one can believe I let them go but they had to play. It was such a big game.'

APRIL

APRIL



Strongmen Darren McCann, Jamie Crawford, Scott Callender, Brian Campbell, John Hutton and Jerry Vickers.

SOME of Lochaber's brawnniest athletes are making names for themselves in the world of strongman competitions.

A number of the squad who train at Ben Nevis Auction Mart, Torlundy, are aiming to qualify for upcoming national events, including the Scottish and UK championships.

Coach Muir Watson told *The Oban Times* Lochaber was punching above its weight in the sport. He said: 'Fort William is a good place for strongmen. The boys are all keen and they work very hard, and we've got a good place to train.'

JUNE



Local officers from Oban Police Office arrested several people in a series of drug raids in the town.



RIGHT: Undercover police officers were at the heart of an operation to expose drug users and dealers in Oban. After the biggest police operation ever seen in Oban, Operation Independence - a covert plan aimed to help rid Oban's streets of serious Class A, B and C drugs - multiple arrests were made in a series of raids. It was 'hugely successful', claimed the town's chief inspector.

While 11 people have appeared in court, the message to drug users and dealers is this is only the beginning and officers are already gathering information with more arrests anticipated in the near future.

The Oban Times

1861 Celebrating 150 years 2011

Review

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

JULY



OBAN'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

HRH Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, joined in the Oban Bicentennial celebrations when she visited the town. She welcomed a grand parade which made its way from Station Square to the Corran Halls and was made up of representatives of local groups and organisations. The Princess watched the parade arrive with Argyll and Bute Provost William Petrie and Oban community councillor Kenny MacIntyre? 16_128princess12



SEPTEMBER



Local SSPCA officer John McAvoy with the corn snake. 15_137snake1

LEFT: A sneaky snake slithered its way into an Oban home, causing three weeks of chaos as residents tried to capture the elusive reptile. Archie Milne was startled to say the least when he found the serpent hiding in a broken air vent outside his flat at 2 Battery Terrace. But little did he realise that the four-and-a-half foot long corn snake would cause quite as much trouble as it did, even if it did provide a few laughs along the way. Archie admitted that all things scaly give him the 'heebee-jeebies'. Archie phoned the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for help.

OCTOBER



It was a successful Royal National Mod in Stornoway for talented Lochside musician Hannah MacRae who won the fiddle competition for Slow Air and March, Strathspey and Reel. Aged just 13, it was Hannah's first attempt at the 13-18 age group competition but adjudicator Gillian Frame, a former Traditional Musician of the Year, said she was 'blown away' by the young Lochaber girl's talent, giving her a mark of 95 out of 100. Hannah also proved her talent stretches beyond instruments by winning her poetry recitation competition for 13-15 years learners.

NOVEMBER



Dreaming of glory: Rosemary is hoping she did enough to impress the judges. 10_144singer01

A HOMELESS Fort William woman is hoping to go from rags to riches after wowing the audience at an audition for the ITV talent show 'Britain's Got Talent'. Operatic singer and mother-of-four Rosemary Leckie has long dreamt of embarking on a singing career, and she's now aiming to become Lochaber's own Susan Boyle, who found worldwide fame after performing on the show in 2009. Rosemary sang 'Don't Cry For Me Argentina' in front of a production team, cameras and thousands of spectators at a packed audition in Edinburgh last weekend. The 38-year-old told *The Oban Times* she had enjoyed herself, despite the pressure of performing in front of such a large crowd. She said: 'It was nerve-wracking, but I loved it. And what an applause I got!

JULY



Burned-out: The Lamborghini Gallardo being carried from the scene. 20_130car01

A LUXURY supercar went up in flames in a matter of minutes in the centre of Fort William. The Lamborghini Gallardo, estimated by police to be worth around £90,000, drew quite a crowd as it was reduced to a smouldering shell on Fassfern Road next to Belford Hospital. Onlookers said the flames at one stage reached as high as the roof of the hospital. The car's owner is thought to have stopped his car when it began smoking on the A82 and went into the hospital to get a fire extinguisher, but by the time he returned the car was ablaze. Officers from the nearby fire station attended to put out the flames.

JULY



Marie Rowan ups the pace at Stafford Street. Photograph by John MacTavish.

OBAN'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

OBAN is capital of the dance, Strip the Willow. More than 2,000 people took part in The Big Strip, one of the highlights of the town's bicentennial celebrations. A further 4,000 people looked on as one of the most amazing spectacles the town has ever put on took place. Organisers Souvy Page and Louise Glen-Lee were delighted with the response on the day. They said: 'While we do not have the final figure, we know we gave out in excess of 2,000 numbers and badges. 'For a wee town that is just brilliant. 'We want to thank everyone who came along and made it such a party experience in Oban.' Dot Stewart, from Iona, who had come to the town especially for the event said: 'I will never look at George Street the same way again. 'Well done Oban.' Organisers are already planning next year's event.

DECEMBER



A spectacular display, named 'Obang', as a dedication to the town that coined the phrase, took place over Oban Bay. The impressive fireworks demonstration by Pyro 1 served as compensation to organisers of the Oban Fireworks Display who at the beginning of November had to apologise after Pyro 1 set off all their fireworks at once. The resulting display at Mossfield lasted for less than one minute. Photograph by Tony Hardley, Scotphoto.com.

Right: Pupils at Upper Achintore Primary School, Fort William, show their delight at the arrival of the first snow of the winter. 20_149snow2

AUGUST



Hot shot: Kenny with the trophy and medal he won at the British Championships. 20_133kenny01

LOCHABER shotgun ace Kenny Jones returned from an international shooting competition in Northern Ireland as the top performing Scot.

Kenny, of Inverroy, only took up the sport three years ago and had tremendous success at the recent British Open DTL Championships at Culbann Clay Pigeon Club in County Derry, winning the gold medal for the High Gun of Scotland. He was given the badge for best overall senior Scottish gun out of the 40 Scots taking part in the tournament.

AUGUST



Directors of Oban Phoenix Cinema Ltd celebrate after a deal was struck to buy the Highland Theatre. 15_131cinema1

THE DISUSED Highland Theatre will be showing films again by the end of the year after Oban Phoenix Cinema concluded a £165,000 deal to buy the building. Company directors will gain entry on September 21, prompting a period of frantic cleaning and organising before the doors swing open to the public again, they hope by November or December.

