

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Concluding this week

Review of the Year 2013



Firefighters called out to tackle Taynuilt Boxing Day blaze

A BOXING Day blaze threatened to ruin Christmas for one resident of Taynuilt after flames ripped through a bungalow.

Two appliances were called out from Oban fire station at 6.35pm after a 999 call to report a fire at the Ainds Bay home.

Crews used breathing apparatus when fighting the blaze in the property, with the fire extinguished by 8.25pm.

Firefighters were also seen cutting away sections of the building's roof and throwing out sections of smouldering insulation.

Cameras

As the building is timber-framed, the fire crews returned the following day with thermal imaging cameras to double check the integrity of the structure and rule out the possibility of hidden fire spread.

Nobody was injured as a result of the blaze.

A spokesman for Scottish Fire and Rescue said: 'It is terrible to have a fire at this time of year and thankfully nobody was hurt.'

'We would like to remind people that our free home fire safety visits, including fitting of a smoke detector, can be arranged by phoning us on 0800 0731 999 or by going online www.fire Scotland.gov.uk.'

Police appeal for witnesses to Christmas morning brawl

A CHRISTMAS morning brawl outside an Oban pub which resulted in a doorman being assaulted has sparked an appeal from police for witnesses.

Trouble broke out in Stevenson Street at around 2.50am, causing the doorman from a nearby pub trying to intervene to try and break things up. He was punched in the left eye.

Witnesses reported a number of assaults afterwards, with the last assault reported at around 3.10am.

Anyone with information about the incident or who was involved should contact Oban Police by phoning the non-emergency number, 101.



Thousands flock to Oban's Hogmanay street party

THOUSANDS of revellers packed into Oban's Station Square on Hogmanay to enjoy live entertainment while bringing in the bells at the town's free street party. Pictured on stage is The Works, which got the crowd jumping, along with ceilidh band Ceol an Aire and feet stomping headline act Face the West. Performers on the night also included the winners of the Opportunity Knocks competition, Amy Leigh Boyce and Oban High School's Traditional School of Music, who triumphed after a tough round of auditions held in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls earlier in the year. Oban Pipe Band helped get the night off to a flying start while the evening was rounded off with a colourful display of fireworks. Photo by Stephen Lawson.

Dangerous weapons in Argyll and Bute schools 'exceptionally rare'

CHILDREN aged 12 or younger have had blades taken away from them in Argyll and Bute schools, according to new figures.

Almost 800 dangerous weapons have been confiscated in schools across Scotland, including Argyll and

Bute, over the last three years. But a spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said incidents of this type were 'exceptionally rare' in the area's schools.

She added: 'The vast majority of Argyll and Bute pupils are well behaved

and act responsibly towards others in their schools.

'Incidences of pupils bringing items that could be regarded, depending on use, as weapons have been recorded in schools across Scotland.

'In Argyll and Bute it is exceptionally

rare that this has happened. Any incident would be treated seriously and appropriate action taken. The safety of our pupils and staff is a key priority.

'The council works with pupils and parents to ensure a safe working and learning environment in our schools.

'The behaviour of our pupils overall is something Argyll and Bute can be proud about.'

Alistair Davidson, Oban's acting chief inspector, said he 'is not aware' of any schools in the town having a problem of this nature.

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Cousins Nicole Clark, seven, Andrew and Isla Russell, nine and six, and three year old Megan Clark, front, were among the youngsters strutting their stuff at Oban's Family Hogmanay Party in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls. 16.10.13/01491

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Argyll residents receive New Year's honours

FOUR Argyll residents have been named in the New Year's Honours List.

Neil Richardson, Helensburgh-based deputy chief constable with Police Scotland, has been awarded an OBE for services to policing in Scotland.

Argyll man Iain Brown, an infrastructure support manager with KBR in Afghanistan, has been awarded an MBE for services to the armed forces and defence industry.

Sheena Edwards has picked up a BEM for services to the Girl Guides and to the community in Kilecraggan, where she lives.

Another recipient of a BEM is Anthony Davey, chairman of Cardross Community Council, for services to his community.

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Contributors sought for newsletter

'UP THE HILL', the newsletter for the Upper Achintore area of Fort William, is looking for local contributors. People with knowledge of and an interest in local wildlife, environmental issues, housing, sport, incoming residents, the primary school, teenagers' interests and local bus service are especially welcome. Contact johnstonk7@aol.com.

Police files

A CAR part was removed from a car parked in Wades Road, Kinlochleven sometime between 7.30pm on Christmas Eve and 2.30pm on Christmas Day.

CHAINSAWS were stolen from an insecure garage in Larachbeg, Morvern, sometime between October 2013 and Boxing Day.

A DINGHY temporarily moored on the opposite side of Loch Leven to Caolas Nan Con, on the Low Road side of the B863, was stolen between 1.30pm on Boxing Day and 11am on December 28.

Kyle of Lochalsh

SNH meeting

PEOPLE are being invited to an informal evening reception held by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) at The Kyle Hotel at Kyle of Lochalsh on January 15 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

SNH chairman Andrew Thin will host the event along with SNH board member Simon Pepper, George Hogg, SNH south Highland unit manager and other members of the area team.

Mr Thin said the evening would provide an opportunity for informal discussions on the work SNH does locally and the natural environment. He added: 'We certainly hope many people will be able to come along and we look forward to meeting them on the night.'

The event is free and light refreshments will be provided.

Newsdesks

01631 568000
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Children from Strath of Appin Primary School with their mobiles.

North Lorn pupils learn how to keep seas clean

MORE than 80 primary school pupils from across North Lorn got their hands dirty as they learned how to keep the seas clean. Strath of Appin, Lochnell, Ardchattan, Lismore and Achaleven primary schools attended the recent Marine Litter and Beach Education Day, funded by the Crown Estate and organised as part of the Argyll and Bute Beach Forum (ABBF).

Organisations including Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS), AllEnergy, Kilmartin House Museum and The GRAB Trust provided workshops on marine pollution, sea energy and hands-on workshops making mobiles and beach art. Environmental education workers provided activities on marine life and the problems caused by litter.

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) was a big hit, delivering a workshop on sea turtles which included a giant blow-up turtle. The next education day will take place in Lochgilphead on March 11 at Lochgilphead Community Centre. For more information contact newseller@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

Special watch commemorates Argyll regiment



The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental watch.

A SPECIAL limited edition watch has been produced to commemorate the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regiment.

Robin Devine, from Time Is Ticking Toronto, made the watch on behalf of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum Trust.

Robin, who created the watch with Robert Layden, chief executive of the trust, said: 'I have been making regiment watches for the Canadian Military for nearly two decades. Through our efforts, I've had thousands of watches donated to veterans in hospitals and nursing homes across Canada.'

'To make these campaigns is very special for me. It is my little way of helping to keep

history alive where people wear the watches every day and remember.

'I happened to be in Scotland last year for my daughter's graduation. It was then that I learned the Argylls and Black Watch would no longer be regiments. Even though the Argyll and Sutherland Highlander Regiment still survives in Canada as a vital and active reserve unit, I can't tell you how sad I was to see what was happening to this historic and vital piece of Scottish history in its very homeland.

I know how much the regiment means to the people of Scotland. Because of this I have just created the Argyll and Sutherland Highlander Regimental watch specifically for the Argyll and Sutherland

Museum Trust in Stirling.' The watches have Selkoe movements and a unique band in the Argyll and Sutherland Regimental tartan. To enable ex-servicemen to own one, the watch is being priced far below its £125 value at only £55.

Robin added: 'Supporters of the regiment will be able to wear this watch, with the striking tartan band, with pride as a lasting memory of a fine regiment and a true gift that you can pass down to your family so they will never ever forget The Thin Red Line.'

Orders for the watch are being taken through the Museum Shop at Stirling Castle, or by calling 01786 475165 or contacting Robin directly in Toronto at 925-5520 or at timeicking@sympatico.ca.

Highlands high-speed broadband a step closer

BT awards three firms a £26.9m contract to lay subsea cables

BT has awarded three firms a £26.9m contract for an ambitious subsea cabling project which will help deliver fast, fibre broadband to the Highlands and Islands.

Specialist vessels will lay 20 fibre optic submarine cables in a precise operation during May to October next year, providing a fibre broadband backbone which will eventually link communities from Kintyre to Orkney.

The massive engineering effort is part of the £146million investment project launched with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in March to bring high-speed fibre broadband to communities across the north of Scotland.

The project is by far the most ambitious and challenging rural broadband roll-out BT has undertaken anywhere in the UK. Along with the subsea cables, the company will build more than 800km of new land fibre backbone to complement its existing fibre network, and install hundreds more kilometres of fibre access cable to hundreds of new street cabinets.

The longest cable will run for nearly 79km under the Minch from Ullapool to Stormoway, with the Western Isles also benefiting from a second link stretching more than 57km between Caernan on South Uist, and Dumvegan on Skye.

Routes will also run from Kilmoran to Lochgilphead, Campbelltown to Shiskine, Jura to Port Askaig, Glenbarr to Port Ellen and Jura to Ormsary.

Mull will be connected via links between Oban and Craignure, with Tobermory and Kilaheon also to be linked.

Mallaig will link with Ardvasar, Dervaig with Scarinish, Lochbostdale with Eriskay and Eriskay with Northbay.

Brendan Dick, director, BT Scotland, said: 'Quite simply, it's the biggest subsea engineering project BT has undertaken in UK territorial waters and is the first ever with so many seabed crossings.'

The size of the task presents a massive challenge, not only because of the number of cables involved but also the fact that the work has to be completed within a single, six-month weather window. The pressure is on but we're confident that in just over a year's time, the Highlands and Islands will be set to benefit from its own network of underwater, fibre optic cables.'

The longest cable will run for nearly 79km under the Minch from Ullapool to Stormoway, with the Western Isles also benefiting from a second link stretching more than 57km between Caernan on South Uist, and Dumvegan on Skye.

BT is investing an additional £19.4million in the project, on top of its investment in its wider commercial roll-out for the region, taking the total project value to around £146million.

Chelmsford-based Global Marine Systems will conduct detailed marine route surveys and supply the cables; Orange Marine, which is based in France but works globally, has been contracted to lay around 400 kilometres of subsea cables, while Hampshire-based A2-Sea Solutions has been chosen to work onshore connecting the cables to BT's terrestrial network.

During the life of the project, BT and HIE will also be assessing new and emerging technology options through a £2.5million innovation fund, with a view to extending faster broadband to the most remote places in the Highlands and Islands.

Conservation charity's growing concern over Skye killer whales

Research shows group likely to be extinct soon

THE ONLY group of killer whales resident in the United Kingdom live near Skye - but are likely to be extinct soon, according to a conservation charity.

The news was revealed by the Mull-based Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) following research surveys conducted throughout 2013. HWDT's latest research is part of a long-term monitoring project of cetaceans using specialist listening equipment.

Kerry Froud, HWDT biodiversity officer, said: 'The impressive range of species of cetaceans and basking sharks that we have documented this year highlights the wealth of marine life in Scotland's west coast ocean environment - and the importance of ensuring the continued survival of these spectacular animals and maintaining the healthy seas that support them.'

A major encounter for HWDT - in August near the Isle of Skye - was a rare sighting of three members of a group of killer whales known as the West Coast Community.

This very small group consisting of just five males and four females is thought

to be the UK's only known resident group, but, as no calves have been seen within the group, it is likely to go extinct in our lifetime.

With growing concerns over the state of the UK's seas and threat to wildlife and ecosystems from human activity, HWDT is calling for volunteers to help continue the pioneering research in 2014.

With the help of 48 volunteers working alongside marine scientists, the charity carried out nine surveys on its research yacht Silurian during 2013. The surveys covered more than 3,000 nautical miles and spanned nearly all of the Hebrides and beyond - from Ballycastle, Northern Ireland in the south, west to the Outer Hebrides, and to Cape Wrath in the north.

HWDT improves knowledge and understanding of Scotland's whales, dolphins and porpoises and the Hebridean marine environment through education, research and working within local communities to ensure lasting conservation of species and habitats.

The charity is recruiting volunteers to take part in its 2014 surveys. Volunteers will live and work onboard Silurian for almost two weeks, working alongside marine scientists, collecting data during visual surveys, and conducting acoustic monitoring including with hydrophones.



HWDT's unique research vessel Silurian.

Dunbeg scientists reveal surprising results on strength of world's largest ocean current

SCIENTISTS in Dunbeg are surprised after discovering the strength of the world's largest ocean current has remained similar over tens of thousands of years, despite vast differences in the world's climate.

The current circumnavigates the Antarctic and when analysed it showed that its strength in comparatively recent times matched its strength during the last ice age, say researchers at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS).

This was unexpected because ocean circulation—a network of interconnected currents—is affected by climate, winds, the amount of heat entering the ocean, and the size of the sea ice field, some of which were considerably different between the

times studied. This new information has given researchers a better insight into how the current has responded to changes in its driving forces, and how it might change in the future.

Known as the Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC), this current connects the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. It flows from west to east between about 45° and 70° south, and is driven by westerly winds and exchanges of heat and freshwater at the ocean surface. With no landmasses to impede its flow, it circulates continuously around Antarctica, connecting back to itself.

UHI Professor Mike Meredith of SAMS Physics, Sea Ice and Technology said: 'The Antarctic Circumpolar Current is the biggest current system in the world, and

plays a huge role in controlling planetary-scale climate.

'These new results show that its strength during the last ice age was surprisingly similar to more recent times, with the exception of where more extensive sea ice blanketed the ocean.'

As well as helping us understand how much the winds that drive the current might have changed over thousands of years, this gives us new insight into how the current actually works and therefore how it might change in future.'

Because of its very strong flow and huge reach, the ACC plays a major role in moving heat, salt and climatically-important chemicals around the globe, so any changes in its flow could have planetary-scale implications.

The ACC is also an important site for ocean mixing, which is a key process in the conversion of dense water to light water and vice versa, and hence the vertical flow of the water.

This process is termed overturning circulation, and has implications for the drawdown of carbon from the atmosphere and consequently global climate.

SAMS says that, although the overall picture was of minimal change in the ACC, the researchers did find significant change in ACC flow in the region where sea ice has changed since the last ice age, hinting at changes in the overturning circulation over this time scale. But, as ever, the research team says there is more work needed to be done to verify and better understand this.

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Variety of topics at Oban Speakers Club

OBAN Speakers Club heard one member describing his favourite tipple when they met last Thursday.

Jim Fraser talked about Craiggellachie and the amber liquid produced in that area. Eamonn Arthur then talked on one of his hobbies 'The roaring stones' and finally Alec Clark spoke on a seasonal subject with the prediction 'We will have snow'.

These speakers and their critics were introduced by Bill Leech.

Chairman Frank Walton then asked his speakers to talk on subjects varying from Christmas shopping to Santa Claus and even asking one person to recall his childhood memories of Christmas.

His speakers were John Maclean, Martin Wilson, Archie McPhail, Roy Wood, Nick Maclean and Peter Mills. Willie Melville kept a note of the times and a comprehensive and fair general evaluation was given by Tom Clegg.

Members will now have a festive break and their next meeting will be in the Ambo Room, Church Centre, Glenclutrin Road on January 9 at 8pm.

Kilchrean homes get go-ahead

A PLAN to build 16 houses in Kilchrean has been given the go-ahead, despite an objection from the area's community council.

Miller Harris had applied to renew planning permission for the development, which had expired in April last year but had not changed.

The application sought to build the houses west of Nurses Houses, with a new vehicle access, 12 parking places and installation of a sewage treatment system.

It was accepted at December's meeting of Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee. No other statutory consultee raised any objections.

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Amy Underwood receives her award from Gordon Jenkins, chief executive of Construction Skills Certificate Scheme.

Top apprentice Amy builds on success

A PLANT operations apprentice from Dalnallyn, who is the only woman in her class, has been named Construction Specialist Apprentice of the Year.

Amy Underwood picked up her award at the recent Scottish Building Apprenticeship and Training Council (SBATC) Apprentice of the Year awards at the Scottish Parliament. Speaking at the awards ceremony, Amy said: 'I was really pleased just to be nominated for the award, but to have won

is absolutely amazing. Construction is commonly thought of as a male occupation. Winning this award proves women can succeed in the industry too.'

The 19-year-old is studying for an SVQ 2 in plant operations through the National Construction College while working for John Underwood Plant Hire, based in Dalnallyn. The Construction Specialist Apprentice award is a new category for 2013 and recognises the particular skills of construction

apprentices working in specialist occupations such as operating plant machinery. Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell said: 'I am absolutely delighted that Amy's talents have been recognised by this award.'

'Amy is a shining example of the talented and ambitious workforce the Scottish Government is working to deliver'. Last year Amy also won Plant Operator Apprentice of the Year at the National Construction College Scotland Awards.

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Scottish Water urged to clarify emergency plans after homes left without water for 24 hours

RESIDENTS in Kilchrean have urged Scottish Water to clarify its emergency response plans after households were left without water for nearly 24 hours.

Despite an abundance of rain in the weekend before Christmas, some homes in Kilchrean ran dry.

Many residents contacted Scottish Water to complain but were told by one operator that bottled water would only be delivered if the system was

down for 12 hours. After 15 hours, one resident took delivery of 12 crates of water.

One resident said: 'Scottish Water did not seem to appreciate that some residents are pensioners, others have small children, some are ill and there are also those who have bed and breakfast visitors.'

'Surely all residents should have been given a supply of drinking water'. The fault had occurred after leaves and debris from recent

storms blocked the intake to the Taynuilt/Kilchrean water treatment works.

Blockage
A spokesman for the company said: 'Although we were immediately on site to clear the intake, the blockage resulted in low amounts of water in the network and customers at higher points may have noticed an intermittent or no supply.'

'Most customers in the Taynuilt and Kilchrean area remained in supply. The customers in the

higher areas of Kilchrean were most affected. We introduced tankers of water into the network to keep water flowing to customers in higher areas and to clear air locks in the water network. We also delivered bottled water to all customers who requested it and we apologise to any customers we could not reach.'

Oban lifeboat proves its worth in extreme weather

OBAN lifeboat has been proving its worth in extreme weather conditions over the festive period.

With no ferries or helicopters available last Friday morning, the lifeboat was launched at 10.22am to bring a seriously ill elderly man from Craignure, Isle of Mull to hospital on the mainland at Oban.

A paramedic from the Oban ambulance depot accompanied the crew.

Wind
The lifeboat coxswain John Hill opted to steer a less-than-direct course for the mainland, against a south-westerly force six wind, making the passage a little less bumpy for the casualty.

On December 20 the lifeboat launched in a force seven wind to answer a Mayday call that two small open boats, with one person in each, were overdue at a fish farm in Loch Melfoil.

The lifeboat had to be recalled shortly after launch when the missing boats were found on the north side of the loch.