That isn't the end of the work though, with the not-for-profit organisation set to commission a feasibility study to determine how extensively and quickly they can refurbish the building. Oban Phoenix Cinema director Laura Russell said: 'We're so excited now. We want to have the doors open by November or December - just in time for the next instalment of the Twilight saga! 'I think for the community this next stage is going to be so much more available and practical. 'People can now get involved. 'We are now looking for volunteers to help with painting and decorating to get the cinema back up to scratch. 'The more people we get, the sooner we can open. 'We're looking for any offers of help from local tradesmen if possible, which would be greatly appreciated.'

SEPTEMBER



Dr Joe Tangney: Scotland's GP of the Year 2011.

A FORT William doctor has been named as 2011 GP of the Year in Scotland by the Royal College of General Practitioners. Dr Joe Tangney, a GP with the Glen Mor Medical Practice at the Fort William Health Centre at Camaghael, was nominated for the award by patient Annie Mackintosh for being 'unfailingly attentive, caring and reassuring' in treating her terminally-ill husband Iain. In her nomination she said: 'He established a great rapport and relationship with my husband who trusted his advice and judgement implicitly. Due to his care my husband was able to remain at home during his final illness. 'Dr Tangney was off duty that weekend but insisted that we were not to phone for the out-of-hours service but to call him at home at any time of day or night if he needed a doctor.' Dr Tangney told *The Oban Times*: 'I am very flattered and honoured to win the award. I certainly was not expecting it. It's great for Fort William that a rural practice like ours can win an award such as this. 'It was a very rewarding experience to have treated Mr Mackintosh over 16 years. As GPs a lot of our time is spent helping people with long term illnesses we can't cure and supporting their families as well.'

SEPTEMBER



Pitt stop: Grace Foote, Emily Roughton and Kathleen Wojcik of Fiddlelore pose with the movie star in Kintail.

MOVIE star Brad Pitt finished filming his new zombie epic 'World War Z' in Glasgow then took off for the West Highlands on his motorbike - twice. Brad hit the A82 on his BMW 800 on Friday afternoon and called in at Glencoe and Onich service stations - then turned up at Kintail Lodge Hotel in Glen Shiel on his Harley Davidson on Sunday. Stunned staff in all three premises could not believe it when the actor strolled through their doors in his leathers. Marianne Worthy, at the Kintail Lodge Hotel, Glen Shiel, didn't even recognise the film star when he popped in for soup and a sandwich on Sunday, just as New Zealand musical group Fiddlelore arrived for their afternoon gig.

DECEMBER



Young Fraser Pollock takes a nap with parents Katy and Gordon following his dramatic trip to Paisley just hours after his birth. 15_144pollack1



NOVEMBER



Young Fraser Pollock takes a nap with parents Katy and Gordon following his dramatic trip to Paisley just hours after his birth. 15_144pollack1

PROUD Kilmore parents Gordon and Katy Pollock have paid tribute to hospital and helicopter staff who beat appalling weather to ensure their son received vital specialist care. Young Fraser, Gordon's first and Katy's third child, had an eventful entry into the world, having been flown down to Paisley's Royal Alexandra Hospital by Sea King helicopter for specialist care just hours after he was born at Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital on Friday October 21.

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Glenalmond College stretches its pupils – academically, physically, creatively, spiritually and emotionally. The strong and supportive community helps them to develop self-belief, generosity of spirit and independence of mind, enabling them to mature into successful, confident adults.

The pursuit of excellence, with every child encouraged to make the most of their academic abilities, is fundamental to the school's commitment to its pupils. However, academic work is balanced with an extensive range of creative, sporting, social and adventure activities, and each child is encouraged to find those areas in which they can shine.

The school is located in 300 acres of stunning countryside just outside Perth, and is the perfect environment for the 400 boys and girls aged 12 to 18 to grow and learn. Boarders and day pupils are welcomed and all benefit from the superb pastoral care and individual attention that are central to the school's ethos.

The experience of Glenalmond is perhaps best summed up by one of the current sixth-formers, who describes the school as a place where pupils are "inspired to learn, determined to achieve".

Parents and children are invited to visit the school at any time. To arrange a visit, please contact the Registrar, Jeremy Poulter, on 01738 842056 or registrar@glenalmondcollege.co.uk.

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LOMOND SCHOOL

Lomond School is one of Scotland's most modern and progressive independent schools. Situated in Helensburgh on the edge of the Loch Lomond National Park, it was founded in 1977 building on the traditions of two previous independent schools in the town. Helensburgh has excellent road and rail links with the West Highlands and is only 35 minutes from Glasgow airport.

Facilities at the school are first class. A notable feature has been extensive investment in ICT and other facilities to enhance the learning environment. The school prides itself on its' extra curricular provision with outstanding opportunities in sport, music/drama and outdoor education. In October 2009 a £3.5 million Sports Hall was opened.

Boarding at Lomond is unique with Scotland's first coeducational boarding house opening its' doors in 2003. Boys and girls are housed on separate floors with a communal ground floor with a variety of social spaces. Boys and girls living on the same site is a positive feature that has attracted families pleased that siblings can share the experience of boarding school living in the same building. A recent inspection by the HMI and Care Commission, described the boarding house as setting 'benchmark standards' for the boarding sector.

Boarders at Lomond come from many parts of Scotland. The school has long associations with the Highlands and Islands through its' bursaries in traditional music. Other means tested financial assistance may be available. Headmaster Simon Mills would be pleased to welcome families wishing to visit the school in the coming months.

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Time to work and play

Outside the regular timetable for evening prep and music practice, boarders organise much of their own leisure time - quiz nights, weekend outings and summer barbecues to name a few.

Judge for yourself

If you are considering a boarding place for your child, we would be delighted to show you around. Prospective boarders are welcome to stay overnight, for a weekend or longer so they can experience the homely atmosphere and meet our wonderful boarders and staff.

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2011 82% A*-B at A level

STRATHALLAN SCHOOL

Strathallan's ethos is focussed on providing the opportunities for all pupils to excel, challenging them and also offering support and building confidence through a range of experiences.

Central to this is academic success: 82% of this year's A level entries were graded A*/B. The School is also committed to high standards in sport, music, theatre and a wide range of other activities. This year saw district or national success in twenty different sports, sixteen Scottish representatives and twelve national champions.

Strathallan School occupies a glorious rural location, situated in 150 acres in the heart of Perthshire, offering a safe and secure environment for children to grow and develop. We continue to invest in our outstanding facilities. Recent additions include modern laboratories, computer centre, design technology centre, strength conditioning room, two floodlit synthetic hockey pitches, medical centre, girls' boarding house, refurbished swimming pool, dining hall and art school.

All boarding houses provide modern accommodation, with a single study-bedroom for every boarder after the first senior year. The Junior House, Riley, is designed to cater for boys and girls wishing to enter the School at 9+ and is situated within its own campus, but enjoys the facilities of the main School.

The School revolves around boarding with two thirds of our 550 pupils boarding. Being a member of the Strathallan community is a wonderful experience in itself but crucially it is also an outstanding preparation for the future.

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There is a wide range of sport, art, music, drama and cultural activities; over 70 extra-curricular clubs are on offer. Of particular note are the opportunities for music; Dollar Academy has a world champion pipe band, regular productions and concerts, a choice of twelve choirs and orchestras and individual tuition for a range of instruments at all abilities. The art department is of national renown.

Your child can board at Dollar Academy. The boarding houses are excellent and pupils are cared for with genuine kindness. A full programme of activities, events and excursions is provided.

Tests for 2012 entry take place on 28th January.
 Please contact the rector for more information: rector@dollaracademy.org.uk

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Closing date for applications is 16 January 2012.

PUBLIC NOTICES

crofters commission
ughdarras nan croitearan

CROFTING ELECTIONS

In accordance with the provisions of the Crofting Commission (Elections) (Scotland) Regulations 2011, nominations are invited from persons seeking election as members to the new Crofting Commission.

A person is qualified to be a candidate at an election if the person is:

- aged 16 years or over; and
- either-
 - has his or her name in the Register of Crofts or registered in the Crofting Register as a crofter or owner-occupier crofter; or
 - has been nominated by an elector.

The Crofters Commission wrote to all crofters in March 2011 encouraging them to advise the Commission of their up-to-date contact details in preparation for compiling the Electoral Roll. Crofters are not required to contact the Crofters Commission to register to vote. Those persons on the Register of Crofts who qualify to vote will receive a ballot paper.

If you have any concerns whether you are eligible to vote in these Elections or any changes to notify, please contact the Registration Officer on 01463 663439 (elections@crofterscommission.org.uk) before the 19th January 2012 (closure of the Electoral Roll).

If you require further information on the Election process or candidature please contact the Returning Officer at The Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness on the Election Help-Line No: 01349 886657 or (elections@highland.gov.uk).

Forms and further information are available from: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/elections/croftingcommission/> or <http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/>

TAGHAIDHEAN CROITEARACHD

Ann an co-rèir ri solaran Rìaghaltean Coimisean na Croitearachd (Taghaidhean) (Alba) 2011, thathar ag iarraidh ainmeachaidhean bho dhaoine a tha a' sireadh an taghadh mar bhuill gu Coimisean ùr na Croitearachd.

Tha neach uidheamaichte a bhith na thagraiche ann an taghadh ma tha an neach sin:

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 - air (a h-) ainmeachadh le neach-bhòtaidh.

Sgrìobh Coimisean nan Croitearan gu na croitearan uile sa Mhàirt 2011, gam brosnachadh gus an Coimisean a chomhairleachadh air a' mhion-fhiosrachadh ùraichte aca fhèin, mar ullachadh airson na Roile Taghaidh a chur ri chèile. Chan eil e air iarraidh air croitearan labhairt ri Coimisean nan Croitearan gus rùn bhòtaidh a chlàradh. Gheibh iadsan air Clàr nan Croitean a tha airidh air bhòtadh, pàipear bhòtaidh.

Ma tha dragh oirbh a thaobh airidheachd air bhòtadh sna Taghaidhean seo no le atharrachaidhean sam bith ri ainmeachadh, cuiribh fios chun an Oifigear Clàraidh air 01463 663439 (elections@crofterscommission.org.uk) ron 19 Faoilleach 2012 (dùnadh na Roile Taghaidh).

Ma tha tuilleadh fiosrachaidh a dhith oirbh mu phròiseas Taghaidh no airidheachd thagraichean, cuiribh fios chun an Oifigear Tìlthidh aig Prìomh Oifis Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd, Inbhir Nis air Loidhne-cobhair an Taghaidh aig: 01349 886657 no (elections@highland.gov.uk).

Tha foirmean agus tuilleadh fiosrachaidh rim faotainn bho: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/elections/croftingcommission/> no <http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/>

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We are looking to recruit confident individuals to carry out site tours at Oban Distillery for our visitors in 2012. Candidates should possess a high standard of communication and customer service skills with the ability to work within a team.
Languages would be an advantage but not essential to the role.
All applicants will need a flexible approach to hours of work over a 7 day working week and some evening work is also integral to this role.
Interested candidates should apply in writing to Andrea Verrall, Brightwork Ltd, 209/211 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5QY or submit CV by email to andrea.verrall@brightworkltd.com. Closing date for applications will be 09 January 2012. Interviews will be held locally early 2012.
Brightwork Ltd offers the services of an employment agency for permanent work and an employment business for temporary work.

DALMALLY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY AGM
Dalmally Church Hall
Thursday, January 12 at 7.30pm
New members welcome

Royal British Legion Scotland Oban Branch AGM
Monday 9th January 2012
7.30pm
Soroba House Hotel

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Apply to Mr C McDonald
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Due to the recent award of a number of contracts TSL Contractors Ltd have the following vacancies:
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BIRTH

CLARK - On December 28, 2011 at the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow, to Alan and Kirsty (nee Macleod) a son Douglas Archibald Ruairidh, a brother for Dolina. Second grandson for Archie and Christine Clark, Ballachulish and Dr Roddy and Maggie Macleod of Ballachulish and Skye.

ENGAGEMENT

CONNOR-OWEN - Both families are pleased to announce the engagement on December 26, 2011 of Patrick Connor, eldest son of Pat and Frances Connor, Toryglen, Glasgow to Carol Owen, only daughter of Tom and Allena Owen, Kinlochleven.

DEATH

CAMPBELL - John William, our beloved dad of Traigh Beag East, Port Ellen, Isle of Islay, passed away with his family around him on December 24, 2011 following a short illness. A devoted and much loved husband, dad, grandpa, brother and father in law. Thank you dad for the richest inheritance, forever our guide in our hearts. Carma and Anne

DAVISON (nee Johnstone) - Jessie in her 89th year, formerly of Park Terrace, Oban passed away in Perth, Western Australia with all her family by her side. Beloved wife of the late Tommy (Scouse) much loved mum to Marie, the late Ann, Pat, Jessie, Richard and Jane. A dearly loved granny and great granny. Contact address Marie Hopkins, 23 Matthews Place, Perth 6104 Western Australia.