Hotel workers warned over thefts

HOTEL workers have been urged to be on their guard after a series of thefts from staff quarters in recent weeks.

The warning comes after police received two reports of thefts, with sizeable sums of cash going missing as a result.

The first theft is thought to have happened sometime between December 15-22, when more than £600 was stolen from staff quarters at the Dalnallyn Hotel.

Police were called to a second reported theft at Oban's Lancaster Hotel on December 23, when £200 was stolen from a staff room within the hotel.

Oban's chief inspector, Alistair Davidson, said: 'There's been a substantial amount of money taken from staff quarters.'

'There's been quite a few of these incidents being reported and we'd ask for hotel workers to be vigilant.'

'If you see anyone in or around staff quarters who is causing suspicion or just shouldn't be there, give us a call.'



Brave souls take dip in chilly river

Brave Killin souls ignored chilly conditions to take a Boxing Day Dip into the River Lochay - all in aid of the community-supported Falls of Dochart Nursing Home. A large turnout ignored the high winds to dip into the river organised by Anna Nicholson. This group of 'Scooby Doo' from the local Food Cafe in Tyndrum are, from left, Lizzie Watson, George Miller, Colin McGeorge, Ellen Cattnachan and Lester Haynes. Photograph by The Studio, Killin.

Majority of council invoices paid within 30 days of receipt

ARGYLL and Bute Council pays around 90 per cent of invoices sent to it within 30 days - but a minimum of £1.4million remains unpaid so far this year.

Figures obtained by *The Oban Times* show that, in the current financial year, the council has received 1,431 invoices for work or services to a value of more than £10,000.

Of those, 1,288 have been paid on time, leaving 143 unpaid within the 30 days. One was unpaid for 181 days as the supplier hadn't provided construction industry tax details.

Another invoice in that period, for a sum under £5,000, has gone unpaid for 234 days as an agreement was served on the supplier and the council is required to retain the payment until the matter is resolved.

In the 2012/13 financial year, at least £2.6million was not paid within the 30 day period to suppliers invoicing for work or services to the value of over £10,000, with that figure hitting a minimum of £3.5million in the 2011/12 financial year.

Other reasons given for delays in payments are the supplier owed the council more than it and the council and the supplier had gone into administration.

The longest period between the council receiving an invoice and making payment is 550 days, for work valued under £5,000. In this case, the company failed to provide tax details.

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Oban cinema handed green grant boost

OBAN Phoenix Cinema is set to go green after being handed a £50,000 boost.

New lighting, insulation and draught-proofing will be installed at the community-owned picture house after it was named one of the winners in the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund.

A total of £47,269 will see the cinema take on a new member of staff and the long-awaited regulator valves will be installed

on the radiators to ensure the auditorium is the right temperature for everyone.

Cinema manager Carol Devine said: 'Eleanor MacKinnon (cinema outreach officer) has done a lot of hard work in the application process and we're thrilled by the award.'

'The process was quite gruelling but we were hopeful. It was quite a big deal and there were a lot of people in it.'

'The award means we'll have to employ a new member of staff specifically to deal with implementing the requirements of the climate challenge award.'

Part of the award means the social enterprise will become a hub for helping people reduce their carbon footprint, acting as a prime example of how reducing your carbon footprint can not only help the environment, but drastically reduce your bills.

'The big thing for people will be the long-awaited installation of

valves on the radiators, meaning it won't just be hot or cold in the cinema.'

'We'll be doing lots of other things too to help reduce the carbon footprint of the cinema and, obviously, reduce our overheads.'

Support
Reopened in the summer of 2012 with a showing of *Brave*, the cinema has enjoyed terrific support from the community since a volunteer group got together to see the old Highland Theatre reopened.

A high-profile fundraising campaign saw several events in the community, including several bring and buy sales, bag packing and themed events - culminating first in the purchase, then in the refurbishment of the George Street premises.

Among the cinema's high profile backers were Skyfall star Judi Dench, Harry Potter's Hagrid, Robbie Coltrane, and Tilda Swinton of We Need to Talk About Kevin.

Portree parents welcome Gaelic school cash

PORTREE Gaelic parents' organisation Comann nam Pàrant Port Rìgh (CaPPRA) has welcomed last week's announcement of £3 million Scottish Government cash for a new standalone Gaelic primary school in the town.

The group has been running non-statutory Gaelic pre-school provision in Portree for two years in the hope that the school would be eventually built.

Highland Council included the £10 million project in its capital plan earlier this year following a six-year fight by Gaelic campaigners.

CnPPR chairwoman Annika Rawlings said: 'Indications are that Gaelic medium education has a very bright future in Portree. Numbers in pre-school are at an all-time high with demand currently outstripping the limits of the premises we use. We would like to thank everyone who has worked all towards this and we look forward to continuing to work with The Highland Council to see the school come to fruition by 2017, or earlier if possible.'

Work on the school is due to start in 2015/16.

Public gets chance to help plan town centre future

FORT WILLIAM is to host a series of public consultation events designed to help plan the future of its own town centre. Highland Council and the Scottish Government are each contributing £15,000 towards the initiative, which also includes Tain and Nairn.

The events, to be held over a two-week period in the near future, will bring together all interested parties to discuss the detail of town centre regeneration.

Those backing the council bid for government funding included community council and business groups in each town.

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Alan as he was last year...



And now, having lost five and a half stone in just 11 months. 15_01alanbrander1

Oban man beats diabetes after shedding five stone

AN OBAN man who cured himself of diabetes after shedding five stone within 11 months says doing so was 'pretty simple' - and he didn't hit the gym.

Alan Brander's habit of munching on chocolate and over-eating caused the lorry driver's weight to balloon to 19 stone by the time he was 46, making him both morbidly obese and causing him to develop type two diabetes.

But less than a year after joining Weight Watchers, Alan has seen his weight drop to 12 and a half stone - going from an XXL t-shirt size to medium.

He said: 'My weight would go yo-yo up and down but this time

last year my wife saw the advert in The Oban Times for Weight Watchers. She was doing my head in and said 'right, we're going there'.

'I walked in at 17st5lbs and met the co-ordinator, Susan Hoy. She put me on the right road and since then I've never looked back.'

Alan's health started deteriorating when his weight crept up to 19 stone, when he was diagnosed with type two diabetes.

Warnings from doctors that the condition may not just cost him his livelihood but his life didn't spur him into action to begin with - but years of nagging eventually got to the Mill Park resident, when his wife Shirley

persuaded him to join Weight Watchers.

While Alan, who turns 52 this month, still has to attend six monthly check ups to ensure the diabetes hasn't returned, he is delighted the condition - which can cause blindness, renal problems and lead to limb loss - has been cured.

Asked why the diagnosis wasn't the catalyst for change he said: 'I probably was in denial.'

'As the weight went on the diabetes was starting to creep up. I was tired and breathless. I didn't think about it at the time, but since the weight's away I've noticed a big difference.'

Alan has also noticed a difference with his general

fitness, without having been going to the gym. 'You really notice the lack of aches and pains, especially with things like walking or going up stairs.'

'So impressive' was Alan's turnaround in health that he was named the Oban branch of Weight Watchers most inspirational member.

He said: 'It's all about watching what you eat. My HGTV cab used to be a restaurant. I've replaced the chocolate with fruit though. My portion sizes are smaller too, but not so much as to leave me unsatisfied.'

'You get points which you can save up over the course of the week, so you can still have a Chinese or a few beers at the

end of the week if you want.' For Alan, the biggest challenge though was perhaps one of the smallest.

'The hardest part was walking through that door because you don't know what you're going into. It was definitely the best thing I've done and I'd recommend it to anyone.'

'There's a mix of guys and girls there and the craic is excellent.'

Susan said Alan's example is one that should provide an inspiration to others.

'He's done really well and he's just one of our members who has lost a lot of weight. Curing diabetes is a huge achievement and shows what can be done with our programme.'

Design a logo for new path signs

A FORT WILLIAM campaign group is looking for a keen artist to design a logo for a planned footpath.

Members of Upper Achintore Regeneration Group (UARG) hope work will begin on the path linking Ross Place to either Glen Nevis or onto the Cow Hill summit this year. Signposts to guide walkers, explaining the wildlife and views, will be included along the route and UARG is appealing to the public to help come up with an appropriate logo for the signs.

Possible themes suggested include the letters 'UA', the Ben, the view, peats or any inspired design. The winner will receive a £10 Morrisons voucher.

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Free classes to tackle stress control

AN ESTIMATED 2,000 people out of Lochaber's population of around 20,000 can expect to be identified as having a mental health problem each year.

Now, NHS Highland is to tackle part of the problem head-on by introducing a rolling series of stress control courses.

The free classes are an attempt to address what is seen as a significant issue in the area.

Members of NHS Highland's mental health team have completed their training to deliver the six-week course, which will take place in Kilmallic Community Hall in Corpach over six weeks from January 8, and then continue on a rolling basis. The classes will be held from 6pm to 7.30pm.

Team leader Jonathan Davies said: 'Evidence from elsewhere has convinced us that this course will make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of folk in Lochaber.'

'Every year we see about 300 to 400 people who have been referred to us. Some of these people have mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and many are coming through our door with depression and anxiety.'

'But we are also concerned about the huge numbers of people who choose, for whatever reason, not to seek help with stress.'

'In Glasgow, where the courses have been held, research has shown that most of the people who attend were not referred by the NHS, and a higher proportion

of men found it easy to attend than seen, say, a traditional one-to-one therapy session with a psychoanalyst.

People will be able to attend classes without being referred. Those who have already been referred to the community mental health team can also attend as part of their treatment.

Mr Davies said: 'It will be like an evening class, and won't involve group therapy - no one will be invited to talk about their particular situation in front of others. And there will be no writing involved in the class.'

'Instead, all people need to do is sit back and learn some great ways to control stress and how to handle common problems such as anxiety, low mood, loss of confidence, sleep issues and panic attacks.'

He added: 'Many people in Lochaber encounter stress and feel that they are under pressure, but they can be helped. We see this course as something that will help to prevent sadness and worry developing into more serious problems.'

For more information about stress control or to book a place on the class, call Jackie Cleghorn on 01397 709800, ext. 3505.

Alternatively, people can feel free to contact the course - no appointment necessary. People can bring someone along with them if they wish.

There are pamphlets for each session covering all the material of the course and a free relaxation CD will be given out.

More civil weddings than religious ceremonies

THE NUMBER of civil weddings in Lochaber outstripped the number of religious ceremonies in 2013, with three civil partnerships taking place.

According to statistics released by Clare Barton, senior registrar for Fort William and Bannockburn, there were 197 marriages in Lochaber, with 87 religious ceremonies and 110 civil weddings. Of the civil partnerships held, one was between two men and two were between female couples.

Most popular boys' first names were Harry, Alex, Logan and Riley with John, James and Alexander the favourite second names.

Top of the girls' hit parade were Eilidh and Ava with variations on Lily, Lilly and Lilia also proving popular. Top choices for girls' second names were Christina, Jane and Margaret.

Popular

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Margaret

Life After Stroke Awards

WEST COAST residents are being urged to nominate stroke survivors, carers and volunteers in the Stroke Association's 2014 Life After Stroke Awards.

Apprentice star Karen Brady is supporting the event after suffering a brain aneurysm in 2006, which could have led to a stroke.

She said: 'Stroke remains one of the greatest health challenges of our time. Too many people don't understand it or ever think it'll happen to them, yet stroke is scarier than you think. These awards are about celebrating stories of courage, commitment and determination.'

Nominations can be made at www.stroke.org.uk/less before the closing date February 29.

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Funding secured for estate buy-out

A 10-YEAR campaign to bring an Isle of Lewis estate under community ownership is nearing fruition after a funding package was secured for the buy-out.

The Paic Trust will receive £230,000 from the Scottish Land Fund to allow it to complete the purchase of the 26,775-acre Paic Estate.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Paul Wheelhouse unveiled the cash boost last week as Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) announced a £76,500 grant for the community takeover.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) (Western Isles Council) has also given financial support

towards the £500,000 purchase price under an amicable agreement with landowner Barry Lomas which should see the deal clinched shortly.

The buy-out move, overwhelmingly backed by people at a public meeting in November, looked a distant prospect until recently following years of wrangling in the courts between Mr Lomas and the trust, who had mounted a hostile bid to buy the land. Chairman of Paic Trust, Angus McDowall welcomed the latest cash injection, which will allow a full-time development manager to be employed.

He said: 'This substantial award from the Scottish Land

Fund, together with financial support obtained from CnES and HIE, will enable us to purchase the estate through an amicable transfer on the terms outlined and approved at the public meeting last month. I am most grateful to the Scottish Land Fund and our other funders for their very valuable assistance.

There now seems every prospect of concluding arrangements to transfer the estate to the community during the early months of 2014.'

Mr Wheelhouse said: 'The whole community around the Paic Estate has worked tirelessly over the past decade to bring their land into local

ownership and I am delighted to announce that the Scottish Land Fund will provide the final part of the funding package to allow the purchase to take place. This funding means the community truly is master of its own destiny. This announcement marks an important milestone in the 10-year journey for the Paic Estate residents, who can now look forward to a sustainable future in which their destiny is in their own hands and the decisions that affect them in terms of land management can be taken at a local level.'

Scottish Land Fund Committee chairman John Watt said: 'Over the last 10 years The Paic Trust

and the wider community have shown great resilience in pursuing their goal of community ownership, in what has been a complex process.'

'I am delighted the Scottish Land Fund is able to help the community look to a future that is stronger, resilient and more sustainable.'

Rachael McCormack, director of strengthening communities at HIE, said: 'We will continue our close working with the community as it implements its development plans to build a stronger and more resilient community. Securing ownership is a major first step to the Paic community realising its true potential.'

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Advertisement for BT Sport, featuring football matches like Liverpool v Everton and Tottenham v Man City. Text includes 'Must-see live matches Free with BT Broadband' and 'Get BT Sport for free with BT Broadband.'

Groups share ideas at 'Big Lunch'

VOLUNTARY Action Lochaber provided the venue for the 'Big Lunch' at its base in An Drochaid, Fort William.

The well-attended event included representatives from a wide range of community groups.

The Big Lunch initiative, which started off in Cornwall through the Eden Project in 2009, aims to bring people together on one day a year for companionship and to share ideas. Emily Watts, Big Lunch Scotland campaign manager, said: 'I'm delighted to be here in Lochaber to meet with and listen to the views of the community.'

For more information on Lochaber's third sector organisations, volunteering and training opportunities please contact Rachel or Margaret on 01397 704044 or e-mail adm@valochaber.org.



Representatives from Lochaber voluntary groups with Big Lunch Scotland campaign manager Emily Watts, front centre, at An Drochaid. 12_01011

Hundreds of residents could get help to make homes more energy efficient

HUNDREDS of Argyll and Bute residents could receive help to make their home more energy efficient.

The £600,000 project, funded by the Scottish Government, aims to help cut household energy use and reduce energy costs. Homeowners or tenants living in privately rented accommodation and who are in receipt of certain benefits may be eligible for free energy efficiency measures which include new boilers and loft and cavity wall insulation. It is estimated that the funding

could help over 300 homes in Argyll and Bute which are in need of insulation or new heating systems. David Smith, area development manager at Scottish Hydro, said: 'Many people are not aware that these schemes are available so it's vital that we get the message out loud and clear. Elderly homeowners and families on low incomes are amongst the groups that could receive these free energy efficiency measures which could help reduce both household energy use and heating bills. I urge everyone to check

the eligibility criteria as their home may benefit from this scheme.'

Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council's spokesman for strategic housing, added: 'Figures in the update of the local housing strategy show that extreme fuel poverty in Argyll and Bute is increasing and any initiative which helps to tackle this problem is warmly welcomed.'

To find out more about the scheme and check eligibility criteria visit www.hydro.co.uk/winterhero or call 0800 980 7537.

Fish farm support business to expand in Oban

A FISH farm support business has announced plans to expand after just a year of operation in Oban.

Hygiene Teknik makes containers for sea-lice treatments and demand is such that the firm is now exporting to Canada, as well as Norway and Chile.

The company is now advertising for Oban-based trainee technicians to join the company and help it expand.

Star inspired by Mary's Meals

Hollywood A-lister visits Liberia to see charity's work at first hand

MOVIE star Gerard Butler put Hollywood on hold to visit one of the world's poorest countries after being inspired by the work of the Dailymail-based charity Mary's Meals.

The A-list star visited Liberia for four days with the charity's founder Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow and met some of the 111,551 children receiving a daily meal from Mary's Meals every school day.

The actor has been a supporter of Mary's Meals since 2010 when he presented Mr MacFarlane-Barrow with a CNN Hero award and learned about its central vision to reach every child with a nutritious daily meal in their place of education. This helps to attract impoverished children to the classroom, where they can receive an education that could be their ladder out of poverty in the future.

Mr Butler pitched in to help volunteer cooks prepare and serve up Mary's Meals, took a class of orphans, played football with children, loaded a truck with sacks of rice provided by Mary's Meals, planted pepper seeds and pineapples at a school garden.

He said: 'Since 2010, I have come to know Mary's Meals but I had no idea of what that really meant until I came to see what

is possible with this organisation and the effect it can have on the lives of so many children.

'One of the things that I have been struck by during this visit is the strength of people's dignity and what I love about Mary's Meals is that it is all about retaining this. They don't operate a free system where people are just taking, instead it is all about respecting and promoting the lives of people, their culture, and what they are capable of.'

'Every meal given to these children is a piece of charity and a little piece of love, and goes into the hearts of the children, feeding them physically and nourishing them.

'That all passes down into the families and into the communities and gives them a sense of hope and that is the difference between a kid saying, "I want to survive tomorrow" and "I want to be a doctor".'

He added that he now plans to get more involved with the work of the charity.

Today Mary's Meals is reaching 822,142 impoverished children every school day.

Mr MacFarlane-Barrow said: 'I really wanted Gerry to come out to Liberia because of the huge need there. There are so many children out of school in Liberia—a little less than half attend school and there are major problems with malnutrition amongst the youngest children.'

'It has been an incredible few days with Gerry. He has a great gift with kids. It has been wonderful watching him go into classrooms where he has brought the children out of themselves. Immediately he forms this bond with them, and children respond to him.'



Gerard Butler hands out the schools meals to children in Liberia.



Gerard Butler and Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow help to unload sacks of rice from the charity's store.



Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow and Gerard Butler meet some Liberian children.

Council denies emergency list is two years out of date

CLAIMS that Argyll and Bute Council's emergency contacts list is nearly two years out of date have been dismissed by the council - despite a former employee receiving calls from schools.

Jo Smith was formerly the council's communications manager and, as such, a key contact for schools whenever bad weather or emergencies meant pupils couldn't attend. Twenty-two months ago she was suspended by the council and subsequently left the authority over false spying allegations, but she

still received calls from head teachers during last week's storms.