MACDONALD - Peacefully at the Knapdale Ward, Mid Argyll Hospital on December 28, 2011, Donella (Dot) Macdonald, nee Gauld, aged 88 years, formerly of Kilmartin. Beloved wife of the late Malkie Macdonald. Much loved sister of John and the late Jean, Bobby, Evelyn and Effie. A dear aunt and great aunt to all the family. Funeral service will take place at Kilmartin Parish Church on Friday, January 6, 2012, at 12 noon. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired, to Knapdale Ward, Mid Argyll Hospital. All friends and family are respectfully invited to attend.

MACLEAN - Suddenly at her home, 1 Collaig, Ardforn, on December 27, 2011, Eilidh MacLean (nee MacDonald), aged 58 years. Eldest daughter of Ina and the late John Macdonald, Dervaig, Mull. Cherished wife of Iain MacLean and loving and caring mother of Iain, Julie, Ron, Amanda and Callum, and a special sister and auntie to all the family. Funeral service will be held in Craiginish Parish Church, Ardforn on Tuesday, January 10, 2012, at 1.00 pm, thereafter to Kilvarree Cemetery. Family flowers only please. A retiral collection will be offered at church. All friends and family are respectfully invited to attend.

MACQUARRIE - Cpt Iain (Born Coll/ resided in Coldingham). Passed away at the age of 90 years, at home on December 30, 2011, after many years of ill health that were borne with great dignity and courage. Beloved husband of Shirley, much loved dad to Anne Neil and Lynn and papa to Catriona, Nicholas, Ross, Lindsay, Heather and Sophie and father in law to Tom and Roy and Gayle. Friends and family are invited to join them for his funeral service, which will be held at Coldingham Priory on Friday, January 6 at 12.15pm, followed by interment in Eyemouth Cemetery at 1pm, refreshments thereafter at the Village Hall, Coldingham.

MARR - Mary, peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital on December 30, 2011 aged 81. Beloved wife of the late Ronald Marr, much loved mother of Ronnie and mother in law of Sandra, and dear granny of Karen.

WHITELEGGE - Adrian Bruce died on December 18, 2011 aged 88. Much loved and loving husband of Day. Father of Emma, Oliver, Polly, Candida and Rupert; grandfather of 14 and great-grandfather of 1. Loved and missed by all. Family only cremation on January 12, 2012. Memorial service to follow, in the Spring.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MACINNES - Allan, Rachel, Derek and Morven would like to thank family and friends for all the support given to them during Donald's illness and for all telephone calls and cards received after the sad loss of Donald, a loving father, papa and brother. Special thanks to Hillary and the nurses who cared for Donald, D and A Munn for efficient funeral arrangements, the Rev Dugald Cameron and Donald MacKinnon for their very kind words about dad. Buffy for playing the pipes and the staff of the Rowan Tree Hotel for the buffet refreshments and to everyone who paid their respects at the church and graveside and who donated to the retiral collection which raised the sum of £1318.24 for Macmillan nurses and Autism Argyll.

IN MEMORIAM

CARMICHAEL - In loving memory of our dear father, father-in-law and grandfather Neil who died on January 4, 1993. Forever in our hearts. Always in our thoughts. - Inserted by Irene, Donald, Nigel and families, Islay and Glasgow.

FERGUSON - In loving memory of my dear mother Jessie who passed away on January 2, 2011. There will always be heartache. And often a silent tear. But always precious memories. Of the days when you were here. - Daughter Anne.

JACKSON - In loving memory of my dear mother Liz, who died so suddenly on January 6, 2006. Always in my thoughts. - Love Iain xxx.

MACDONALD - Treasured memories of Eileen dearly loved Mum of Philip and precious daughter of Margaret sister of Colin and Karen, taken from us January 6, 2008. To us you were so special. What more is there to say. We only wish with all our hearts. That you were here today. So very missed. Kerrera Terrace Oban.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of my dearest niece Eileen Susan who died January 6, 2008. A quiet thought, a silent tear. A constant wish that you were here. Cherished memories. - Auntie Eileen and cousin Rhea.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of Lorna who passed away on January 4, 2010. God bless you precious daughter. Until the day we meet again. - Mum. Forever loved, forever remembered. - Kenneth, Eilidh, Kirsteen, James, Rachael and Iona.

MACLELLAN - Precious memories of our darling infant son Christopher, who was called to Heaven on January 1, 1991, aged 4 months. Our little flower. Just lent not given. Who bud on earth. And now blooms in Heaven. - Loved always Mum, Dad, Craig and Calum xxxxx.

MACLEOD - In loving memory of my two dearly loved sons and our brothers, Neil, who died January 3, 2004 and George who died in the Philippines January 5, 2009. The call was sudden. The shock severe. To lose two sons I loved so dear. - Love Mum xx 29 Glenpane Street. Sadly within the shadows. There came two sudden calls. With farewells left unspoken. You both quietly left us all. - Ian, Rory, Daniel, Donald, Christine and Marina xx.

MACMILLAN - Treasured memories of Jasmine a dear mum and gran, who passed away on January 2, 2008. Always loved, never forgotten. - David, Moira, Carla, Kayleigh, Brett and Jamie.

MACNAUGHTON - Ruby and Colin (Mum and Dad). Love and remember you every day. In our hearts you will always stay. All our love. - Mairi, Alec, Johnnie and families.

MACPHAIL - In memory of our precious son and big brother, Ryan, tragically taken from us on January 7, 2003, aged 16 years. At sixteen years of age Ryan's life here is done. It is hard to accept he was just having fun. Growing to a man but still a wee boy.

But we know to our lives he brought us great joy. We love and miss you so much. Mum, Dad, Jenna and Jason xxxxx

ROBERTSON - Treasured memories of George who died January 6, 2011. Forever in our hearts. - Ena, Caroline and Carrie.

ROBERTSON - January 6, 2011 was a very sad day. We lost my dear husband and our dearest father George. God took away someone very special and loving. Yet he remains a part of our daily lives. And will always be in our hearts. Always thinking of you. - Your wife Margaret, sons George and Lorne and daughter-in-law Helen.

SIMPSON - Cherished memories of my beloved husband John who died January 6, 2011. So very missed each day and always remembered. - Your loving wife Fiona.