She had previously asked the authority to remove her name from the outdated contacts list in March. In an email to the authority, Ms Smith said: 'Please can you make sure I'm removed from your emergency contacts lists? I did ask you in March but received no reply. I've been called again by head teachers who have no power. If I continue to receive calls in connection with emergency incidents, then I will be issuing the

council with invoices for my time.' A council spokeswoman said: 'As part of our overall proactive approach to emergency planning, systems like our emergency contacts directory are checked and updated on a regular basis. Staff are given new documents and advised to discard and cease use of any previous directories.'

'While it is possible that some older versions are still in circulation, we will repeat our advice to employees about discarding these and using the latest directory provided to them.'



Park pupils boost Argyll Animal Aid

Park Primary School's P6 class collected cat and dog food for Argyll Animal Aid before their Christmas break, gathering quite a haul for the charity over the festive period.

Scottish Water's winter warning

SCOTTISH Water has reminded its customers to ensure homes and businesses are protected and prepared for the impending wintry weather.

While relatively warm now, it is thought a cold spell is approaching. Joanna Peebles, Scottish Water's regional community manager, said: 'Very often people think it won't happen to them, but there are few things more upsetting than coming home or into work to find everything ankle deep in freezing water and your carpets, furniture and equipment all ruined because of a burst pipe.'

Bid to attract more people to work for care companies

STRUGGLES to attract new people to work for care companies will see Argyll and Bute Council put extra effort into promoting the job.

Shawn Davidson, Oban, Lorn and Isles area manager for adult care, said the limited number of professional carers meant staff often moved between providers depending on who was offering the best employment package.

That meant some companies were supplying more carer hours than those deemed the council's first choice provider, leaving the authority with more headaches

than solutions. Mr Davidson said: 'There's ongoing problems with attracting people into the area, not just for internal jobs but external services too.'

'We are going to try and publicise this kind of work more - it is a major problem.' Councillor Elaine Robertson said: 'This problem is not exclusive to here, this is across the country.'

Measures were being considered to increase the provision of professional carers, with a further report to be brought to the Oban, Lorn and Isles Area Committee in February.

Newsdesks 01631 568000/01397 703003

JANUARY SALE

<p>£1.68 SAVE £2.39</p> <p>ELVIVE SHAMPOO & CONDITIONER 250ML RRP £4.07</p>	<p>£8.99 SAVE £5.00</p> <p>NIQUITIN MINI LOZENGES 60PK RRP £13.99</p>	<p>99p SAVE £1.60</p> <p>SURE MEN ANTIPERSPIRANT 150ML RRP £2.59</p>
<p>£1.99 SAVE 40%</p> <p>KLEENEX SUPER 3 RRP £2.39</p>	<p>£2.45 HALF PRICE</p> <p>DETTOL LAUNDRY CLEANSER 1.5L RRP £4.89</p>	<p>99p HALF PRICE</p> <p>AQUAFRESH PUMP 100ML RRP £1.99</p>

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SEIL

GENEROUS islanders on Seil have raised nearly £500 for the Friends of Oban Hospice through the annual Light Up A Life event.

Supporters of the Friends of Oban Hospice got together to promote the event during a social evening in a local house with mulled wine, punch and nibbles were served.

The Seil group contributes donations to the hospice services in the Oban area, with £485 handed over from the recent event.

Elizabeth Galloway, from Seil supporters group, said: 'Being together with fellow supporters and volunteers has been a heart-warming experience and we could sense the support of each other and the encouragement to carry on supporting the frail members of our community.'

Many villages used to hold an event for the Oban Hospice but this has dropped off in recent years and the Friends of the Oban Hospice is now encouraging communities to get involved again.

Provision of community services costs in the region of £40,000 per year while costs incurred in delivery of the day hospice run to approximately £25,000 per year. Donations from the people of Oban, Lorn and the Isles enable Oban Hospice to continue to provide these valuable services for patients.

APPIN

ALL THREE clans at Strath of Appin Primary School were 'souper' when it came to their latest challenge.

The children had to create their own pots of soup for the final clan challenge of the year. Clan Linnhe prepared winter minestrone soup, Clan Crean prepared tomato and carrot soup and Clan Linnch creamy carrot and coriander.

The children put to use the practical skills that Alex Needham from the Waterfront Restaurant had demonstrated a few weeks earlier. There was great teamwork exhibited within the clans and the children were very pleased with the end product.

Friends and family came along to try the soups at a recent soup lunch in the school and gave great feedback on the children's culinary efforts.

ARISAIG

THE SENIOR Citizens' Christmas Lunch, hosted by Arisaig WRI, was recently held at the village's hotel.

Forty-three members and guests enjoyed a wonderful meal, before entertainment was provided by Piper Wallace Dempster and Edward Lee on accordion.

Raffle winners: Tommy MacEachan, Judy Stewart, Morag MacDonald, Bridget Moyhinan, Donnie MacDonalid, Daphne Heaps, Winnie MacPherson, Felicity Blackburn, Mary Ann Gillies and June Cairns.



Banavie backpackers do their bit for charity

Banavie Primary School's P7s have been doing their bit for charity as they went bag packing to raise money for a nationwide appeal. The pupils raised £650 for the ITV 'Text Santa' fundraiser by helping customers in Morrison's, Fort William, a fortnight ago.



Elgol's modern take on Christmas story

Elgol Primary School's 18 pupils performed 'A Midwife Crisis' as their Nativity play in the school in aid of the Philippines Typhoon Appeal and school funds. The modern take on the Christmas story tells of a midwife who is very excited to hear that a king is about to be born in Bethlehem.



We sound braw: Members of the P6 class after the sing-a-long with Dr Freeman. Back left to right: Robbie Brown, Gareth Russell, Rhys MacIsaac and Sean Lawrie. Front left to right: Lucy Fraser, Kyle MacDonald, Archie Connolly and Connor Mackenzie.

Spotlight on guid Scots words

PUPILS of Caol Primary School have been learning guid Scots words from an expert in the field.

The children learnt words such as 'breesks', 'fash', 'drookit' and 'peelie-wallee' with the help of Dr Fred Freeman, a specialist in Scots language. And the afternoon took on a musical note as pupils learnt and sang the song 'O are ye sleepin Maggie' by Robert Tannahill, an 18th century Scottish poet and songwriter.

Dr Freeman has produced more than 20 traditional folk CDs including The Complete Songs of Robert Burns.



Pupils turn back the clock

ON ENTERING Kilchrenan Primary School recently, one would be forgiven for thinking that there had been a time warp.

The school was the venue for a Victorian Christmas Fayre, organised by pupils, staff and parents.

It was a wonderful evening with a great turnout of friends, residents, uncles, aunts and grannies who were greeted by parents dressed in all sorts of Victorian costumes.



Kilchrenan club party fun

The Kilchrenan Thursday Club held a children's Christmas party on December 14 when Santa arrived in the middle of the fun and games.



Some of Caol Primary School's P1s show off the surfing they learned with Trunk.

Imaginations run wild at Caol primary

PUPILS of Caol Primary School were taken on an imaginary pre-Christmas adventure as they were visited by an interactive performer and her magic suitcase.

The activity, Trunk, centres around performer Julia McGhee and her case full of various objects, designed to spark the imagination of young children.

P1s let their imaginations run wild as they ventured on a train journey to the beach, explored a fast flowing river and lay under the stars, running, jumping and surfing along the way.

Ms McGhee created Trunk, aimed at children aged between four and six, as part of Plan B dance and theatre group.

She told The Oban Times: 'Kids like to get dancing and moving they just want to run around at that age. They know I hope they're doing things a boy shouldn't do. Mum and dad are happy that I'm happy though and my brother comes to visit for his holidays.'

'I don't regret it. Even at the point when I was going for the big operation, I wasn't in any doubt about what I was doing.'

'I started writing the book for no other reason than to document what I went through. As I was going through it I realised it might be helpful to other people.'

'Good progress has been made on forming the path along open hillsides above the tree line between Allt na Crìche and Sron a Mhuic.'

'At the same time I wanted it to be something really open, to let people see what someone like me has to go through, to cope with this internal struggle.'

'I'm not a man who became a woman. I'm an ordinary woman with an extraordinary story. Hopefully people will take something from that.'

Becoming Julie is set to be published by Fledging Press in October.

Morvern Lines

EVERY now and again our peninsula is referred to on maps and documents as 'Morvern', without the second 'r' which is confusing to say the least.

Although there is now little interest locally in such matters, there was a time when some of the best Gaelic scholars in the country were lumps out of each other over it.

Some said it must be 'Morvern' and cited the writings of the Rev Norman Macleod and his son John, whose incumbencies in the parish lasted 107 years.

Both may have been 'native' Gaelic speakers (albeit Norman was a Skye immigrant) but as neither was consistent in the spelling of 'Finuair' or their own surname, they are unreliable.

'Morvern' (which in Gaelic orthography signifies 'Mor Bheinn' meaning big, or great mountain) may have found credence among newcomers to the parish and the pseudo-intellectual idolaters of Ossian, but it shows little relationship with the Gaelic forms 'Mharairne' or 'Mhorairne'.

Some place-name experts say this means the great division of land, others think it comes from 'a Mhuir-bhearna', the sea-loft and refers either to the valley running from the head of Loch Teacuis to Loch Alinne, or Loch Sunart which almost separates Morvern Ardnamurchan, Sunart and Ardgoue.

The oldest spelling I can find appears in a charter of 1390 and is the same as the present. Sir Lachlan Macleod of Duart, in his baronetcy title, bears the distinction of 'Duart and Morvern,' and 'Lord Morvern' is one of the titles borne by the Duke of Argyll.

These show the double 'r' and are in agreement with the Gaelic rendering. The Post Office, in the days when it cared about local issues, used 'Morvern' when it opened its first office in 1805.

MORVERN may not mean the land of big mountains but it is not to say the peninsula cannot boast of a few.

Beinn Iadain (1,854 ft) is probably its finest and did not deserve the description 'slazary' by the Sassenach gardener and writer, the late Christopher Lloyd of Great Dixter, who came to look at its unique alpine flora following its discovery some years previously by Bruce Campbell, the well known Ardnamurchan author and ornithologist.

A close second is Creach Bheinn which lies between Glen Tarbert and Loch Linnhe and has two summits. The main one rises 2,800 ft above the head of Glen Galmadale, Kingairloch. The lower, Maol Odhar (2,578 ft) is the wreck site of an American Air Force F-101 Voodoo jet fighter which crashed there on May 7, 1964 killing the pilot, Capt Morris Reed, aged 28, of Omaha, Nebraska.

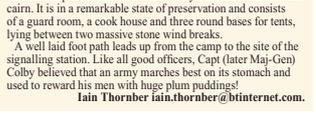
One of the most intensive peacetime searches for an aircraft in this country swung into action when the Voodoo mysteriously disappeared during a routine training exercise.

Although 22 USAF and RAF planes and several mountain rescue teams took part, it was not discovered until 10 days later. I well remember the overwhelming smell of aviation fuel when I visited the site the day after the plane was found.

Amongst the debris, which had been sifted through by a team of crash investigators from RAF Bentwaters, the Suffolk base from which the Voodoo operated, I found dozens of unexploded 20mm shells and a twisted and scarred 1925 Buffalo nickel (five cent piece) that must have been in the pilot's pocket.

Apparently this fighter-bomber had a maximum speed of 1,000 mph and was capable of carrying nuclear-tipped air-to-air missiles and a thermo-nuclear bomb.

Fortunately there was no bomb aboard, but judging by the amount of wreckage scattered over Maol Odhar and the surrounding corries, it must have been carrying some very high explosives when it struck.



A Voodoo jet fighter of the type that crashed on Creach Bheinn in 1964.

THE CRASH was not the first time that there had been a military presence on Creach Bheinn.

Over a century ago a detachment of the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners (later the Royal Engineers) under the command of Capt Frederick Colby, was stationed on the hill every summer for a number of years during the Ordnance Survey's first triangulation of Great Britain and Ireland.

Their camp is situated in a hollow 50 yards below the summit cairn. It is in a remarkable state of preservation and consists of a guard room, a cook house and three round bases for tents, lying between two massive stone wall breaks.

A well laid foot path leads up from the camp to the site of the signalling station. Like all good officers, Capt (later Maj-Gen) Colby believed that an army marches best on its stomach and used to reward his men with huge plum puddings.



The new path takes shape above Invermoriston.

MAGNIFICENT views north and south of Loch Ness are being opened up as work on new sections of Great Glen Way path continue above Invermoriston.

Good progress has been made on forming the path along open hillsides above the tree line between Allt na Crìche and Sron a Mhuic.

Meanwhile, work on a new link between the upper forest road and the spur road behind the Lochnacardoch Hotel at Fort Augustus continues but the way-marked forest trail remains open. Tree felling and extraction is currently underway at Dalcaigat, Invermoriston, and a diversion is in place to take walkers and cyclists around potentially hazardous

INVERMORISTON

operations. Everyone using the path is advised to observe signs, follow instructions and to stay away from machinery.

'We're doing quite a bit at Allt na Crìche, where a new section will take walkers up the hill through birch woodland adjacent to the burn.'

'The path above the tree line follows the contours of the line of the hillsides and is quite exposed but after a little bit of effort it will be much more rewarding.'

'An ordinary woman with an extraordinary story'



Coll's Julie Clarke, pictured, hopes her book Becoming Julie can be an inspiration to other transgender people, as well as provide insight to others.

PUT TO her that she might be singled out for being different or unusual, Coll's Julie Clarke - Jools to her friends - admits some people may take that view.

But after a lifelong struggle with her gender and finally going through surgery to become a woman, the Arinagour resident says she is simply 'an ordinary woman with an extraordinary story.'

Julie has just put the finishing touches to her first book, Becoming Julie, which details why she went from married firefighter to female ferry worker in the Hebrides - and the difficult journey she had to get there.

In telling her story, Julie not only hopes to provide an inspiration to people in similar circumstances to herself, but to give others an insight into gender identification struggles.

While hard to put together, Julie admits writing the book was cathartic.

She said: 'It was difficult to write. I had to revisit some really tough and dark times - some really horrible moments. But having completed it I feel so much better about some of

the issues. I maybe needed to air some truths to myself. 'For me, I knew when I was seven years old. I realised something wasn't right. My mind was telling me one thing when my body was telling me something else.'

'I spent years saying 'this isn't happening to me' to myself. While she doesn't wish to revisit her life as a man in great detail, she said the sense of denial she lived through saw her lead a stereotypically masculine life.

'I was married,' she said. 'I married for all the right reasons; at least it felt like that at the time. I didn't have any children though as that didn't feel right.'

At that time, Julie worked as a firefighter - something that could be considered a very macho profession.

'It was part of the denial I was living; of running away from the inevitable,' she said. 'Part of that was the fact my dad was in the fire service, it was me over-compensating.'

She added that until she made the decision to change, she was scared to come out, saying society's attitude towards transgender people made it almost impossible.

'One thing I'd say is in the 70s, 80s and 90s - although

particularly the 80s - being someone like me was scary. People are getting a bit better now though and are more accepting.'

Coll was key to supporting her through the process of changing and she says she couldn't have done it without the support of the island.

'I was 48 when I bit the bullet and accepted that's what I had to do. I was living on Coll then and it was here I first stepped out as Julie. Up until then, most of my life had been a process of elimination, eliminating the male parts of my life.'

'I had the surgery done on the NHS two years after I made the decision. It wasn't much fun.'

'Asked if island life was a key part of her decision, she said: 'I think it was but that's not why I came here. I already knew it was going to be easier than in the city, because I had friends here that would support me. I came here with a partner too.'

'Without blowing my own trumpet, I'm popular here and well-known. I work for Argyll and Bute council and for CalMac.'

'The people of Coll really accepted me and took me under their wing. They've really treated me as one of their own and they've even protected me in some ways. If someone

came onto the island and said something about me they would shoot them down.'

Her family are divided by her change though.

'Some are okay with it and some apathetic,' said Julie. 'In the early days the family wouldn't talk about it - but they knew I was doing things a boy shouldn't do. Mum and dad are happy that I'm happy though and my brother comes to visit for his holidays.'

'I don't regret it. Even at the point when I was going for the big operation, I wasn't in any doubt about what I was doing.'

'I started writing the book for no other reason than to document what I went through. As I was going through it I realised it might be helpful to other people.'

'Good progress has been made on forming the path along open hillsides above the tree line between Allt na Crìche and Sron a Mhuic.'

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Storm bound couple rescued from bothy

A COUPLE were picked up by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team after stormy weather became too much for them. The pair had been walking from Courour train station to Spean Bridge through wind and snow when they retreated to Lairig Leachach Bothy for shelter last Friday evening. The team was called out when family became worried that the couple had not come home. Rescuers soon found the pair in the bothy. Team leader John Stevenson said: 'They were very cold and very wet but not hurt, quite a common route they were walking but it got hit badly with snow and I think the weather got the better of them.' The rescue team's Land Rover had to be dug out of a snow drift during the search for the stranded couple. The incident was the first rescue the team had faced in over a month as stormy weather kept walkers and climbers out of the mountains. Mr Stevenson said: 'The last five or six weeks have been very quiet. We normally are at this time of year but we've been exceptionally quiet this year because of the weather.'

Elderly woman seriously injured after being hit by car

AN ELDERLY woman was left seriously injured after she was hit by a car in Oban. The pensioner, believed to be in the area on holiday, was walking near Cuiheanna with her daughter when the car, believed to be driven by a local man, struck her on Monday evening. The A82 was closed for two hours from around 4.30pm, causing tailbacks of traffic almost to Ballachulish Bridge and north past the Corran Ferry. When an ambulance attended the scene, the 85-year-old pedestrian was conscious and breathing. Her injuries were described by police as 'serious but not life threatening'. She was taken to Belford Hospital for further treatment. The driver was not hurt.

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Waverley Cameron Jrn presents Gladys and Jimmy with the framed photographs of the 13 people who are only here today thanks to their daring rescue.

West Highland honours double

AN ISLE of Skye hotelier, food writer and charity champion has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List. Lady Claire MacDonald received the medal for her services to the hospitality industry, and to charity in Scotland particularly through Marie Curie Cancer Care. Claire, 65, who along with husband Godfrey have owned the Kinloch Lodge on Sleat for 42 years, has written 18 cookery books, many extolling the virtues of local seasonal food. A passionate advocate of Scottish quality produce both at home and abroad, Claire regularly does cookery demonstrations for Quality Meat Scotland and Marie Curie Cancer Care. Claire told *The Oban Times*: 'Hopefully this will give me a vehicle to tell people about the wonderful food in Scotland and the wonderful hospitality industry we have here. It is the biggest single source of income and employment in Scotland and overall we should be very proud to be a part of it. It is food that gets people to a country, not history and heritage.' She added: 'It's not being immodest, but I consider it a very real honour and I can think of very many more people who are more worthy of receiving this award than I. I suppose what got it for me was the length of time I have been doing it, taking food from Scotland all over the world.'



Jessie Henderson: received a British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List. Lady Claire MacDonald: OBE for services to hospitality industry and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

On her charity work, Claire said she takes great pride in fundraising for Marie Curie Cancer Care through cookery demonstrations the length and breadth of Scotland. She said: 'When to the end of life, no matter what the illness, be it heart failure, motor neurone disease or cancer, normally it is the Marie Curie nurses who go out into the home to look after patients and their families. Both male and female nurses are saints - they are a special breed of people and it is a privilege to raise funds for them and help them, because they rely entirely on volunteers and charitable contributions. Long may they continue.' Meanwhile, the West Highlands scored another success when Jessie Henderson of Fort William was recognised with a BEM (British Empire Medal) for voluntary service and charity in Inverness-shire. Jessie, together with husband Bobby, have raised thousands of pounds for good causes in Lochaber by holding dances in Kilmallie Community Centre, where they are committee members. Both regularly give up hours of their time to help out at events. Committee chairman John MacDonald said the honour was well-deserved. He told *The Oban Times*: 'Jessie and her husband Bobby have been running charity old time dances in Kilmallie Hall for about 20 years. They travel all over Scotland, Ayrshire, Keith, Huntly and the Borders to support dances there, then people always respond by coming every August to support the dances here. They pick a different local charity each year and usually raise between £2,500 and £3,500 over one weekend - that's a lot of dough over the years.'

Elsewhere, an administrative officer with Stornoway Coastguard also received a BEM. Vivien MacKenzie was recognised with the honour for her services to fishing boat safety. Vivien, from Stornoway, said: 'I am honoured and delighted to receive this award in recognition of my role within the MCA team at Stornoway, supporting the under-15s metre fishing vessel safety inspection regime throughout Scotland and Northern Ireland.'

Pair reunited with man they saved 53 years ago

A SPEAN Bridge couple have been reunited with a man for the first time since they saved him from drowning in a dramatic sea rescue 53 years ago.

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

see Gladys and Jimmy. It was wonderful to see them looking so sprightly. Mike sent his best wishes.

Gladys and Jimmy Johnston plucked Waverley Cameron Jrn and four other men from the Forth of Lorn off Oban on August 20, 1960 after coming across them clinging to their tiny upturned boat just minutes from death. The life-saving feat earned Mr Cameron, now 69, and fellow survivor Michael Acheson went on separately to have children and grandchildren who would otherwise have never been born. And in an emotional reunion, Mr Cameron, an Edinburgh businessman, presented Gladys and Jimmy with a framed collection of photographs showing 13 members of his and Mr Acheson's families who are only here today because of the couple's heroic actions. The meeting was held in a hotel in Milnathort because Mr Cameron's business commitments prevented him from travelling to Spean Bridge. Gladys, 72, told *The Oban Times*: 'It was so exciting. We just hugged and hugged and we had tears in our eyes. He was

just so happy and said it was unbelievable to have met us after all these 53 years. 'It was the first time since they had him out of the water that day. 'There are 13 people who would not be here today were it not for our timely rescue. We are going to keep in touch and he would love us to meet with Michael Acheson some time.' Mr Cameron, who is 'winding down' to retirement after running a technology start-up business for some years, told *The Oban Times*: 'It was very nice to meet up with Gladys and Jimmy after such a long time. It was a great pleasure to see them again. I simply said thank you for saving my life - I don't know how you can thank somebody enough for that. 'Directly or indirectly there are 13 people - myself, Mike and our children and grandchildren - who owe their lives to him. 'I said I had stayed in touch with my friend Mike Acheson and I told him I was coming to

see Gladys and Jimmy, who now lives in France, are the last two surviving members of the five-strong party whose boat, the Babysam, overturned. 'Among the others were Mr Cameron's father, also Waverley, the then owner of *The Oban Times*. Gladys and Jimmy, along with friends Tommy and Edie Stevenson from Newcastle, were on Jimmy's converted lifeboat the Silver Wave when they saved the men and their dog, Sputnik. The incident caused a sensation in Oban and hundreds lined the quayside to watch rescuers and rescued arrive safely in port aboard the Silver Wave. Recalling the fateful day, Gladys said: 'We spotted them miles away and thought they were canoes, remarking how stupid it was for people to be out in such weather. 'When we got there were five men in the water and a dog underneath the boat. But we saved them all. Some people thought we should have got more recognition but we thought nothing of it.'

Local history society meets

LOCHABER Local History Society will have their first meeting of 2014 on Thursday. A third instalment of 'Land Ownership in Lochaber 1746-2012' will be presented by

Richard Sidgwick, an expert on Lochaber's estates. The meeting is open to the public and will be held at the Ben Nevis Hotel on Thursday January 9 at 8pm.

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Recycled paper made up 75.5% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 2014

Dunadd - a fascinating glimpse into history

A TINY sign bearing one word, on the side of the road between Oban and Lochgighhead shows the way to one of the west coast's most impressive historic sites. Dunadd, a landmark of Scotland's history, is revered in academic circles and spoken of in myth and mystery. It is referred to in the Annals of Ulster twice and believed to have been visited by Saint Columba. Yet, blink when you drive by it on the A816, and you might never know it was there. This is the place where kings of Dál Riata were crowned, the centre of an Iron and Dark Age industrial past, and place of fiscal life on the west coast for 16 centuries.



The view from the top of Dunadd over Moine Mhor towards the ocean. t1duns

Dunadd is an Iron Age fort rising above Moine Mhor in Kilmartin Glen. The prehistoric site is only a few miles from the sea at Loch Crinan, opening onto the Sound of Jura and perfectly placed to rule a kingdom of both land and sea. Archaeological discoveries at Dunadd show it was serving as a fort in the Iron-Age more 2,000 years ago. It became the centre of industry for the whole of the area making fine jewellery and pottery. It is the re-use of the site from the first millennia until the ninth century by a Déla Riata in the sixth to

ninth centuries for which it has become renowned. Evidence found on the site shows it was occupied from before the turn of the first millennium until the ninth century but retained fiscal importance until June 16, 1506 when commissioners appointed by James IV, including the earl and bishop of Argyll, met at Dunadd to collect rents and resolve feuds. The site is complex. Visitors are immediately drawn through a series of natural contours defined by the remnants of dry stone dykes. It was planned to create a feeling of awe and majesty. The summit, which is fairly flat and deceptively large, was once home to the rich and powerful. While the history of Dunadd is still relatively unknown, three archaeological digs have revealed some of the site's secrets. In 1905, Professor David Christison wrote the first detailed study on Dunadd. The scholar didn't visit the site during the excavation, saying: 'The great distance of the locality precluded superintendence, in our usual manner, by regular visits from Edinburgh.' Site work was carried out from May 1904 to January 1905. It unearthed one of the most important collections of finds from any early medieval site in Scotland. Its treasure included tools, weapons, ornate stones, imported pottery and motif-pieces and moulds. Collections from the site are in the care of the National Museum in Edinburgh. **Artefacts** The second major excavation of Dunadd was undertaken in 1929 under the direction of J.H. Crawford, secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Its purpose was to study rock stratification, in order to age the site and its artefacts and to clarify problems of dating left by Christison's excavation. The work on site was undertaken over 24 days with the excavation completed by two local men. Crawford's work revealed much more about the site and uncovered various metal, glass, stone, clay and pottery artefacts. The finds were not labelled and therefore little is known about where on the site they were found. Crawford's report concluded

many more artefacts might be recovered from Dunadd. Fifty years later, in 1980, it was decided that a limited excavation would take place on the site. Its purpose was to establish dating criteria and look for areas undisturbed by previous excavations. The excavations of the 1980s produced an outstanding range of artefacts, including an impressive array of high-status metalwork and weapons. Dunadd has produced the largest, most diverse range of imported European pottery of any site in the Celtic west. Dunadd was also a major production centre with, archaeologists tell us, one of the most significant metalworking workshops in Europe. While some call for better signs to mark the site, others say it's fine the way it is. Visitors are able to step back in time almost instantly as they enter the steep slope up into the fort. If there were more signs to attract people it might detract from the peacefulness of the archaeological site. For a centre of such historical importance, its relative peacefulness almost makes it unique. People can still put their foot in St Columba's (imagined) footprint, picnic by the imagined throne of the kings and take a look at the breathtaking view towards the Atlantic Ocean. In recent years there has been talk of another archaeological dig at the site, in order to understand the problems in dating artefacts on the site. But for now its secrets lie hidden beneath its craggy exterior. Dunadd is managed by Historic Scotland and is free to enter. Canmore (www.canmore.gov.uk) provides information on more than 300,000 places in Scotland, with over 200,000 digital images. You can also add your own imagery and knowledge to Canmore.



Santas dash round Tobermory for charity

Christmas came early in Tobermory this year as the town was inundated with Santas on December 22. The event was the second annual Santa Dash, with all proceeds going to Marie Curie Cancer Care. These colourful entrants were greeted with a medal, dram and mince pie at the end.

Photo by Sam Jones.

Community council hits out over Ardfern homes plan decision

COMMUNITY councillors in Ardfern have slammed Argyll and Bute Council for approving a plan which will see 10 houses built - including four private properties. Craignish Community Council (CCC) sent letters protesting the decision, made at a recent public hearing, to Sally Loudon, council chief executive, and Dick Walsh, council leader. CCC has criticised councillors who are members of the planning committee for ignoring the Craignish Community Plan (CCP), which states only affordable housing should be permitted on the site of the Glebe. Community councillors also hit out at only four of a possible 12 Argyll and Bute councillors attending the public hearing, describing the situation as 'unacceptable'. Mary Smyth,

chairwoman of CCC, said: 'It has taken just over a year for the CCP to be worth no more than a paper that it is written on. 'We feel very let down by Argyll and Bute Council and councillors who, on the one hand, encourage bottom up democratic involvement in planning issues, but who, at the first challenge, have chosen to ignore the community's clearly expressed wishes.' The planning application, submitted by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, is for six affordable homes and four plots of land to be sold for private housing. An Argyll and Bute Council spokesman said: 'It is not the case that the CCP has fallen at the first hurdle. 'The plan has been used to help determine a number of

significant planning applications in the area. The council said the application also received 120 letters of support and 60 letters of objection. Mid Argyll councillors Sandy Taylor and Donnie MacMillan explained they were unable to attend the meeting after openly supporting the CCC's plans to purchase the land back from the trustees. Mr Taylor said: 'In offering my clearly stated support for the community purchase proposal, I had compromised my ability to participate in the planning hearing. I sought advice to clarify my position. I could not be seen objectively by other interested parties as acting impartially and fairly, as I had clearly declared my support for the community buy-out which featured in the objectors' case.'



Early archaeologists take a short break during 24 intensive days of digging on the Dunadd site in the 1920s. Photograph courtesy of RCAHMS.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies

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How the competition works

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies competition is back for 2014. Enter your little bundle of joy today for your chance to win a whopping £500 worth of vouchers to spend at The Co-operative!

Plus, this year we will have £150 of vouchers for a second place winner and £100 vouchers for third place. The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest mutual business owned by nearly

eight million members. It is the UK's fifth largest food retailer operating across the country with almost 2,800 local, convenience and medium sized stores. Visit www.co-operative.coop.

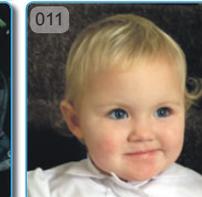
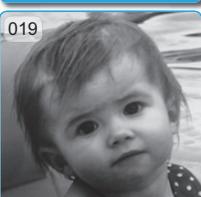
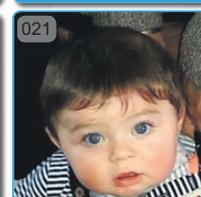
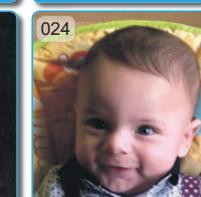
The competition will take place in weekly groups where readers are asked to vote for that week's bonniest baby. For example, if your child is in group one and gets the most votes out

of all the entries in that issue they will be entered into the grand finale. The baby who has the most votes from the grand finale, held early 2014, will be crowned the Bonniest Baby of 2014. It

doesn't matter which round your baby appears in, you can keep voting every week from the date your child appears until the voting deadline, which we will announce in a future issue.

We won't count the votes to decide who goes into the grand finale until the voting deadline has been reached. Full details online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

ENTER YOUR BABY TODAY! See page ?? or enter online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies

 Jack Lockhart 7 months Oban	 Mackenzie Hugh MacArthur 21 months Isle of Tiree	 Martha Teale 2 months Isle of Gigha	 Ruby-Grace Ronald 18 months Oban	 Mya MacDougall 3 months Oban	 Arianna Lea Hendry 4 months Inveraray
 Cameron Grant 10 months Oban	 Connor Campbell 23 months Corpach, Fort William	 Charley Kennedy 10 months Corpach, Fort William	 Matthew 20 months Clachan Seil	 Karys Clark 29 months Bunessan, Isle of Mull	 Donnie Monk 13 months Caol, Fort William
 Isla Macgregor Anderson 16 months North Cannel	 Heidi Poulton Ellis 7 months Tobermory, Isle of Mull	 Autumn Angel MacDougall 27 months Oban	 Catherine May Kangley 20 months Tobermory, Isle of Mull	 Oliver Dunn 6 months Oban	 Jack Cassells 5 months Oban
 Isabella Rose Flannigan 11 months Oban	 Chloe Bakos-Hodge 2 months Oban	 Logan Campbell 7 months Craignure, Isle of Mull	 Leia Anne Butler 6 months Oban	 Isla Jean McNulty 14 months Taynuilt	 Izyan Khan 8 months Oban

Vote for Group One's finalist!

How to vote

Readers can vote for their favourite baby by text or by post, using the coupon provided on this page. You can vote for as many babies as many times as you like until we announce the closing date to register your votes. Just make sure you quote the number stated on the child's photograph when voting.

By text:

To vote by text, text the word **BABY** followed by a space then the three digit number stated on the top left hand side of the child's photograph to **88010**.

Text messages cost **£1** plus one message at standard network rate. The voting deadline will be announced in a future issue.

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Fergie's Folk with Fergie MacDonald

IF YOU find television boring on occasions switch to BBC 504 and look for a show called 'The House of Lords'.

I totally disagree with an article I read recently in a national newspaper calling for the government to axe what was described as legalised fraud, and save the country millions. A single visit by a member of the venerable institution can amount to £1,000 plus expenses.

Please don't axe this show. The entertainment value is streets ahead of 'Mr Bean', 'The Two Ronnies', 'Porridge and even Norman Maclean in his prime.

'Noble Lords', as they call themselves, debate serious problems in relation to the nation and its people.

With all due respect to our senior citizens including myself, I reckon that most of these performers have lost the plot, age finally having caught up with them.

Dotted around this historic building and usually stretched out on luxurious leather crimson benches you can spot them as if waiting for 'the call' in their twilight years.

The other week was a classic. A top variety performance. The noble lord who was top of the bill got his lines totally mixed up.

I can imagine him in his stately mansion sitting at his desk in front of a roaring log fire sporting plus-four tweeds and slippers and peering through a monocle, preparing his speech and of course adjusting his expenses claim form. All on this sheets of A4 carefully numbered.

However, during his performance in the House of Lords his speech became a complete nonsense. He got his A4 sheets completely mixed up.

Yet, in the true showbiz tradition 'the show must go on' and it will be alright on the night' he acted like a real pro with off-the-cuff gags and one-liners.

He even referred to a test match between England and the West Indies where the fast bowler ran into the batsman and knocked him out. I was bursting my sides laughing.

Deviating away from the debate and items on the agenda didn't matter a toss to his ardent fans - all five of them.

One noble lord was totally 'out of the game' as they say. Slumped in the seat, head back, mouth wide open, shirt collar and tie unfastened, and sound asleep. It was a ghastly death-like sight. It looked to me as if he had passed away.

I spotted a baroness and a noble lord in the furthest away luxurious back bench. They were in a little world of their own like two young lovers in the back row of the cinema.

They seemed to be scribbling little notes to each other and killing themselves laughing and not listening to one word the star performer was saying.

I can only imagine and suspect that this could be an ongoing illicit affair like the ones we used to read about in aristocratic social circles.

Top billing must surely go to the noble lord who sat throughout the show scratching his bald head and looking up to the heavens for a flash of inspiration to complete his crossword.

When the final curtain came down to end the show, cool as you like, he folded up his book of enigmas and put into his briefcase which seemed to be bulging with goodness knows what - probably top shelf literature and expense claim forms.

Eventually every good thing comes to an end as the saying goes. Sitting at a desk in the middle of the floor, the master of ceremonies, dressed in black and wearing this ridiculous curly white wig, brought this hilarious debating farce to a close.

His basic duty in the house is to enforce law and order. Nip potential riot outbreaks in the bud. He will no doubt double up as referee and bouncer. To be perfectly honest, these frail old souls could hardly stand up - far less participate in a brawl.

Thankfully the end came quickly. Everybody trooped - or rather staggered out of the auditorium led by this guy twirling a mace.

Our own star, Angus MacColl, Pipe Major of Oban Pipe Band should note this guy's telephone number in case the band drum major has to pull out at short notice.

So there you have it. Rather than talking of giving this show the axe, we should up the ante. Review the wage structure of the noble lords to the standard of stars like Ronaldo, Messi and Maradona.

As far as I am concerned, roll on the next episode - or even repeats would do.

LOCHABER-based The A82 Partnership, the group pressing for upgrades to the West Highlands' main route between Glasgow and Inverness, is looking forward to their campaign work bearing fruit in 2014.

The new section of road at Pulpit Rock on Loch Lomond-side and the Crianich bypass are both due to open by next summer, while current planning suggest works will start at Glen Gloy, north of Spean Bridge, by mid-2014.

Land acquisition and design are 'progressing' at the bottlenecks where the A82 there has been down to a single lane for over a year after floods undermined the carriageway.

During 2013 the group, after consulting across the West Highlands, decided to focus their efforts on upgrading the road between Tarbet and Inverarnan and Onich and Fort William.

More success came when the Fort William-Cool-A82 Link Road was included in Highland Council's capital programme.

A82 Partnership chairman, Councillor Brian Murphy, said:



Fort William's Judy Clark, left, with Beth, who is modelling a bespoke dress made from 1,200 recycled coffee capsules and woven cardboard. 652, judy03

Fort designer on track for more success

A FORT William fashion designer look set to weave more magic in 2014 as she plans her first independent fashion show.

Judy Clark will showcase her latest creations at her in Edinburgh on January 23 to add another triumph to add to her long list of achievements.

Judy, 29, is keeping the event under wraps for the moment and declined to divulge further details to The Oban Times.

Locally sourced fabrics such as Harris Tweed and MYB Lace are common features in Judy's edgy yet classic dresses and jackets - but she insists growing up in the West Highlands is not the only inspiration behind the designs.