PERSONALS

Happy Retirement Willie



Love from the family

CHARITY DONATIONS

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT
Working towards a time when every person in Scotland has equal and ready access to the best information, treatment and care for cancer.
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Business Park, Clydebank G81 2DR
Tel 0808 100 6000
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Please give your financial support by donation, deed of covenant or legacy.
Please send to Appeals Department, Highland Arts Effort, Royal Blind Asylum School, R.O. Box 500, Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh, EH10 4HZ

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Please contact David Mudie (Treasurer) Oban Hospice Ltd The Croft Kilmore

MARIE CURIE CANCER CARE
Oban & Lorn Fundraising Branch
Donations always gratefully accepted.
Please contact Mrs Lillian Kernode Tynwald, Glenburn, Soroba Road, Oban 01631 571009

GRADUATIONS

Rosie Wade graduated with a Degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Stirling.
Rosie, a former pupil of Bunesan Primary and Oban High School, is the daughter of Trevor and Mary Wade.

Thought for the Week

Technology

THERE are two dates on the past year calendar that stand out for me.

One is that our church had a visit from the Moderator, the Rt. Rev. John Christie.

The other was later in the year when we had the pleasure of inducting our new minister, Rev. Elspeth McLean - both happy occasions.

Events pass quickly into the past tense. We live in a world of technology: the SatNav, the mobile phone and our favourite books uploaded to an eReader.

We grow accustomed to these things and lose the wonder of them.

We have grown familiar with the three wise men of the Christmas story, who used their technology and knowledge of the stars to go in search of a newborn King (Matthew 2v1&2). One bright shining star moved across the night sky and they left their own country to follow the course of this star in particular. The star led them to Bethlehem and stood still above the place where the baby that they sought lay. The wise men could only follow the star, it was the maker of the stars (Genesis 1v16) that could make it stand still. Oh the wonder of it!

The Bible tells us they went into the place where they saw the child with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped him and laid precious gifts before him, as to a King. We know this babe to be the Son of God, our Saviour. The wise men took another route home (Matthew 1v12) - a new road.

A New Year road stands open to us all, with all its new technology and wonders. The men of old had a star to follow but we - through faith - have Jesus Himself to walk on the road with us.

*When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His word
What a glory He sheds on our way
While we do His good will
He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey*

A very happy and blessed New Year,

Anne MacArthur
Tiree



Councillors Roddy McCuish and Louise Glen-Lee with the Six-Book Challenge achievers and volunteer reading tutors from Oban Library Reading Group. 16_151516book01

Reading group perform their story from Six-Book-Challenge

MEMBERS of a reading group, who have been improving their literacy skills through drama, performed for an audience at Oban Library to celebrate their achievement.

The Oban Library Reading Group all received certificates after completing the Six-Book Challenge.

But before receiving their awards, they had to act out the story from the sixth book, Skint!, in front of an audience

that included Argyll and Bute councillors Louise Glen-Lee and Roddy McCuish.

It was the first time any of the group had performed live to an audience.

Brian Marden, adult literacy and numeracy development worker, said: 'Rather than just let them make speeches, we decided to do something a bit different and perform Skint! for an audience.'

'When in character, they are

far better at reading because they have got to think about what they are saying.'

'Research has proven that repeated reading is a great way of improving reading skills.'

As the reading group received their Six-Book Challenge certificates, three of the volunteer reading tutors also received awards.

Brian added: 'I would like to pay tribute to all those involved. Those who performed did so for

the first time and it took a while to build up the confidence to read out loud.

'Although they were very nervous, they all felt a great sense of achievement'

The reading group has been invited to perform Skint! at the Lorn Resource Centre in the New Year.

Anyone who would like to improve their reading skills can contact Brian on 01631 567 952.

Lochawe SWRI here from carers

REPRESENTATIVES of the North Argyll Carers Centre were guest speakers at a recent Lochawe SWRI meeting.

Ruth Moody, who runs the service, and her colleague, training officer Morag MacLean delivered an interesting talk.

The service is one few people know about until they get into the situation of having to care for someone, at which point they do not know who to approach.

The ladies explained that a carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends, who couldn't manage without this help.

The term carer should not be confused with a care worker, or care assistant, who receives payment for

looking after someone.

The service offers help in many ways: A respite for a few hours, or organising a holiday for someone who is looking after a relative, or perhaps after a bereavement.

Sometimes a listening ear is all that is required.

The service can be found in Albany Street, opposite the police station.

Miss Eilaisaid MacKay thanked the ladies for their interesting talk on behalf of all present.

Competition (judged by Ruth and Morag): Sticky marmalade tea loaf - P. McLeod, gold; C. MacDougall, silver; J. Ogden, silver.

An excellent tea was provided by hostesses for the evening, Mrs K Campbell and Mrs J McHardy.

Right - Captain Ian Stevenson of the Hebridean Princess hands over a cheque for £1,269.32 to RNLI Oban treasurer Les Stewart. The donation results from a 'frog race' aboard the ship, which the passengers held for lifeboat funds. Captain Stevenson is also a member of Oban Lifeboat.



ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN
Campbell Street Church
Sunday 8 January 2011
11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
Phone-In 'Worship Link' available
Rev. Archie McPhail MA, MTh (01631) 567076 All welcome

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 8 January 2011
Epiphany 1
St John's Cathedral, Oban Holy Communion.....08.00
Sung Eucharist.....10.15
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books All Welcome
Norman MacCallum, Provost. (01631) 562323
St Columba, Gruline, Mull Holy Communion.....11.00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona Holy Eucharist.....10.00

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New Year message from Provost of Lochaber Allan Henderson

BLIADHNA Mhath Ur!

Despite the dreadful financial plight of Europe, Lochaber's main industries continue to invest heavily to allow them to expand and consolidate.

Rio Tinto (ex Alcan) has invested heavily in new turbines and BSW continue to build and develop as they transfer across the A830 to make the pulp mill just a memory. Forestry thrives on the back of this; Fish farming grows, helping to keep unemployment low in the area.

EWOS new fish feed store in Mallaig and Marine Harvest's smolt farm at Lochailort all help sustain the industry in Lochaber.

West coast commercial fishing continues to struggle under the weight of over regulation but diversification to leisure with the new pontoons in Lochaline and Mallaig, will mitigate this.

The underwater centre, providing world class training, and West Highland college both continue to develop and deliver. All these industries, along with smaller, skilled engineering and building trade contribute to a vibrant haulage industry, by road, rail and sea.