She said: 'The biggest designers in the world use Scottish material, they're so popular and I'm just lucky to have them on my doorstep. We've got the cream of the crop in fabrics.'

'I have Scottish roots which influences me to an extent but it's normally a collection of ideas from cultures and tribes around the world, combined with historical influences.'

Judy can fashion a dress from

anything - one of her latest creations was made of recycled coffee capsules to celebrate the opening of Nespresso's first Scottish boutique store in Edinburgh last month.

'I enjoy working with new and different materials, so when I was approached by Nespresso to create something to mark its first Scottish Boutique I jumped at the chance. I was sticking things together and making things out of recycled objects before I learned how to sew so that was almost like going back to the beginning.'

Judy won Womenswear Designer of the Year at the Scottish Style Awards last month and followed that up with a visit from Italian Vogue. And it wasn't enough, she has just designed a new range of clothing for the staff at Islay whisky distillery Ardbeg.

Judy, now living in Edinburgh, prides herself on her use of Scottish fabrics and the uniforms are no exception as she used bespoke Ardbeg tweed woven at Islay Woolen Mill for the design.

She said: 'Creating a new line with Ardbeg has been wonder-

ful as the inspiration from the whisky and location was endless. From design to the woven cloth, everything was produced in Scotland which really reflects Ardbeg's almost 200-year heritage on Islay.'

After a hectic year Judy, the only designer still living in Scotland, was back in Fort William in time for Christmas. She said: 'I like coming home to chill out. I love walking up the glens, it's nice to get away from the city.'

Judy graduated from Heriot Watt University in Galashiels in 2006 and has worked with Alexander McQueen but has gone from strength to strength since opening her own Edinburgh-based studio.

And looking to next year Judy has plenty in the pipeline, including launching her first ready to wear collection in February. 'Green Close' features the work of just 10 designers from across the UK - and Judy hopes it will encourage more international stockists to her clothes. Pieces from Judy's collection have already been showcased in Japan, Russia, New York and Chicago.

A82 road group looks forward to seeing campaign bear fruit

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More success came when the Fort William-Cool-A82 Link Road was included in Highland Council's capital programme.

A82 Partnership chairman, Councillor Brian Murphy, said:



The Rotary Club of Lochaber has raised in impressive £3,927 packing bags for shoppers at Morrisons in Fort William. Above, Rotarians David Thomson, left, and David Robertson were among with the club members involved. The club would like to thank the people of Fort William and surrounding area for their support and generosity. 20, 2013ary01

Post office closed for move

BALLACHULISH Post Office will be closed for three days this month as it transfers from the Co-operative in Loanferm to the new Co-op store beside the tourist information centre.

The existing branch will close at 1.30pm on January 27 with the new branch opening on January 30.

Post Office field change advisor David Duff said the new modern Post Office would meet the needs of the local community and secure services for the future.

Ladies' supper

THE LOCHABER Rural Education Trust will kick off its 2014 season with a ladies' Burns Supper at An Clachan, Torlundy, on January 27.

A Holiday Club will run in February and the Seed to Supper project will start in March. Bookings are now being taken by linda@bosslochaber.co.uk.

Stagecoach talk

STEVE Walker, managing director of Highland Stagecoach, will give a presentation to Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council at its monthly meeting in Spean Bridge Primary School next Tuesday.



Kinlochleven bright sparks: Back row, left to right, Dani Taylor, Nicci Federici, Emma McFartridge, Patrick MacLean and James Viray. Front, Nicole Farrell, Tyler Murphy and Ashleigh Carson.

Kinlochleven pupils just the business

AN S3 team of budding entrepreneurs from Kinlochleven High School has won a coveted place in the Scotland Real Business Challenge final at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh on February 4.

The eight-strong outfit won through after formulating a healthy drink and saying how it could be marketed to the consumer through a social enterprise business.

They proposed launching a range of fruit 'slushies' to be sold through milk bars and soda fountains in disused cafe premises, sponsored by local authorities and competition backers Coca Cola. The healthy drinks outlet would cater for young adults and would provide a year's work experience for four or five people, together with two full-time staff.

At the final, Kinlochleven will work alongside Coca-Cola business mentors on a live project and have the chance of winning exciting prizes.

Business studies class teacher Michael Farman said: 'Once the idea had taken hold the pupils were really motivated to plan how the operation could work, and investigate the viability of the idea through market research questions to their peers.'

Fort population growth falls behind Inverness

FORT William, the biggest town in the Highlands, is falling behind the City of Inverness in terms of population growth.

Highland Council report, created from Scotland's Census results, reveal that the number of people living in Fort William increased by 4.5 per cent from 9,980 to 10,437 between 2001 to 2011.

However, Inverness increased by 21.3 per cent in the same period from 47,160 to 57,232, largely due, according to the report, to a housing boom in the city.

Figures show 4,430 new homes were built in Inverness in the decade - compared with just 273 in Fort

William. The report states: 'Local population growth is strongly linked to the building of new homes. High levels of population growth have occurred in areas where there has been significant house building.'

The census report also highlights a major increase in those reaching retirement age in the Highlands.

Findings show that there has been a 'peak' in the age 56 to 68 age group, who will reach pensionable age in the next few years. This will eventually result in an increase in elderly care needs and costs.

The Highland Council leader, Councillor Drew Hendry said: 'We are aware that a large section

New year Citylink bus fare freeze cheer

BUS COMMUTERS using Scottish Citylink services to and from Fort William and Skye to the Central ComfortDeGlo - highlighted the need to help remote communities such as those in the West Highlands.

Elizabeth Esnouf, managing director of Stagecoach's UK coach division said: 'We are pleased to be able to freeze prices on our

West Highland services to Skye and Fort William as we understand the challenges that travel in rural communities can bring.'

Lochaber Transport Forum chairman Brian Murphy said: 'Times are very difficult for a lot of people, especially in rural areas. Transport costs are so important for folk in this part of the world so any move to try to hold down fares at the present level has to be welcome.'

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Mildest Lochaber December for 11 years

LOCHABER has experienced the mildest December for years, according to a local amateur meteorologist.

Andrew Bootman has been recording the weather from Achabonnie, near Spean Bridge, since 2003 and found this December to be the warmest so far with the average temperature almost double that of last year. The mercury ended over the month at a balmy 6.2°C, compared with 3.3°C in December 2012. The mild weather, Mr Bootman found, was accompanied by a remarkable 490mm (19.25 inches) of rainfall - a massive increase on the 238.3mm (9.38 inches) logged during the same month last year.

That figure was another record breaker for his Achabonnie station.

Mr Bootman said: 'This has been the mildest winter in the 11 years that I've been keeping a record. We've also only had one night of air frost and we normally have quite a few. December was also the wettest month since I have started recording in January 2003.'

The unusually warm conditions meant that there wasn't enough snow for skiing at Nisps in the Central Highlands but managing director Marion Austin said it was high winds that caused more problems than the temperature.

She told The Oban Times: 'Most people don't want to ski until Christmas or after so not having much snow wasn't a big problem but there was a lot of damage done to our ski lifts during the storm in early December and we haven't been able to fix them all because of the stormy weather.'

Glencoe Mountain Resort has also suffered due to the exceptionally windy conditions. Resort manager Angela Dingwall said: 'We've got loads of snow but we can't get it because of the wind.'

However, calmer conditions on Sunday saw skiers flock to Lochaber's ski slopes.

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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

CASTING a glance back over the last 12 months - as it is only natural to do at this time of year - provides many a surprise.

Looking at our front pages, a few events obviously stand out. There were dramas, not least with the weather. Three large wildfires, in Connel, Bonawe and Corpach in the spring came as weeks without rain left the ground parched.

Things went from extremely dry to positively soggy in the summer, with flash floods chaos in Lorn in August before storms battered the west coast throughout December - with a strong wind blowing in to keep us on our toes.

The Oban Times wouldn't be complete too without reporting on a few controversies - and 2013 certainly raised a few eyebrows.

Scriptwriters for the Carry On films would have been rubbing their hands in glee at the goings on at Kilmorey, with Argyll and Bute councillors spending more time fighting with one another than running the local authority.

Utility prices have been a concern too, with electricity companies in particular criticised for describing bills which see some pay hundreds of pounds a month to heat their home as 'normal'.

But what stands out when you look across 2013's front pages is the triumphs. Argyll, Lochaber and the Isles have a lot to be proud of. Our men, women and children constantly go that extra mile not just for their community, but for causes close to their heart - in doing so providing inspiration to others.

Among the highlights are Islay and Lochaber's successes Royal National Mod and Oban's fireworks display returning to form with a spectacular show at Mossfield. Dalriada's Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow was even congratulated for his work with Mary's Meals by the Pope.

So as we look ahead to what 2014 has in store, we can surely do so with a sense of pride from our achievements over the past 12 months.

And while we spare a thought for those who have endured difficult times in 2013, we do so with the hope 2014 will be better for all.

GLASGOW LETTER

Celtic Connections 2014

WITH the opening concert taking place on Thursday January 16, and long since sold out, this column will provide as much information as possible in the coming weeks but for this week I would wish to highlight a couple of events of particular interest to the Gaels and especially those with close connections to the city of Glasgow.

Last week I mentioned the concert taking place in the City Halls on Friday January 31 which will explore the historical role of the Gaels in Glasgow and the part played by the River Clyde as a gateway to the Commonwealth in what will, of course, be the year of the Games in the city.

Those of us brought up in the city, and now of a certain age, can look back to the days when, in the districts either side of the river, Gaelic was the first language of many residents and this was added to by the number of Highlanders travelling to and from the city in their search for work as crew members in the extremely busy maritime industry.

It is therefore fitting that Celtic Connections has, in collaboration with the territorial associations in the city, chosen to acknowledge this valuable contribution to the city of Glasgow. The stellar assembly of Gaelic vocal talent will include Cathy Ann MacPhee, James Graham, Gillebride MacMillan, Robert Robertson and Ceilin Smith together with the junior and senior Gaelic choirs from the city.

The show will be under the direction of Brian MacPhee and will feature top accordionists John Carnichael, Fergie MacDonald and Charlie Kirkpatrick with, as one would expect in a Highland ceilidh, surprise guests.

This concert, a visual and musical journey, will visit Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa, all locations reached by the Gaels from their starting point on the River Clyde.

Earlier in the month, on Friday January 17, Cool's Craic, in partnership with Gaels n' Cheile, will celebrate its tenth anniversary in the CCA on Sauchiehall Street by continuing to emphasise the strong links with Irish Gaelic.

Making their debut will be the 'Urban Teachers', namely Kathleen MacInnes and Sinead MacIntyre, and the programme will also feature ex-Bumblebees harpist Lorraine Kelly, Glasgow-based Donegal descendants the Friel Sisters, launching their debut album, and accordionist Paddy Callaghan, last year's popular winner of the BBC Scotland Young Musician of the Year.

Further information on both of these events can be found at www.celticconnections.com.

Drama invitation PLAYWRIGHTS' Studio Scotland is presenting Urjar, a new Gaelic play laboratory, in the Club Room at CCA, 350 Sauchiehall Street, at 7.30pm on Thursday January 16.

Lead by director, writer and actor Iain MacRae, artists will work together to develop and rehearse two new scripts and then devise a new one on the night.

These will be shared with the audience in a unique exploration of cultural expression and the evening is open to Gaelic and non Gaelic speakers.

The writers will be Martin MacIntyre, Robert MacNicholl and Gerda Stevenson, the performers Carina MacLeod, Marri Morrison, Davey Walker and Ruairidh MacIver and accompanying music will be played by Mairead Green.

This will be followed by post show discussion to explore the possibilities for continuing Gaelic drama and how its future development might be supported.

If you would like to attend please contact emma@playwrightsstudio.co.uk by 5pm on Monday January 13.

Diary dates Friday January 10: Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 7.30pm. Saturday January 11: Glasgow Skye Association Family Ceilidh, Crawford Hall, Beith Street, 7.30pm.

Pub scene ERISKAY Lilt will be playing in the Park Bar on both Friday and Saturday evenings with Nicky McMichan there on Sunday while in the Islay Inn it will be Crooked Reel on Friday and Parting Glass on Saturday.

Neil Murray, Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.

YOUR LETTERS

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 200 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.

PRESS POLICY

WE AT The Oban Times do our utmost to make sure that all our reports are fair, accurate and balanced, but we accept that, on occasion, mistakes can occur in the hectic process of producing the biggest local newspaper in the West Highlands.

It is the policy of The Oban Times Group to correct any errors in print. If you find an error of fact on our pages please write to The Editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB giving your day-time telephone number where possible. This statement of policy will appear on this page every week along with any corrections or clarifications.

The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct.

The views expressed in The Oban Times are not necessarily those of this newspaper.



Oban concert party - late 1950s

This week's flashback photograph features members of a concert party in Oban, possibly at one of the town's hospitals, in the late 1950s. It was submitted by Colin Armstrong of Coventry, included in the photograph are, back row, second left: William John Armstrong senior, fiddle player, who is Colin's dad. The two young lads in the middle are William John Armstrong junior, vocals/guitar, and Colin Armstrong, vocals, guitar, ukelele. Also in the photograph is Colin Campbell, accordion, and Callum Skarris, fiddle. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Royal Hotel, Oban, porters 1971-1994

Mrs Ruth Grant of Tain, Ross-shire, submitted these photographs which feature some of the porters Mrs Grant and her late husband employed when they managed Oban's Royal Hotel from 1971 to 1994. The boys worked after school and in the holidays. Mrs Grant said: 'We were very proud of them. Many of them will be married and have children now so I thought it might be nice for them to see themselves in your paper.'



Night porters Maurice Levy and Tommy Askev.



Aldo Lopez and unknown.



Brian, Bugsy and Malcolm.



Terrence, Socks and unknown.

Letters to the editor

PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB email: editor@obantimes.co.uk

www.obantimes.co.uk

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Agreement over barrier

Sir, I write in reference to the letter 'Ridiculous comparison' published in The Oban Times, December 26 2013. I agree with your correspondent Joan Le Morven that it is 'ridiculous' to compare the barrier erected in Oban with the barrier erected by Israel.

The Oban barrier is erected on land owned by those who erected it, whilst the Israeli barrier, 15 metres high, is erected by Israel on land plundered from the people of Palestine in contravention of international law and in defiance of world wide criticism.

The Oban barrier is an inconvenience to some, aimed at controlling the parking of motor cars.

The Israeli barrier is by any definition a cruel and illegal example of a racist apartheid policy aimed at cleansing the occupied West Bank and Gaza of its indigenous people.

Yes, it's ridiculous to compare the two. Liam Griffin (senior), An Tobar, Leraghs.

Obstacle little more than an inconvenience

Sir, As Joan Le Morven stated, it is 'ridiculous' to compare the barrier erected adjacent to Oban train station with the barrier erected by Israel.

The Oban barrier aims to control the parking of cars. Its existence may threaten a few local businesses, which is deplorable,

but little more than an inconvenience for most others. Also, it stands on the owner's land.

In contrast, the Israeli barrier is actually a massive concrete wall 15m - nearly 50ft - high, most of it erected on land Israel has stolen from the Palestinian people in breach of international law and in defiance of world wide criticism.

The wall in Palestine is the monstrous and illegal manifestation of a racist apartheid policy aimed at clearing the indigenous Palestinian population from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza.

It is indeed ridiculous to compare the Oban barrier with the Israeli-built apartheid wall on Palestinian territory. Margaret Powell-Joss, Oban Member of Oban Concern for Palestine.

Grateful thanks to Oban hospital

Sir, I recently spent time in Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, being treated for pneumonia.

About 10 years ago, the same hospital treated and cured me of severe blood poisoning.

With so many NHS hospitals attracting negative press for failing to provide decent standards of patient care, I wish to commend every member of staff on Ward B for their medical expertise, patience, courtesy, kindness and good humour.

To be treated with the appropriate

medication is vitally important, but to share with other patients a happy, respectful atmosphere in which to recover is a super special bonus.

What's more, the food is delicious, especially the rice pudding!

I am truly grateful to be home again and well on the road to recovery.

Ann Louise Carter.

Proof cycle paths are unsafe

Sir, Since the construction of the 'cycle paths' near Oban, a number of letters have been published in this paper informing the readership that cyclists are the 'real menace' on the roads, a 'hazard' that should be restricted to the 'cycle paths' for drivers' safety and their own!

Well in the last few weeks two vehicles have left the road north of Bendorloch, careered across the 'cycle path', smashing through the fencing, ending up in the fields. Luckily there was no one using these paths at the time.

If some drivers are unable to keep their vehicles on a straight section of road, is it really the cyclists that are the menace/hazard?

I've written to this paper several times stating that the 'cycle tracks' are not safe places to ride a bike. Unfortunately it seems, I have been proved correct.

Key Whitehead, Appin.



Beachd Ailein Ailean Cairnbeul

BLIADHNA Mhath ur dhuibh uile, agus mòran dhuibh! Aig an àm seo den bhliadhna tha sinn uile dualach a bhith cuimhneachadh air ais, gu math tric le cianalasan is began bròin, air na daoine is na cuirmean a b' àithne dhuinn naireigin aig àm bliadhna ùire. Tha deagh chumhlan' againn fhìn air a bhith a' sùbhal a' bhaile nan òganach 'a chur na Bliadhna' Ùire' ur nàbaidhean is eòlach. Aig an àm sin 's e fìor annas a bhiodh ann botal uisge-beatha fhaicinn aig duine sam bith: cha robh an t-uirgead aca fù 's gèd a bhiodh an miann! An-diugh tha cuisean air atharrachadh chun na h-ìre 's nach eil drama na h-annas aig àm sam bith den bhliadhna agus dha mòran, gu mì-fhortanach, tha sin gam fàgail mar a bha an duine bochd san òran aig a' bhàrd Sgitheanach 'Niall Peutan'.

Throid a' bhean 's gun throid i riom, Thuir i, " Nèill, tha thu gun tùr 'S bliadhna' ur agad an-còmhnaidh!"

Bha luach ga chur air drama na bliadhna' ùire, agus bha còthrom cuideachd ga ghàbhal air seann chleachdaidhean urachadh 's an gleidheadh. Tha cuimhne bhliadh againn air seann chloibair a bh'odh a' tadhal againn agus fù 's gèd a bhiodh clach-mheallain 'a' cur na suile às', cha tighèd e nar sa stasach chun an gabhadh e Rann Callainn. Tha mi cho tàmailteach nach do thog mi fhìn an rann sin bh' Phàidr' Beag MacIill Eathain nuair a bha an còthrom ann! Nach dhuilich nar a' nàmhair de na rannan sin agus an càirdes a bha nan cois air a' dhòl air chall an-diugh.

Tha cuimhne againn cuideachd air daoine 'a' gabhail an òran aig Màiri Mhòr 'Seo a' bhliadhna' ur thug solas dhuinn.' Sòraid dè 'n sèorsa solas a bheir 2014 dhuinn uile. Le suidheachadh caomach, cosnadh is eile! Ach nach cuir sinn sin an drama taobh airson latha neo dha is deannam toileachas a càirdes is carthannas coimhearsnachd, is ma tha nàbaidh agabh a tha leis, neo leatha, fhèin tadhaibh orra le deagh rùn na bliadhna' ùire is na mìl ghè chinnceach gum faigh sibh falte chridheil! Agus mo dhàrachd fhìn dhuibh ann am facian a' bhàrd Sgitheanach eile, Niall Macleòid.

Mo dhàrachd le bliadhna mhaith ur, Is àireamhan dhuibh air do cheann; Do thoradh bhith sgaoileadh le bhàth. Is gràs a' toirt fàis air do cheann.

Do bhriathran bhith tuiteam mar dhàrachd Air meaganan brùit' agus fann, 'S do chliù ann am fion-lìos an Rìgh. 'HAPPY N' cuimhn' aig an tinn nach eil ann.

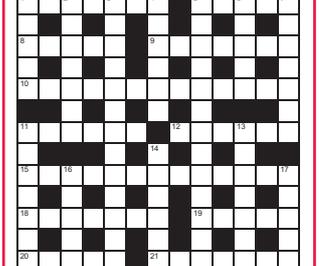
A HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all and whatever 2014 may have in store, take some time now to enjoy the company of family and friends, with as much of our precious cultural tradition as possible. If you have neighbours who are on their own, a call with seasonal greetings will be most appreciated. I wish you all the success that you wish for yourself!

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

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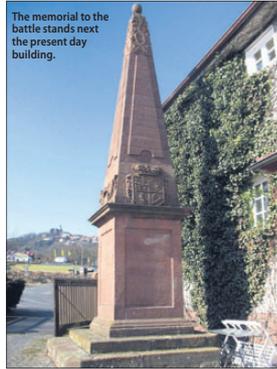
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LAST week's SOLUTION SCOTS WINTER EDITION OUT NOW www.scotsheritagemagazine.com

Active role of Highland soldiers across Europe examined in Germany



Brucker Mill in Hesse: Highland soldiers fought and died here in 1761. The River Ohm flows below.



The memorial to the battle stands next to the present day building.



Brucker Mill re-enacted: Local Germans take on the role of Keith Highlanders to commemorate the battle at the place it was fought.

LAST WEEK in *The Oban Times* our German correspondent Johannes Rauch found some surprising connections between his country and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Johannes, from Geringswalde, a town in Saxony some 40 miles west of Dresden, recently visited the Highlands. And among the impressions with which he left were those of a proud martial history - from bloody clan warfare to the 1745 rising, through countless imperial conflicts on behalf of the British Crown to two world wars and beyond. Here, Johannes examines the role of Scottish Highland soldiers in Germany during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).

In Amöneburg Castle he stationed a British garrison of about 600, with soldiers from the 87th and 88th Highlanders among them.

Where did these Highlanders precisely come from? The 87th Highlanders were originally recruited from the ranks of the legendary 42nd infantry regiment, the first regiment formed from Government-supporting 'Whig' clans, the Campbells, Grants and Munros, which became The Black Watch in 1725.

The regiment was established in Perth for service on the continent in the Seven Years' War. It was also called 'Keith's Highlanders' after its commander Major Robert Murray Keith the younger.

The 88th Highlanders were established in Stirling out of the surplus of the 87th after more soldiers were required from Argyll, Perthshire, Invernesshire, Ross and Sutherland by the Duke Ferdinand of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. They were placed under the command of John Campbell of Dunoon.

Interestingly, Gaelic-speaking soldiers also featured in the ranks of the French troops, the rivals of the allied regiments. These were mostly exiled Jacobites, a large number of which were Highlanders. Among the Gaelic soldiers was none other than Ailean Breac Stiubhart from Appin, who served from around 1745-52. Stiubhart was a relative of 'James of the Glen', who was unjustly hung in 1752 for 'The Appin murder' of Colin Campbell, the Red Fox.

These soldiers fought in the so-called regiments d'Ogilyvy and the Royal Ecossais - French, not Highland regiments.

Mr Köhler describes how combat operations at Brucker Mill started early on September 21, 1762. The 87th and 88th Highlanders made their presence felt in the battle field at 3pm on that day, appearing with three battalions of English infantry.

The battle lasted until 1am the next day and ended with a victory for the allied troops which saved the river Ohm line. The ceasefire between both parties was subsequently signed in the inn at the Brucker Mill.

In September 2010, enthusiasts from the Hessian Society of Military and Civil History recreated the allied troops' main camp under the command of Ferdinand, among them the Keith's Highlanders and the Campbell's Highlanders, in Wertenberg at Gleiberg Castle. The 87th Highlanders first arrived there in autumn 1759.

According to Mr Köhler, David Stewart of Garth (1722-1829) army officer and writer on the Scottish Highlanders, and the Campbell's Highlanders, in Wertenberg at Gleiberg Castle. The 87th Highlanders first arrived there in autumn 1759.

He was a brother of the Campbell of Acharlander and came from a younger branch of the Campbells of Glenorchy (later Breadalbane).

Mr Köhler's book is well worth a read as it shows us how Highlanders, through bearing arms, contributed significantly to the future political development of Europe from that time. The book also makes it clear that Scots, especially Highlanders, have always been a part of Europe.

Source of literature, English version: Axel Köhler. 'From Breadalbane to Brucker Mill. Scottish Highland Soldiers in Hesse 1759-62'.



The old bridge over the river Ohm at the Brucker Mill where the battle took place.

IT MAY seem surprising, but Scottish Highland soldiers played an active role in shaping the political map of Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Historical documents show that Highland mercenaries, and later enlisted soldiers, took part in conflicts in several European territories.

They fought under different commanders and in different camps, and were hired by Danish, English, German, Russian and Swedish rulers.

Highland Scots, therefore, were an integral part of warfare on the European continent, particularly during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).

One notable action was at Brucker Mill in Hesse, West Germany, a battle described by Axel Köhler in his book 'From Breadalbane to Brucker Mill: Scottish Highland Soldiers in Hesse 1759-62'.

The book notes connections between the French-Scottish Regiment d'Ogilyvy (in service in Germany 1760-61), the Appin Stewarts and Niall MacEachainn of Howbeg, South Uist, as well as between the Campbells of Barcaladine and Baileveolan, the Breadalbane Campbells and the 88th Highlanders,

aka Campbell's Highland Volunteers.

Scottish Highland regiments fought at Brucker Mill, one of the strategically important battles in the Seven Years' War.

The mill stands on the little river Ohm near the town of Amöneburg, located in today's federal state of Hesse.

But in 1761 Germany was not yet a national state and consisted of many independent territories. One was Hesse-Kassel, where the allied armies of Prussia, Hesse-Kassel and George II of Great Britain had gained a victory in the Battle of Warburg. However, French troops had taken the three important fortresses - Marburg, Dillenburg and Kassel.

So in 1761 Duke Ferdinand of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1721-1792) planned to reconquer Kassel and other Hessian strongholds from French occupation.

The duke was the head of the allied troops on behalf of Prussia in the west. He ordered the cordoning off of the whole Ohm valley, barricaded the fords and bridges and positioned troops everywhere alongside the river.

Dalmally sell-out show for Skerryvore visit



TRAD rockers Skerryvore made a rare trip to Dalmally Community Centre last Saturday as part of their winter tour and played in front of a sell-out crowd.

Among those raving about the performance was Lochawe's Findlay Ross, who said: 'They had the whole hall dancing and jumping around. It was a fantastic atmosphere in a very intimate venue, we haven't seen a gig like it here for a while!'

Luing ceilidh adds to money raised for the British Heart Foundation



GENEROUS islanders on Luing raised £313.85 for the British Heart Foundation at a ceilidh in Cullipool Hall and via Christmas post deliveries.

The event saw Duncan Fothergill on trumpet, his sister Heather playing guitar and Rachel Cruickshanks on accordion.

The ceilidh raised £215.50 added to the Christmas post which totalled £98.35. Morag Watson would like to thank everyone for their help and support.

Ceitidh Mòrag coming soon to BBC Alba

THE FAMOUS Katie Morag stories, which are based on the Islay of Coll, will be aired on BBC Alba, following a successful Cbeebies series.

The Katie Morag books are set on the Isle of Struay, which is based on the Isle of Coll, where author Mairi Hedderwick lived for a number of years.

Filming took place on the Isle of Lewis between April 29 to mid-August last year, mostly within the former STV studios in Stornoway, but Black Isle-based production company Move On Up planned to film some of the final scenes on Coll.

Maina Murray Pickering, 10, from Lewis, voices the main Ceitidh Morag character, originally played by Cherry Campbell.

Margaret Cameron, channel editor at BBC ALBA, said: 'Working with colleagues at Cbeebies and Move On

Up was great fun and they provided us with the fantastic opportunity to bring Ceitidh Mòrag to BBC ALBA. I'm sure Ceitidh Mòrag will prove it has on BBC ALBA just as it has been on Cbeebies.'

The series will commence on Tuesday, January 7 at 5pm and each consecutive Tuesday thereafter.



Cherry Campbell played Katie Morag in the successful Cbeebies series.

Mànrán entertain a packed Astley Hall despite absentees



The show must go on: Mànrán had a successful night despite two absent members. From left: Ewen Henderson, Gary Innes, Robert Robertson, Ross Saunders and Ross Martin. 20/10/13/10/13

ARISAIG'S Astley Hall was packed on Saturday night as folk band Mànrán took to the stage.

The show was a sell-out and the hall reached its 240 person capacity as the band entertained the crowd with their mix of Gaelic and English songs.

Fort William singer Robert Robertson was a temporary addition to the group as usual singer Norry MacIver couldn't perform due to illness. Uilleann pipes player Ryan Murphy was also absent, replaced by Ross Martin on guitar.

Mànrán were supported by Oban ceilidh band Ceol an Aire.

Oban Phoenix Cinema

Saving Mr Banks	Thursday 2nd	19.00
Frozen	Thursday 2nd	14.00 2D, 16.30 3D
	Friday 3rd	13.00 3D, 15.30 2D
	Saturday 4th	13.00 2D, 15.30 3D
	Sunday 5th	13.30 3D
The Butler	Friday 3rd	18.00
	Saturday 4th	18.00
	Sunday 5th	16.00
	Monday 6th	21.00
	Tuesday 7th	17.30
	Wednesday 8th	21.00
	Thursday 9th	18.00
Anchorman 2	Friday 3rd	21.00
The Legend Continues	Saturday 4th	21.00
	Sunday 5th	19.00
	Monday 6th	18.00
	Tuesday 7th	20.30
	Wednesday 8th	18.00
	Thursday 9th	21.00

Tel: 01631 562905 • Box Office: 08719 025752

Frozen (PG)
Families optimate Anne teams up with Kristin Bell and Josh Gad this is looks to become another Disney Classic Christmas film.

Saving Mr Banks (PG)
Author P. L. Travers reflects on her difficult childhood while meeting with filmmaker Walt Disney during production for the adaptation of her novel, Mary Poppins.

Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues (15)
With the TV's beloved him, San Diego's top rated newscaster, Ron Burgundy (Will Ferrell), returns to the news desk in this timeless classic film it is today. With the original music from the production to help tell the story this is a film for not only any Disney fan but also any fan of the most famous musical nunny ever created as it shows where the novel ended, Disney's story began.

The Butler (12A)
Geoff Gooles was a shaver's son who grew up in the 1920s as a domestic servant for the white family who eventually destroyed his. Eventually ending up on his own, Geoff becomes a hotel valet of such efficiency and discipline in the 1950s that he becomes someone named Old in a race to his.

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COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

OBAN U3A
Tuesday 7 January 2014 at 10.30am
Regent Hotel, Corran Esplanade, Oban
A warm welcome to members new and old for our monthly coffee and chat meeting.

Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club
Argyll Hotel, Inveraray
Wednesday 8th January at 8.00pm
Guest Artistes
From Campbelltown
Achiè MacAllister Trio
Supporting players most welcome

Oban & Lorn Lions Club
Old New Years Night Ceilidh
In Aid of CHAS
The Children's Hospice Association Scotland
In The Royal Hotel
Saturday 11th January
7.45pm for 8pm start Tickets £5 (inc. stewies)
Tickets available from Hotel Reception or Westbros Photographic Centre, George Street. Tel: 01631 562917
A Fantastic Family Ceilidh in aid of some of the best local talent around.

Home-Start Lorn Fundraising Burns' Supper
19th January 7pm
Waterfront Restaurant
Tickets £15
Tel: 01631 566749

Oban and Accordion Fiddle Club
Monthly Club Night
Thursday 9th January 2014 7.30pm
Argyllshire Gathering Hall
Guest Artist: Colin Garvin Trio
Admission: £4
Tickets for the annual dance on Feb 7th will be on sale also.

what's on
THE OBAN TIMES
FREE EVENT LISTING
THURSDAY - January 2
10.30am, Ramblers Scotland Kinlochewe walk, meet Oban's Longside Road car park 9.20am, Fort William Woollen Mill at 9.45am or N Ballachulish PS at 10.10am.
1.30pm, Open house, Bishop's House library, Iona.
New Year party, O'Donnell's, Oban.
FRIDAY - January 3
8pm, New Year Oban Mix, O'Donnell's, Oban.
7.45pm, Ballroom and Latin Dance Class, Dalmally Community Hall.
SATURDAY - January 4
9pm, First party of the New Year, O'Donnell's, Oban.
SUNDAY - January 5
9am, Ramblers Scotland Glencoe walk, meet Oban's Longside Road car park at 8am, Fort William Woollen Mill at 8.30am or Glencoe Village car park 9am.
MONDAY - January 6
9.30am, Knit and Natter, Dalmally Church Hall.
6pm, Circuit Training, Dalmally Community Hall.
8pm, Scottish Country Dancing, Leuchowrie Village Hall.
TUESDAY - January 7
10.30am, Oban U3A, Regent Hotel, Oban.
6.30pm, Karate, Dalmally Community Hall.
WEDNESDAY - January 8
10am, Teas and Tots, Dalmally Church Hall.
1pm, Knit and Natter, Dalmally Church Hall.
8pm, Inveraray and District Accordion and Fiddle Club, Argyll Hotel, Inveraray.
THURSDAY - January 9
10.30am, Ramblers Scotland Barcaladine walk, meet Fort William Woollen Mill car park at 9.30am, Oban's Longside Road car park at 10am or Ballachulish tourist info at 10am.
6pm, Circuit Training, Dalmally Community Hall.
FRIDAY - January 10
7.45pm, Ballroom and Latin Dance Class, Dalmally Community Hall.
SATURDAY - January 11
10.30am, Ramblers Scotland Rybridge walk, meet Oban's Longside Road car park at 8.30am, N Ballachulish PS at 9.25am, Fort William Woollen Mill at 9.55am or Spearan Bridge Woollen Mill at 10.15am.
7pm, Dalmally PS quiz, Community Centre, Dalmally.
7.45pm, Old New Year's Night Ceilidh, Royal Hotel, Oban.
Send your events to whatson@obantimes.co.uk.



Review of the Year 2013

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES



SEPTEMBER
New winter Lochboisdale/Mallaig ferry service

UIST residents celebrated after it was announced a new winter ferry service was to be introduced between Lochboisdale and Mallaig following years of campaigning. The new crossing - shorter than the current route from Oban by more than two hours - is running twice a week between November and April for the next three years on a trial basis. Locals in both the Outer Hebrides and the mainland have been campaigning for the ferry from Mallaig to be re-instated after the route was axed in the 1990s, and local leaders have called for the residents to use the new service to show demand is there to make it permanent. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar leader Angus Campbell said: "This will help strengthen the local economy as well as providing an additional service."

Fort William's BA Club facing uncertain future

THE FUTURE of Fort William's BA Club looked uncertain after owners Rio Tinto Alcan announced they were looking to offload the popular venue. With current club steward Ann Nilsson set to retire at the end of the year, Rio Tinto said they were seeking 'potential interest' for someone to take over the site. The club and surrounding grounds were originally for workers at the aluminium smelter, but a dwindling workforce has meant it is now more regularly used by the local community. Communications and external relation manager for Lochaber Jim Beattie said it was 'the right time to consider other options' for the club's future.

Lochaber councillor suffers heart attack

LOCHABER councillor Bren Gormley required an emergency operation after suffering a heart attack in Inverness. SNP Councillor Gormley was rushed to Raigmore Hospital on Thursday September 5 after complaining of chest pains before a council meeting. He underwent the operation and was kept in hospital for several days for treatment.

Sisters get stitching for playpark 'yarnbombing'

Oban sisters Edie, left, and Alex Elliot were among those knitting colourful scarves for an eye-catching fundraiser at Oban Community Playpark. The 'yarnbombing' project began in September but the big reveal took place at the beginning of December when the playpark and the adjacent Atlantis Leisure building were decked in the colourful creations. 16_13910001



Young swimmers brave loch

Three Lochaber youngsters braved the chilly waters of Loch Linne to take part in the junior race event. The sun was shining on the flat water as Mhari MacArthur, Eoghan MacArthur and Erin Davie swam 400 metres along the east side of the loch to the finish at Lochaber Yacht Club. Erin, left, was the quickest to finish with Eoghan second and Mhari third. The senior race for Tresaig to Lochaber Yacht Club was won by Stuart Reid. 20_14610001



Portree Primary janitor Donald Gillies, together with pupils Ella MacFarlane and Freya King, receive their award from Councillor John Gordon.

Skye community awards

BIG-HEARTED community groups and individuals from Skye were honoured for their achievements at an awards ceremony in Portree. Billy Reid won the community award for his lifelong membership and service to local groups, including 30 years on the village and then community council, and 20 years as local Justice of the Peace. Isle of Skye Pipe Band Pipe Major Alan MacKenzie won the young people category, while Portree primary won the environment award. Councillor Drew Millar said: "We have some fantastic people in Skye and Lochalsh who give of their time to us. We congratulate each award winner."

Loch Maree charity swim

A LOCHABER woman was believed to have become the first person to swim the length of Loch Maree in Wester Ross. Solo swimmer Morag 56, together with relay team Ewe Wild Swimmers, raised around £2,500 for charity, including Good for Ewe, a local group planning a garden for the disabled.