British Waterways proposal to seek developments on the canal, along with the Corpach marina proposal, two thriving boatyards, Mallaig's new marina, as well as Annapoint terminal would all be strengthened by cruise ship facilities. The Council continues to seek options.

The new Blar Mhor development not only promises a new supermarket but will also amalgamate many of our blue light services, tying in with the health centre.



Also on this site there will be a 3G all weather pitch which will allow all sports teams to fulfil fixtures, taking pressure off the hard pressed sodden grass pitches, which the council continue to invest in, even in the difficult financial climes. A lack of a maintenance programme, however, is a big hindrance.

Improvements to Lochybridge roundabout as a result of the development, due to start soon, will also be a great benefit to safety on the A82/830.

The commencement of redevelopment on the old Grand Hotel site in Fort William is another boost to the area.

The tourist industry, despite the inclement summer, managed to maintain mainly fairly healthy levels through marketing and development by the Outdoor Capital of the UK and the area marketing groups.

The closure of public conveniences has not helped but innovative groups such as Arisaig Community Trust and LAD in Caol have helped fill the gap.

2012 will be a challenging year for the newly formed community councils and Caol Community Centre steering group as they get down to taking their destiny in their own hands. I wish them all well.

A Happy Prosperous New Year to all.

BEST FOR NEWS, VIEWS & PHOTOS
The Oban Times
Tel: 01631 568000
www.obantimes.co.uk



The West Highland Wheelers set off on their last race of 2011 on a 10-mile course through Leanachan Forest near Fort William.

Wheelers league race beats the bad weather

Grizzled veteran relives old glories as he wins Leanachan Forest race

WEST HIGHLAND Wheelers third round of the Alpine Bikes sponsored Winter League in Leanachan forest last Tuesday saw grizzled veteran John Shirley relive old glories by coming in first ahead of Lachlan Blair and Alan Dent.

A gap between the train of Atlantic low pressure systems led to relatively benign conditions, much to the relief of the riders of all ages.

Hannah Barnes was first lady home with Mairi Meldrum and Frances Dent in second and third respectively. Three maturing

men scrapped over fifth place with the race inquest posing many 'what-if' questions.

Gregor Linfield took first place in the short course with Daniel Parfitt recording a very respectable time in second.

Thanks

Thanks go to Ruari Watt and the Forestry Commission. The next event is scheduled for January 8th at Barcaldine.

Results: 1, John Shirley 35:34; 2, Lachlan Blair 36:00 1st Junior; 3, Alan Dent 36:29; 4, Spook Munro 36:37; 5, Roddy Wells 38:17; 6, Gregor Muir 38:19; 7,

CYCLING

Alastair MacLennan 38:24; 8, Hannah Barnes 38:50 1st Lady; 9, Gavin Linfield 38:55; 10, Stephen Dent 39:53 2nd Junior; 11, Mark Aldridge 41:31; 12, Steve Bradley 42:53; 13, Scott Clarke 43:44; 14, Mairi Meldrum 44:52 2nd Lady; 15, Alex Dent 53:57 3rd Junior; 16, Frances Dent 54:00 3rd Lady; 17, Doug Little 54:01; 18, Brychan Martin 58:04; 19, Peter Martin 58:06. Short Course: 1, Gregor Linfield 38:51; 2, Daniel Parfitt 47:15.

Fixture congestion continues for Fort

FOOTBALL

FORT WILLIAM Football Club face more fixture congestion after their game against Clachnacuddin was called off last week due to Claggan Park being waterlogged.

Four of Fort's five scheduled games in December were called off, meaning Danny Conlon's men have played six games less than the team above them in the league. Brora Rangers. The outstanding fixtures will be re-scheduled for a mid-week.

Fort are due to travel to take on Buckie Thistle this Saturday. Buckie sit in sixth place in the league and ran out 6-0 winners when the sides played at Claggan back in August.

Members wanted

TABLE TENNIS

FORT WILLIAM Table Tennis Club will welcome members and new players to its first session of 2012 at the Nevis Centre on Monday night.

Club chairman Jim Hinchley said the sport was perfect for everyone, irrespective of age or skill levels.

'If there is anyone out there that's played a racket sport and doesn't want to play in the leagues, they can give it a go.

'Table tennis is an all weather sport, and no matter what the weather's like outside, we are still getting a good workout.'

For more information phone Jim on 01397 708827

Marie Curie invites supporters to get training for 2012 events

MARIE Curie Cancer Care is inviting supporters in the Highlands to start 2012 by getting into training for upcoming events.

Sporting challenges include runs, treks, triathlons and cycle rides to swimming, walking and dancing.

Marie Curie has running events all year round, from marathons to local fun runs, including The Loch Ness Marathon on 30 September.

Ambitious

And for those of a more ambitious bent, the charity's Kilimanjaro Trek, from 7-16

June will provide a test of a different order.

Vonnie Carson, community fundraiser for the Highlands, said: 'New Year resolutions often fall by the wayside before January is over, but Marie Curie Cancer Care has events and challenges throughout the year to help you stick to, and achieve, your aims for 2012.'

'Whether you want to improve your fitness, have fun or get outdoors more, there's something for everyone. So why not take up a challenge, fulfil your ambitions and help raise valuable funds for Marie Curie nurses, who provide

FITNESS

free care to people with terminal cancer and other illnesses in their own homes.'

Events

Calendar: Etape Caledonia Pitlochry 13 May; Edinburgh to Dublin Cycle Ride 12-15 July; Glen Coe and the Devil's Staircase trek 28 July; Walk Ten Inverness at Belladrum 1 September; Loch Ness Marathon 30 September.

To take part telephone 08700 340 040 or visit www.mariecurie.org.uk/challenge

Aonach Mor New Year's day race

LOCHABER Athletic Club's annual New Year's Day race up Aonach Mor attracted its largest ever field of runners this year despite stormy conditions forcing a change of route.

Some 123 athletes from across the UK tackled a 5.85-mile looped route through Leanachan

Forest in a hail of wind and rain; with local man Davie Rodgers winning in a time of 37minutes and 28 seconds. LAC's Dawn Scott was the third fastest female runner home.

Race organiser Teresa Kennedy told The Oban Times the conditions were the worst she had ever

ATHLETICS

seen for a race. She said: 'It was like a hurricane. And everything that could have gone wrong did. But it was well marshalled and the route was well marked out. In the end it went really well and everyone enjoyed it.'