Daniel's 80-mile run raises thousands for cancer charity

Taynuilt's Daniel MacDonald was greeted by his mother, Dolina, as he finished an 80-mile fundraising run from Glasgow to his home village in September. Daniel, who was running with a knee injury, raised thousands of pounds for Macmillan Cancer Support and Yorkhill Children's Charity. 15_13761001



Skinny runs 100 miles from Glasgow to Oban

Just a week after Daniel MacDonald's achievement, Oban's David 'Skinny' MacInnes made it 100 miles from Ibrox, Glasgow, to Oban in just 22 hours. The 33-year-old had pledged to achieve the feat within 24 hours and stunned his supporters by finishing ahead of schedule. One of the first to congratulate the shinty player as he reached the finish line at the Corran Halls was his grandmother Annie MacInnes. 16_13810001



Newtonmore lift Camanachd Cup

Newtonmore won this season's Scottish Hydro Camanachd Cup against south rivals Kyles Athletic after a dominant display at An Aird, Fort William. A crowd of nearly 4,000 watched a 3-0 win for the Badenoch side. Photo: Neil Paterson.

Town's new Gaelic hub opens

September saw the opening of Oban's new Gaelic hub, Furan, in the Corran Halls. Barra man Duncan MacNeil will manage the centre, which is being run by Argyll and Bute Council and was paid for through a Scottish Government grant. Furan will be a centre for Gaelic learners or people interested in learning more about the language. 16_13610001



Gold award for Kinlochleven pair

TWO LOCHABER women became the first former Kinlochleven High School pupils to earn gold Duke of Edinburgh awards. Helen Nelson from Glencoe and Eilidh MacIntyre of North Ballachulish were both presented their awards at a ceremony in Edinburgh. High school head teacher John McGiip said he hoped their achievements would encourage other pupils.



Boccia team celebrate Olympic success

SPECIAL OLYMPIANS: the Disability Sport Lochaber boccia team proudly display their medal haul. MEMBERS of the Disability Sport Lochaber boccia team competed in the Special Olympics held in Bath - and brought home a clutch of medals. Despite having to perform on a surface very different to the one used at home, players Natasha Brown, Claire Madden and Jean Mitchell took gold, Mary Mitchell a bronze while Matthew MacLean claimed a fourth place ribbon. Boccia is similar to bowls and is particularly suited to players with a disability. Follow us on facebook www.facebook.com/obantimes



Finlay Wild celebrates winning the Ben Nevis Race, with second-placed Sam Tosh of Rossendale Harriers and Murray Strain of Hunters Bog Trotters, who finished third.

LOCHABER man Finlay Wild became the first ever Scottish athlete to win the Ben Nevis Race four times in a row when he charged home more than seven minutes ahead of his closest rival. A sizeable crowd lined Fort William's Claggan Park hoping for a local victory as almost 500 athletes lined up for the start. And they were not disappointed when Fort William man Finlay broke the tape in a time of one hour 30 minutes, just nine seconds shy of his fastest time set last year. He said afterwards: "To be the first Scottish runner to win four times in a row is a bit special."



Portree pupils all smiles as games area opened

Shinty, football, tennis, basketball and rugby were the order of the day for youngsters at Portree primary after the school's new multi use games area was officially opened. The new area, funded by the school, the parent council, Highland Council and the local Co-op store, will be used by P1-P7 pupils as well as the nursery and sunshine room youngsters.

Review of the Year 2013



Clockwise from left, Mallaig siblings Kayleigh and Liam Morrison, together with Grace MacDonald from Morar enjoyed learning the whistle with traditional music tutor Hamish Napier. 10_1416es02

Experts tutor youngsters in traditional music

FEIS na Mara rocked Mallaig - but top performers still found time to tutor local children in traditional music. Concerts and ceilidhs in the community centre over two nights raised the roof with Dìamh, The Chair, the Bevy Sisters, Session A9, Deoch an Dorus and Drama Allowed among the headline acts. In Mallaig Primary School, however, it was all about the next generation as a

dozen youngsters from across Lochaber received instruction from the experts. Tutors Dierdre Beck (fiddle), Sileas Sinclair (accordion and Gaelic song), Murdo Cameron (guitar), Hamish Napier (whistle and group work) and Andrew MacPherson (chanter and drums) held classes. A special concert for younger children and a family dance followed in the West Highland Hotel.

Drive for new skate and bike park

As well as creating an area for skateboards and bikes, the pair want to make a small area for local trials bikers to practise on objects such as tyres, rocks and crates. Mr Macgregor said the next step for the skate park would be to set up a committee, draw up a business plan and look at funding avenues.



Lochaber Gymnastics Club members welcomed Invergordon gymnasts. 20_142gym01

Special day for Lochaber gymnasts

LOCHABER Gymnastics Club members and coaches got the benefit of some expert tuition when Highland and Islands regional gymnastics development officer Sonny Rhind led a special mentoring day at the Nevis Centre. Mr Rhind brought four young gymnasts down

to Fort William from Invergordon to help instruct the Lochaber youngsters. The session followed a £6,000 grant to the club from Awards for All for new equipment including bars, coaching blocks, top tumblers and safety matting.



SARDA Southern Scotland rescue dog Ruby joins Ian Macleod Distillers' Neil Boyd, Scottish Mountain Rescue project manager Andy Rockall and Roy Bridge climber Dave MacLeod to celebrate the new sponsorship deal.

A WORLD-ACCLAIMED Lochaber climber hailed a commercial sponsorship deal that saw a whisky firm provide Scottish mountain rescue teams with life-saving avalanche training and equipment. Roy Bridge-based Dave MacLeod, famed for his gravity-defying exploits, had no further to go than Glen Nevis, where he joined Ian Macleod Distillers UK commercial director Neil Boyd to unveil the three-year agreement. Under the

partnership, the company will contribute a further £10,000 to Scottish Mountain Rescue, with 15p from the sale of each bottle of Isle of Skye 8 Year Old Blended Scotch Whisky also going to the charity. Ian Macleod Distillers has already invested £100,000 to help fund new rescue equipment, support SARDA's rescue dogs and provide highly specialised avalanche rescue training for Scotland's 26 volunteer mountain rescue teams.

OCTOBER Annual Highland dancing competition



Trophy winners from left to right: Beth Campbell, Skye, Emma Montgomery, Skye, Laura Robertson, Inverloch, Anna Taylor, Portree, Ceitidh Smith, Portree, and Connie MacLennan, Fort William. 20_144dancing01

Arisaig woman wins business award

A COMPANY partly-funded by an Arisaig woman was named Scotland's most promising start-up business. Anne Widdop started up Fuze Ceremonies with Victoria Bisland and Morag Adams to provide humanist wedding ceremonies across the country. The firm also provides naming days, non-legal Humanist marriages, same-sex affirmations and re-affirmations of vows. Fuze was the overall winner of the LESL Enterprise Challenge, which set out to find the country's most promising new company.

Anne Widdop, left, with Fuze Ceremonies co-founders Morag Adams and Victoria Bisland.

HIGHLAND dancers from across Scotland came to Fort William on Saturday October 26 to take part in Nevis School of Highland Dancing's annual competition. Inverloch Primary School's hall was packed out with plenty of local talent, including a large contingent of dancers from Skye and Kyle, as well as Lochaber and Oban.

Among the local winners were Inverloch youngster Laura Robertson, who won the best Nevis School of Highland dancing beginner under eight trophy, while Connie MacLennan won the same award for under 14. Anna Taylor of Portree was named best novice aged 10, with Ceitidh Smith, also Portree, winning the Highland trophy. Locals also did well in the premier events in the afternoon, with Fort William's Jamie Lee Laverty named best Nevis dancer in the 11 years group, and Katie MacPherson of Oban overall winner for 15 years old.



Lochwatch launches new patrol boat

Members of Lochwatch Loch Awe took a vital step in their campaign to improve loch safety by launching a new patrol boat. As the boat was unveiled at Cruachan Visitor Centre the safety group signalled its intention to find the sunken dinghy used by the four fishermen who drowned on Loch Awe in March 2009. 15_140lochwatch01

Liam scales the heights for rescue team

Eight-year-old hill climber Liam Keats donated a cheque for £1,200 to Oban Mountain Rescue Team after scaling the equivalent height of Mount Everest on mountains in the Scottish Highlands and the Lake District. Liam, who lives at Inverawe, asked his parents to help him organise the Summer of Summits following an incident on Ben Cruachan in 2012 when Oban Mountain Rescue Team was searching for a missing climber on Ben Cruachan. When the team found the climber's body Liam was in the company of the man's grandson, who had been staying at Brander Lodge, run by Liam's grandfather, during the search. Liam said his Summer of Summits had been 'tiring, but fun'. 15_140liam01



Benderloch athlete wins Great Scottish Run

Benderloch athlete Susan Partridge became the darling of Scottish distance running after winning the Great Scottish Run. The comprehensive victory came a week after the 34-year-old was named in Scotland's Commonwealth Games squad and shortlisted for the title of Scotland's Athlete of the Year. Susan, who lives in Leeds, also recorded her best ever race result in the summer of 2013 by finishing 10th in the marathon at the World Athletics Championships in Moscow.

Royal National Mod: Paisley

Right: Young Royal National Mod competitor Ealasaid MacLean from Lismore was tasked with handing over a bouquet to HRH The Princess Royal during her Royal visit to this year's festival in Paisley. Left: Young conductor Donald Feist from the Isle of Islay led Govan Gaelic Choir to the Royal National Mod's premier choral prize, the Lovat and Tullibardine Shield. The 23-year-old said growing up in Port Charlotte gave him a love of traditional music and was key to his success at the Mod. 15_143mod30



Lifeline Connel road celebrations

Residents of Connel were celebrating the end of a 36-year campaign in October after persuading Argyll and Bute Council to adopt a 'lifeline' road. The previously unclassified Achaleven Road, from Achaleven Farm to the railway level crossing shouldering the A85 is now under the council's responsibility. 15_140con01

Review of the Year 2013



Oban couple's surprise wedding delights guests

OBAN'S Andrew 'Krank' MacLellan married Christine Rogers in November after fooling guests into thinking they were attending Christine's 40th birthday party in the Royal Hotel.

Oban woman caught in eye of Philipines typhoon

AN OBAN woman caught in the eye of the storm in the Philippines left her family 'numb for days' before she could contact them to say she had survived.



Tess Campbell, pictured, had flown out to Lawaan, in Eastern Samar, in September planning to stay for a year but she had only been there a matter of weeks before Typhoon Haiyan, known in the Philippines as Typhoon Yolanda, hit.



Years of weekly coffee mornings see parents bank £42,000 for carers



Appeal for help to save St Conan's

Trustees of St Conan's Kirk made an appeal for more people to help save the unique Lochawe church by launching a Friends of St Conan's Kirk group.



Enterprising Emma raises £723 for Children in Need

Enterprising youngster Emma Hill raised £723 for Children in Need by hosting a Pudsey-themed soup lunch in Connel Village Hall.



Hundreds celebrate 40 years of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

HUNDREDS of friends past and present of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig gathered to celebrate 40 years of Scotland's Gaelic College at the Sabhal Mòr

Fort designer wins top award

A FORT William designer has been crowned Womenswear Designer of the Year at the prestigious Scottish Style Awards.



Judy Clark: Womenswear Designer of the Year.

Superfit duo's endurance raises thousands

TWO HIGHLAND firefighters have handed over thousands of pounds to charity following an incredible fundraising feat of endurance earlier this year.



John Grievie: the break-ins will not prevent regular mountain rescue operations in Glencoe.

Rescue team's theft shock

THE LEADER of Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team has said thieves who broke into their base and stole thousands of pounds of equipment will not disrupt any imminent rescue operations.

Memorial unveiled

A MEMORIAL was unveiled in Glen Nevis to a young Canadian airman whose Spitfire crashed into a Lochaber mountainside during the Second World War.



Tribute to a young airman: Brian Mullins shows off 'Spitfire Sunrise' with Framing Place owner Allan Kinnera.



Firefighters Chris Findlay, front left, and Ricky Dibble hand over £4,323 each to Help the Heroes and Scottish Burned Children's Club.

Glencoe dentist retires after 37 years

A GLENCOE dentist has drilled his last tooth after 37 years in the profession - 35 of which were spent in Lochaber.

Review of the Year 2013



Upper Achintore kids admire the Christmas tree in the snow before enjoying the Christmas fair inside the school. 20_150supper01

Festive fun and frolics

HUNDREDS of Fort William folk turned out to support Upper Achintore Regeneration Group's Christmas Fair in the local primary school. The volunteer body is leading attempts to regenerate the 600-property housing scheme through amenity projects - with community pride at the heart of its efforts. And they were rewarded when almost 30 stallholders and Lochaber Wind Band attended the event to add to the Christmas cheer.

Robert on song again



Fort William's Robert Robertson was a winner at the Scots Trad Music Awards.

FORT William student Robert Robertson has another prestigious award to add to his list after winning the Up and Coming Artist of the Year award at the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards in Aberdeen. The Gaelic singer's talent was recognised when he came top of his category after 90,000 members of the public voted for their favourites across different categories. A delighted Robert, 19, told *The Oban Times*: 'I feel amazing, I can't quite get my head around it yet. I couldn't get over being nominated so to win was just great.'

Food bank gears up for Christmas



Lochaber Food Bank: Volunteers prepare for the Christmas rush. Left to right: Anita Russell, Donald Eider, James Casey, Alex MacConachie, Patricia Leslie and Catherine MacDonald. 20_150foodbank01

LOCHABER Food Bank has received around four tons of food donations in the two weeks since it opened, organisers have revealed. The lifeline service is now gearing up to hand out food packages once organisations such as Lochaber Housing Association, Tweeddale Medical Practice, Highland Council and health and social care services allocate vouchers to those who need them. Once received, the vouchers can be handed into the food bank at Fort William High Street in exchange for non-perishable groceries. Food bank manager Alex MacConachie said: 'We've had several people coming in looking for food but we need to direct them to the appropriate organisations so that they can get vouchers first.'

DECEMBER

Residents pull together after storm

MALLAIG residents pulled together in the aftermath of a storm that wreaked havoc on the village. Scenes of devastation surrounded the port as the tide hurled rocks larger than footballs over 100 yards at parked cars, smashing windows and lifting bonnets. One vehicle was shunted sideways into another car and huge recycling bins had been overturned as they were dragged from a nearby wall on to the middle of a road, narrowly missing the community centre. The Chlachain Inn on Davie's Brae remained open despite a power cut, serving food that was cooked without electricity. 'You just need to keep going when something like this happens,' owner Cameron told



Candlelit quiz: Cameron Boyd, owner of The Chlachain Inn gives customers a refuge from the cold. 20_150com03

The Oban Times in the bar. 'We've been serving soup, sandwiches and chips because a lot of people can't cook anything at home and we're having a 'candlelight quiz' tonight.'



From left, 1st Fort Augustus Brownies and Guides Rhianna MacCallum from Invergarry, Elanor Littlewood from Balmaglasser, Megan Stewart from Invergarry, Sophie Rand from South Laggan and Jade Douglas from Invergarry enjoyed their day at their tombola stall. 20_150garr01

Invergarry Christmas fair boosts hall funds

GLENGARRY Community Hall was a hive of activity as local people turned out in their droves to support Invergarry's annual Christmas fair. Stallholders did a roaring trade as did the cafe next door where Belle Stewart and her helpers served up a steady stream of hot drinks, cakes and snacks. Proceeds from stall fees raised £120 for the Archie Foundation, while raffle proceeds boosted hall funds to the tune of £185.



Artistic talent: Portree Primary School Kai Purdy shows off his winning design.

Scout winner

A PORTTREE Primary School boy has won a national contest to design the Commonwealth Games badge for Scots Scotland. P4 pupil Kai Purdy, who is a Beaver with the organisation, took top prize in the Scottish Scouting Commonwealth Legacy competition. Kai's imaginative winning entry could now be worn on the shirt of every Scout in Scotland. Head teacher John Finlayson said of the eight-year-old's success: 'I think it is a fantastic achievement and everyone is pleased and excited that Kai's design will be worn by all the cubs, beavers and scouts in Scotland in 2014.'

Business plan rejected

BACKERS of a controversial proposal to create a business improvement district (BID) in Lochaber have been left stunned after the scheme was comprehensively rejected. At the declaration of the count in the Council Chambers in Fort William it was announced that 418 voted against the BID, compared to 135 in favour. The figures represented a 55 per cent turnout of the 950 businesses eligible to take part in the postal ballot. Opposition were available, but many observers believe the move founded on strong opposition from outlying districts such as Malling and south Lochaber.



The faces say it all: Frazer Coupland, third left, and fellow Living Lochaber steering group members after the result was declared.



Oban rugby girls win national title

A girls' rugby team from Oban High School celebrated winning a national sevens trophy in Edinburgh. The under-15 team won the schools section of the competition before beating the club section champions Murrayfield Wanderers in the grand final, taking the title of Queens of the SEVENS. 13_149105p10103



Family cheer for Ciara

After previously being told by doctors she could not leave the UK because of her treatment for a brain tumour, 12-year-old Islay girl Ciara Allan, right, was delighted to hear that she could travel to the UAE to spend Christmas with her whole family. Her father, Rob, works in Abu Dhabi and mother Lloret and brother and sister Lorne and Ila flew out with Ciara in time for Christmas.



George Street and Esplanade flooded

Stormy weather and a high tide left Oban's George Street and Esplanade flooded. 1310r0012



Oban Winter Festival

The Oban Winter Festival brought colour and fanfare to an otherwise dark and cold winter in the town. Highlights included a St Andrew's Day ceilidh, McCaig's Tower lights show, a fire art demonstration, pictured, and a fireworks display over Oban Bay. Billed as the best festival yet, it did not disappoint. 16_149105v1213

Andy's our Angel of the Year



Andy MacDowall, left, collects his award as The Oban Times Angel of the Year 2013 from friend John MacKenzie. The award is given to a volunteer, nominated and chosen from across the west Highlands, who goes to great lengths to help others. Andy dedicated the award to his late wife Rena, who, he said, would have been 'so proud' of his achievement. 13_15220011



Oban Phoenix Cinema named best community-led regeneration project

Margaret Burgess MSP, centre, met representatives of Oban Phoenix Cinema to present them with the Scottish Urban Regeneration Foundation (SURF) Award, as the best community-led regeneration project.

Farming

A pivotal year for Scottish agriculture

NFU SCOTLAND'S president, Nigel Miller, has described 2014 as a pivotal point for Scottish agriculture.

Extreme weather in 2012 and 2013 left a legacy that many farm businesses are slowly recovering from, but it is the political decisions to be taken in the next 12 months that will shape the long-term future of the sector.

In a busy year, the union expects to be at the heart of discussions on implementing CAP reform in Scotland, establishing a new rural development programme, pushing for an LFASS re-base, informing the Agricultural Holdings review, re-designing

the Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs), and building Scotland's food and drink sectors. That activity will take place against the backdrop of an independence referendum.

Writing in the union's annual report, Mr Miller said: "The next 12 months are a pivotal point in defining Scotland's future farmed landscape and productive potential. For Scotland, there is a considerable amount of work to be done in 2014.