Yacht club members brave the wind and rain

LOCHABER Yacht Club members braved the wind and rain to take their boats out on Loch Linnhe on New Year's Day for the annual sailing event.

Four boats were taken out on relays, with 12 people taking part in the sail. Club

commodore Martin Faulkner told The Oban Times the event was nearly cancelled due to the weather providing tough sailing conditions.

Decent Weather

He said: 'There was a squall - very strong winds with heavy

YACHTING

rain. But there was a window of decent weather.

'It was a chance to get out and meet some other members - and it certainly cleared away some New Year cobwebs.'



Lochaber Phoenix: Looking to attract more youngsters to the sport.

Boxing club to hold come and try sessions to tempt new members

LOCHABER Phoenix Amateur Boxing Club is to take part in a nationwide programme to encourage more youngsters to take up the sport.

The free 'Amateur Boxing Academy' lessons will give 10-19 year olds the chance to try a non-contact version of the sport. The sessions start on Tuesday night at the club's gym in Ben Nevis Industrial Estate, Fort

William. As reported in The Oban Times last week's, Nether Lochaber Amateur Boxing Club in Kinlochleven will also be taking part in the program.

Club official Steve Docherty said: 'The sessions will be a mixture of fun games and exercises, and will provide the young people of Lochaber with an opportunity to not only get fit but teach them about a healthy

lifestyle, and will also be a fun way to find out about one of the world's most exciting and rewarding sports.

'The club hopes the sessions will promote wellbeing, fitness, health, nutritional awareness and a positive attitude towards behaviour and discipline in young people.'

The participants will be split up according to age, with classes

BOXING

for 10-12 year olds and 13-15 year olds held on Tuesdays, with 16-19 year olds taking part on Sundays.

Anybody interested can turn up on the night or contact Niall Clark (07554994744), Vince Lopez (07979321025) or Steve Docherty (07767069532).

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LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

P Lang
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All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

I enclose £1 for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

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Matthew picks up the medals

Superb swim in the 1500 metres takes him back to the top of the UK rankings

FIFTEEN-year-old Matthew Anderson from Oban was in medal-winning form at the Scottish national short course swimming championships. The event was held over three-and-a-half-days from December 15 to 18 in Inverness. Matthew won the 1500 metres freestyle title in the 15-and-under age group with a stunning performance. Going with the very fast early pace set by his main rivals, Matthew took up the lead from the 400-metre mark, relentlessly pulling away from the field to win by more than 20 seconds. Matthew's winning time of

16 minutes, 7.92 seconds took him back to the top of the UK rankings for the event in his age group. He had previously set the fastest time back in November but had lost top spot to a Newcastle swimmer during the English championships at the beginning of December. The previous day Matthew also won the bronze medal in the 400 individual medley in a time of four minutes and 41.72 seconds and was only pipped for another medal in the 400 freestyle event the same day finishing fourth in a time of four minutes, 7.39 seconds, losing out by two tenths

of a second. Matthew completed an outstanding weekend by also making the senior B final at 200 Butterfly and producing a fine swim at 100 fly setting a new PB of 1.01.07. Matthew now heads for the first of the Scottish Grand Prix events at East Kilbride on January 14 and 15, followed by the Scottish Schools Championships at the end of January. Matthew has qualified as the fastest qualifier in both events entered at the schools championships, 400 individual medley and the 200 fly.

SWIMMING



Matthew Anderson, 15_101mat01



Saini Do Kickboxing recently held a grading with Sharon Dickison achieving 1st Dan Black Belt. Also gaining junior 1st Dan Black Belt were Gregor Dickison, Nathan Allan and Ben Fitton. Ronnie Allan and James MacCallum were awarded honorary Black Belts for all the help they give with fundraising for the club.

Argyll volleyball coach to officiate at the Olympic Games in London

AN ARGYLL woman will be taking part in the London Olympics this year when the volleyball competition gets underway on July 28 at Earls Court. However, Zalina Dzhatieva will not be in the running for a gold medal, as she takes on refereeing responsibilities as a line judge. A native of Russia, where she played at a high standard, Zalina and her family moved to Gannan when she began work at Scottish Association for Marine Science. And, after being disappointed at the lack of volleyball in the area, she started Lorn Volleyball Club at Atlantis Leisure. Meanwhile, she has been training with the Scottish and British volleyball associations since 2008 to become a qualified line judge for indoor volleyball.

Zalina, who has now been involved with volleyball for more than 30 years, told The Oban Times: 'I became involved in 2008 when there was a call for line judging for London. 'There was no Olympic volleyball team at all until UK won the right to host the games in 2012. Supporting Staff 'This way the host country gets a default place, therefore it needed a team and all supporting staff including referees and line judges. 'Since I have not made it to the Olympics in my time as a player, I thought I would like to be involved in London. 'There is a special feeling when you line judge - as you often get so close to the game, that you are actually almost playing with players. 'Last year I was on the English

play-off final and it was a stunning two-and-a-half hours.' Zalina is looking forward to her Olympic experience but also to bringing some of the 'Olympic spirit' back to Argyll. 'On a bigger picture it is not only about my ambitions, as I am hoping to bring that spirit back to Oban and to my Lorn Volleyball Club,' she said. 'I am really looking forward to sharing my experience with my three junior clubs in Dunbeg, Rockfield and Park primary schools. Who knows where we are going to see these children in few years time?'

VOLLEYBALL



Zalina Dzhatieva will take on refereeing duties at the London Olympics.

Saints on Scottish Cup duty this Saturday

FOOTBALL

THE Scottish Amateur Cup 4th round tie between Dynamo East Kilbride and Oban Saints, which has been switched to Oban, is due to go ahead this Saturday. The game will take place, weather permitting, at Glencruitten with a 2pm kick-off. Referee is George Allen from Johnstone. The incentive for the winners of this game is a home tie in the 5th round against Aberdeen premier division outfit Echt or Wallacetoun from Ayr who are due to play on Saturday as well.

Sportshall in Lochgilphead

ATHLETICS

SPORTS Hall Athletics will once again be promoted in Argyll this winter with the local competition for the Mid Argyll area being held at Lochgilphead Joint Campus School on January 15. This version of indoor athletics gives young people a taste of athletics in a warm and dry atmosphere. The Lochgilphead competition is the second of four area events being held in Argyll this winter and is promoted jointly by Argyll and Bute Local Athletics Partnership and Mid Argyll Athletic Club. Qualifiers from the area competitions will be invited to take part in the Argyll Sports Hall Athletics final to be held on February 25 at Atlantis Leisure in Oban.

Oban Lorne take on Strathaven

RUGBY

OBAN Lorne go into 2012 with points to prove after a poor start to the season, which has been hampered by a limited squad list. But for a minor revival towards the end of the year, the men in green would be in deeper trouble than their current bottom-place position suggests. This Saturday, Oban Lorne welcome Strathaven to Glencruitten for a 2pm kick-off. This re-arranged fixture would be the first turnout for the men in green for more than a month. Oban currently sit bottom of the table, having played nine games with eight points so far. A win would see the team switch with Uddingston in 9th and be within touching distance of the teams above. Coach Corrie Louw and captain Struan Smith hope they will have a large squad to pick from for such an important game.

Saints' youth team fixtures

YOUTH FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints youth teams will get back in action after the Christmas and New Year break with the following fixtures: Saturday 7 January - Under 15s v Allander Colts. Sunday 15 January - Under 13s v Clydebank BC; Morton BC v Under 14s; Strathleven v Under 16s.

Oban Saints Seniors - the season so far

THE poor weather has played havoc with the fixture list so far with the senior side only managing to play eight games out of the 16 listed since the start of the season back on August 13. All the postponed games have been away from home. The first match of the season saw Saints travel to take on Postal United and they were a bit unlucky to lose a close game 1-0, the only defeat of the season so far. Next game was against Inverclyde at Glencruitten with the Oban lads winning 4-2 thanks to goals from Craig MacEwan (2), Keith Millar and Asen Gaydardzhiev. Thorn Athletic were the visitors to Oban on September 3 with the game ending in a 1-1 draw. Netting for Saints was Craig MacEwan. The following Saturday Saints were due to be away

to Castlemilk, but this game was called off due to a waterlogged pitch. Kings Park Rangers at Glasgow Green was the next league fixture with the lads turning in a fine performance in a 5-0 win. Scorers - Donald Campbell (4) and Willie Gemmell. The first Saturday in October was the first round of the Scottish Cup and this was when the fixture pile-up started. This away game, against Weir Recreation was postponed twice and when it did get played goals from Donald Campbell (2), Craig MacEwan and Lewis Cameron gave the Oban side a 4-1 victory. The second round of the cup proved another nightmare as the game against Prestwick side Caledonia was also postponed on two successive Saturdays and when it eventually got

played Saints came back up the road with an impressive 7-0 win under their belts thanks to a hat-trick from Craig MacEwan, a double from Donald Campbell and goals from Ryan Campbell and PJ Sinclair. The third round of the Scottish Cup was next on the agenda, with Saints at home to Edinburgh side LBG Strollers. With Glencruitten in great condition there was no danger of a postponement and the game was played on the allocated date with the local side winning comfortably 7-1. On the scoresheet was Ross Maitland (2), Donald Campbell, Craig MacEwan, Keith Millar, PJ Sinclair and Ryan Campbell. The team travelled to Claggan Park to take on Highland League side Fort William in a friendly match on Wednesday 15 November and turned

FOOTBALL

in a fine performance to win 5-1. Netting for the Oban side were Donald Campbell, Alan Miller, PJ Sinclair, Craig MacEwan and Lewis Cameron. Away to Mount Vernon Juniors on November 19 in the West of Scotland Cup was the next fixture with Saints storming to a comfortable 10-2 victory with goals from Donald Campbell (2), Myles McAuley (2), Ryan Campbell, Ross Maitland, Alan Miller, Lewis Cameron and PJ Sinclair. Unfortunately this proved to be the last game played in 2011 as the 4th round Scottish Cup tie against Dynamo East Kilbride has been called off on three occasions, so hopefully the weather will relent and allow the game to go ahead at Glencruitten this Saturday.



Kenny Campbell makes a sprint home to the finish line after the gruelling 10k run. 21_c52sl0g02

Good turnout for a Slog in the Sand

AN IMPRESSIVE entry of 56 from across Argyll turned out to take part in the second Slog in the Sand at Westport Beach recently. All the more impressive as contestants had to brave the wind and rain in the 10k race across the undulating stretch of beach with a high tide to compete with too. Kenny Campbell was the first male home, pipping last year's winner Gary Turner followed by Craig Metcalf in third. The ladies winner was Donna Robertson who beat off competition from her twin sister Fiona,

who finished second and an impressive run by Rachel Edwards secured third. The Robertson twins, who hail from Campbeltown, are of course no strangers to securing top spots having both won Commonwealth bronze medals at Judo in the past. The event was organised by Campbeltown Running Club who were delighted with the turnout with runners travelling from Lochgilphead to compete.

ATHLETICS

Weather

Thursday Sunny intervals. Winds strong, north westerly. Temperatures 3°C to 7°C

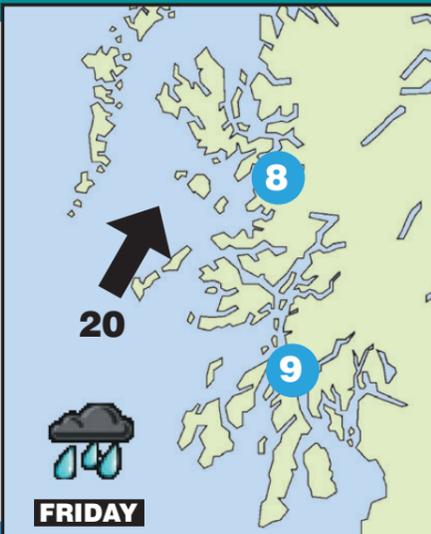
Friday Heavy rain. Winds strong, south easterly. Temperatures 3°C to 9°C.

Weekend Sunny intervals.

Outlook Winds strong, south westerly. Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 5, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	02.44 3.1 09.17 1.9 15.29 3.3 21.21 1.7	
Fri	03.37 3.3 10.18 1.8 16.13 3.5 22.10 1.5	
Sat	04.22 3.5 10.58 1.6 16.53 3.6 22.52 1.3	
Sun	05.02 3.7 11.35 1.4 17.32 3.8 23.30 1.1	
Mon	05.41 3.8 12.10 1.3 18.09 3.9 ** ** *	
Tues	00.07 0.9 06.16 3.9 12.47 1.1 18.41 3.9	
Wed	00.44 0.8 06.49 4.0 13.22 1.1 19.12 3.9	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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