"The architecture of Scotland's new CAP must be defined; the regionalisation of Scotland and the transition arrangements that will move Scotland away from historic support are two of the

basic building blocks to deliver future support. The detail of greening within the arable area is also still a priority.

"CAP reform in Scotland will certainly embrace the limited coupled option offered by the 2013 agreement. Utilising that tool to complement regional support is a must if all sectors are to gain some value from this targeting tool.

"There is a determination both in government and the farming community that the new CAP will bring new and developing businesses into full support from day one. The national reserve will also have a key role to ensure businesses do

not fall between the cracks of legislation. The next few months will be crucial in defining the function and priorities of that national reserve.

"LFA support remains the core priority for discussions on Pillar Two. The consultation on the design of the new Scottish Rural Development Plan is now out, and it offers an opportunity to strip out the complex application procedures from the competitive options. Limiting the size of projects can open up support to the limited budget.

"We will also look to develop our view that our LFA scheme should be re-based to bring in

new entrants and anomaly cases. In the coming months, we will use our regional team to gather evidence on the numbers of farmers currently locked out of LFA support and would benefit from the re-basing exercise.

"Climate change will colour the new SRDP and can be a priority that provides multiple benefit by also driving business efficiency. Designing win-wins can deliver for all stakeholders: the union will be at the centre of this development process next year. The independence referendum will dominate the political skyline in Scotland but there are other major decisions to be taken in 2014 that will be fundamental

to the future of many members. The 'Agricultural' Holdings review is a major piece of work chaired by the Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead. A survey of all tenants will inform the process. Legislation is almost certain, however this process is more significant than new law. It has the potential to change operating standards over much of Scotland's farmed area and will determine the opportunities for our new generation as well as defining the potential growth of existing businesses.

It is important we use this opportunity to move Scotland into a more positive era. "The re-designation of our NVZ regions next year offers a chance to remove land from controls where ground water evidence gives the green light. "The Grocery Code adjudicator, Christine Taccon, is now in place - developing, monitoring and reporting procedures will be key to changing the trading environment. Next year we will see that important role bed in. "And 2014 will also be a launch pad for the further development of the export ambitions of Scotland Food and Drink. As we enter our 101st year, members - more than ever before - see themselves at the centre of that food and drink success story."

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United Auctions Stirling

UNITED Auctions sold 7,075 prime sheep at its Boxing Day Stirling sale, including 1,990 lambs, 2,085 ewes and rams.

Lambs: Cretlevane (SuffX) 492; Harrisvailing (TexX) 1105; South Flanders (CharX) 492.50; Luckenburn (BrexX) 1104; Easter Buchlyvie (Mule) 493; Upper Kidston (Chev) 493; Durnuchan (BF) 494; Ewes: Ardoch (Suff) 498.50; Grassmoinston (TexX) 1118.50; Netherton (Char) 493.50; Northfield (Mule) 497.50; Shearston (Chev) 495.50; Woodhall (BF) 494.50; Rams: Shearston (Suff) 1105.50.

UNITED Auctions sold 6,640 prime sheep, including 4,881 lambs and 1,759 ewes and rams at their Christmas show and sale on December 19, when Goddens were made overall champions with a pen of Bellic which realised £100. The reserve pen was Collavoulin, realising £103. Lambs: Collavoulin (BrexX) 1106; Gleanmond Farms (TexX) 497; Little Rain (SuffX) 495; South Flanders (CharX) 498; Monzie (ChevX) 492; Jaw (Mule) 477; West Bracklin (BF) 475.50; Durnuchan (X) 490; Lambs: Goddens (BrexX) 238p; Kivihmet (TexX) 217p; West Leith (Suff) 186p; 2 Grubsh (Mule) 167p; Roseberry Est (BF) 182p; Gatherauld (Char) 179p; Newhouse of Gort (Chev) 187p; Stoney Path (X) 180p.

Ewes: Outerston (Suff) 477.50; Connaught (TexX) 491; 4105; Wester Bowhouse (BFL) 473.50; Newhouse of Glamis (Chev) 467.50; Balbard (Mule) 490.50; Remoy (BF) 448.50; Kirkhill (Char) 490.50; Carburie (Zwa) 456.50; Kipperoch (Brex) 4106.50; Bellic (Suff) 498.50; West Kirton (Suff) 483.50; Outerston (Tex) 1106.50; Pitkey (Chev) 483.50; Durnuchan (BF) 484.50.

Royal Highland Show judges

JUDGES for the 2014 Royal Highland Show have been announced.

Supported by RBS, the show will take place at the Royal Highland Centre, Inverlisk, Edinburgh, on June 19-22.

The task of placing around 5,000 head of the country's top cattle, sheep and horses will be in the hands of experts from all over the UK and Ireland, including one judge from France - Yves Lacroix of Mirecourt, who will place the Texels.

The overall supreme champion will be selected by Ian Anderson, Dalreest, Cumnock, while in the diary rings Gavin Lawrie, Brieryside, Sandyford, Monkton will decide on the overall champions.

Other inter-breed beef judges include: team championship - Friar Thomson, Balmyle, Meikle; beef breeder and junior inter-breed - Robert Adam, Newhouse of Glamis, Forfar; beef pairs - David Murray, Wolflaw, Forfar.

In the sheep lines, the challenge facing Angus Kampion will be Broughton, Biggar will be to choose an overall individual champion from 24 breeds, with the pairs and young handlers judged by Allan Wright sr, Midlock, Crawford.

In light horses, Joyce Coltart The Stables, Tour, Kilmarnock will be judging The Queen's Cup.

As a reflection on the popularity of the HOYS Mountain and Moorland Under Saddle qualifier, the show has split the section into small and large breeds and appointed four judges as opposed to the usual two.

Also new for this year's show will be a HOYS qualifier for Part Bred Arab and Part Bred Welsh Ponies - a cup for the Royal Highland Show. Judges will be announced in due course for this.



Lara Sinclair, 11, with Christmas Cracker, Carol and Pudding. 08_011108101

Three helpings of lamb for Christmas

'We called the triplets Cracker, Carol and Pudding'

FARM manager John McLachlan had to make do with lamb for Christmas.

Well, he did not actually eat it but he certainly missed out on his turkey after Christmas day brought a special surprise - lamb triplets.

"I had only just managed my starter when I had to deliver them," said John of Kildalton Farm, Campbelltown.

"They were difficult births and I was away for three hours."

John had brought the Suffolk mother as a Christmas present for wife Jean, a breeder who collected a first with a shearing pup at last summer's Kintyre Agricultural Show. I wasn't expecting the lambs this early, I thought it would be another week or so," he said.

"The mother came from Jimmy Douglas of Caithness, one of the country's top breeders. I thought it be an ideal Christmas present for Jean, knowing how much she likes to bring animals on for the Kintyre, Oban and Mid Argyll shows.

"We called the triplets - two ewes and a top - Christmas Cracker, Carol and Pudding."

"Mother and offspring are doing well and Jean's granddaughter, Lara Sinclair, 11, is enjoying helping looking after them."

'Between a rock and a hard place'

CROFTERS are 'between a rock and a hard place' says the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) in its response to the 'mini-consultation' regarding the transfer of CAP funds between pillars.

"Though this may have been called a 'mini-consultation', said SCF's chief executive Patrick Krause, 'it was a very difficult one to respond to due to the paradox of the situation. The principle of moving money into the Scottish Rural Development Programme, where most of the schemes that should be supporting crofting and the environment, such as the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS), the Crofting Communities Agricultural Grant Scheme (CCAGS) and agri-environment measures are found, seems a no-brainer."

"But the reality is that LFASS in Scotland is designed to pay higher rates per hectare to the better off land; the government wants to open CCAGS to non-crofters; and the agri-environment schemes have been siphoning the money away from the crofting counties, where most of the High Nature Value areas are."

An overall objective of the CAP reform, the European Commission has said, is to move money away from direct payments and into rural development.

The federation says that, with Scotland receiving the lowest rural development payments in Europe, it 'seems anomalous' that the full 15 transfer of funds allowable from agricultural direct payments, pillar one, to rural development, pillar two, is being questioned and Scottish Government is minded to only transfer 9.5 per cent.

Mr Krause said: "Crofters do not trust the Scottish Government's use of pillar two funding. The perverse way in which LFASS is calculated to pay the highest rates per hectare to farms on the better land has to stop. This surely is not the intention of a less favoured area support scheme. We will be meeting with European Commission officials over this."

There was the option to move to the more equally targeted Areas of Natural Constraint but the Scottish Government has chosen to delay this. So, whilst the principle of moving as much money as possible into pillar two may be agreed with idealistically, the reality is that how it is being suggested that pillar two funds are spent is far from being in the interests of crofters, the environment or rural communities."

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Caledonian Marts

CALEDONIAN Marts had 1,193 prime lambs and 866 cast ewes at its Christmas Eve sale in Stirling when prime lambs sold to 242p for a Merton, Lochend to average 184.52p (+8.16p on the week).

Leading Prices: Bel - 233p & £101.50; Lochend - Bel x - 223p; Drummesse, 495 Ballinloan; Tex - 225p & £96.50 Lower Greenyards; Tex x - 219p; MeikleSeggie, 495; Gelvin View - Cent - 215p; Gleanmond Farms, 493.50; Drummesse, Suff - 194p & £81.50; Pleen Farm Cottage, Suff x - 186p; Newton Farm, 480 Hillarvie; BF - 188p; Mains of Burnbank, 474.50; Newton Farm; Mule - 179p; Mains of Burnbank & Drummesse, 475.50; Picaire Farm; Chev - 192p & £63.50; Drummesse Light Ewes averaged 446.20 (+£3.61 on the week) selling to a top of £58.50 for Cheviots from Mr McFarlane, Muirmaling Farm. Heavy Ewes averaged 466.76 and sold to a top of £106.50 for Texels from Mr R McNea, Woodend Farm. Tups sold to a top of £107.50 for a Texel from Mr J More, Townend Farm. Leading Prices: Ewes: £197.50; Terrac; Tex x - 494.50; Terrac & Burnbrae; Cent - 494.50; Terrac; Suff x - 489.50; Terrac; Chev - 477.50; Coughshill; BFL - 487.50; Burnbank; Beltex - 460; Lochend; Mule - 464.50; Burnbank; BF - 455; Woodend, 453.50; Over Fings; Swale - 443.50; Burnbrae; Tups; Tex - 498.50; Townend; BFL - 486.50; Dollarbank; BF - 470; Newton.

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ENGAGEMENTS
DUNCAN - HARRIS - Both families, the Duncans of Glenclutrie Drive, Oban and the Harris's of Hayton Aspatia, Wigton, are delighted to announce the engagement of Miss Shona Alison Lyon Duncan, eldest daughter of Mr Clark Duncan, to Mr Cliff Harris, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Trevor Harris.

DEATHS
CAMERON - Peacefully in the Belford Hospital on Wednesday, December 25, 2013. Morag aged 78 years of Pier Road, Kilmochan, Glasgow. Beloved wife of the late Kenneth and Catherine Cameron, dearly loved sister of Chrissie and the late Ian, beloved sister-in-law, much loved auntie, grand-auntie and great grand-auntie. Funeral service to be held on Friday, January 3 at 1pm in Kilmochan Parish Church. Will be sadly and sorely missed.

CARMICHAEL - Peacefully, at home in Kilmochan on December 20, 2013. Catherine (Kate) Carmichael. A very special sister, auntie, great auntie and friend who will be sorely missed. Funeral service took place at Kilmochan Church of Scotland on Monday December 30, 2013 at 1pm. Arrangements handled out by John McEellan Funeral Directors.

KEATE - Harry Robert. Captain Royal Navy aged 88. Much loved father of David, Vencia, Iona and Angus and grandfather of eight. Funeral at 1pm on Monday, January 6, at St John's Cathedral, Oban. Committal Kilniver Cemetery.

MACNEILL - Flora - Peacefully, on December 29, 2013, at home on Colonsay, Flora (Onnasy) aged 92 years. Beloved wife of the late Andrew S MacNeill. A very much loved aunt, sister-in-law, cousin and friend. Funeral on January 3, 2014 at 2.00 pm at the Church of Scotland, Colonsay, to which all family and friends are respectfully invited. There will be a collection for Marie Curie in lieu of flowers, if desired.

MACQUARIE - Peacefully in Lorn and Islands General Hospital on December 28, 2013. Jessie, beloved wife of Ailie, sister in law of Eilma and Donnie. Much loved twin sister of Jeannie, sister of Margaret and the late Nan, Duncan and Rosanna. Precious aunt, great aunt and great great aunt. Will be sorely missed by many.

MACTAGGART - Rose Ann (née Langan), passed away December 8, 2013. Beloved mother, sister, much loved auntie, granny and good companion of Donnie Stoddart for 36 years. Funeral held in St Mary's on Monday, December 23. Fondly remembered by her sons James and Scott and her companion Donnie, grand-daughter Ellie and her brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews.

MCLENNAN - Peacefully surrounded by his family at the Lorn & Islands Hospital Oban on December 30, 2013 in his 87th year, Peter McLennan, beloved husband of the late Isa, much loved father and scannair. Sadly missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
MACLEOD - Following the sad loss of Neil, Ruth and the family would like to thank most sincerely all family, friends and neighbours for their kindness and support. We would like to express our appreciation for phone calls, cards and flowers and to all who paid their last respects at the church and cemetery. Our special thanks go to Rev Moira Herkes for a comforting pastoral visit and a lovely and fitting service. Thank you also to Barbara Summers for playing the organ and to John McCallum for the bagpipes. We appreciate the care given to Neil by Drs Williamson and Calder of Ballachulish Medical Centre and to the staff of Lynn of Lorn, Rannoch and Abbeyfield for their sensitive care. We would also like to thank George Grant and Kenneth MacDonnell for their help and support and also Mike McCall for dignified funeral arrangements and Loch Leven Hotel for excellent catering. - Ruth A MacLeod, Alford, Glencoe.

MEMORIALS
ANDERSON - Remembering a loving wife, mother and nana Peggy, who died December 29, 2012. The rolling stream of life goes on But still the empty chair Reminds us of the face, the smile Of one who once sat there. Always remembered. - John Anderson.

Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

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

FERGUSON - In loving memory of my dear mother who passed away on January 2, 2011. No one knows the broken heart, That lies beneath my smile, No one knows the loneliness, That's with me all the while, Silent tears do gently fall, Which others do not see, Who were the kind and loving mother, Who meant the world to me. - 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.

LAMONT - In loving memory of my dear husband Willie, who passed away so suddenly on New Year's Eve 2005. Always in my thoughts. - Mary.

MACDONALD - Treasured memories of Eileen. Dearly loved mum of Philip and precious daughter of Margaret and sister of Colin and Karen, taken from us on January 6, 2008. Also remembering those who have gone before. To us you were so special What more is there to say We only wish with all our hearts That you were here today. Sorely missed. - The family, 14 Corran Brae, Oban.

MACEWAN - In loving memory of my dear husband and father, Alex, who passed away on January 1, 2012. We have been lonely since you left Home has never been the same The world would be like Heaven Just to have you back again. - Inserted by Rina and family.

MACNEILL - Loving memories of Alex MacNeill, a wonderful Father and Grandpa who died so suddenly on January 1, 2013. You touched our lives in so many ways. To brighten our world on darker days, You went to sleep and didn't wake, Peaceful, though our hearts still ache, Living in our memory, We miss you so much! - Jessica and Family, Sandy and Family.

MAGILLVARY - In loving memory of my dear wife Eilma, who died January 3, 2012. - Fionnie in my heart. - Winkie. Treasured memories of a dear mum, who died January 4, 2012. Always in our thoughts. - Robbie and Ellen.

MACINNES - In loving memory of Duncan (Eriskey), much loved husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather, who sadly passed away January 3, 2013. We thought of you with love today But that is nothing new We thought about you yesterday and the days before that too. We think of you in silence and often speak your name All we have are memories and your picture in a frame. Your memory is our keepsake With which we will never part. God has you in his keeping we have you in our hearts. Nellie and family xxx.

MACINTYRE - Treasured memories of Jean, beloved wife, wonderful mum and very special Nanna, sadly taken from us on December 28, 2012. We miss you more than words can say. Loved and remembered every day. Lots of Love Dougie, Christine and Jim, Lauren and Ashley.

MACKINNON - Treasured memories of a dear brother and uncle Jimmy who passed away January 3, 2013. Your name is often spoken And thoughts are with you still. You have not been forgotten And know you never will. Very sadly missed. - Cathie and family, Coll and Blantyre.

MACLELLAN - Precious memories of our darling son Christopher who was taken from us on January 1, 1991 aged 4 months. Our little flower Just lent not given And who had on Earth. But blooms in Heaven. Loving you always, Dad, Mum, Craig and Calum x

MACLEOD - In loving memory of my two beloved sons and our brothers Neil who died January 3, 2004 and George, who died January 5, 2009 in the Philippines. You were taken without any warning. You both left hearts filled with

pain But though you are gone from amongst us In our hearts you will ever remain. - Love Forever mum, 29 Glenpate Street, Remembering you always Nigel and you never. - Ian, Rory, Daniel, Donald, Christine and Marina xx.

MACMILLAN - In memory of Jasmine MacMillan, a much loved mother and grandmother, passed away January 2, 2008. Gone but not forgotten For memories never die. David, Moira, Carla, Kayleigh, Brett and Jamie.

MACNAUGHTON - In memory of my mother Connie. There's a corner in our hearts You visit every day It gives us this warm feeling That you're never far away. - Love Heather, Nicola, Morgan, Leona and Orlagh.

MC DONALD - In loving memory of Hugh, died January 8, 2013. Let the winds of love blow softly And whisper for you to hear We love and miss you sadly As it dawns another year. - Mum and family.

MCLEISH - In loving memory of my mum Morag who passed away January 3, 2010. We often sit and think of you And think of how you died We never got to say goodbye Before you closed your eyes. - Christine and family.

MORRISON - In loving memory of Johnny who passed away on January 3, 2008. Sadly missed by us all. - Catherine, John, Karen, Alan and families.



Oban pupils help those in need at Christmas. Pupils from Oban High School collected 350 cans of tinned goods for the Salvation Army to give to those in need at Christmas. The pupils also participated in the online 'free rice' programme and gave millions of grains of rice to the United Nations World Food Programme.



Kilchrenan congregation remembers loved ones. The Rev R Brooks recently led a service to remember loved ones in Kilchrenan. The congregation lit candles and placed names of deceased loved ones on the branches of a small tree, while organist, Eric Convey played 'How Great Thou Art'.

Advice on cooking fat disposal. THE RSPB and Scottish Water have become unlikely allies - encouraging Argyle residents to encourage recycling of fats, oils and grease responsibly. Over time, fats poured down the sink or drain can build up and cause blockages in drains and sewer pipes that prevent the waste water draining away properly causing unpleasant sewage flooding or environmental pollution.

Families are advised to dispose of fats responsibly by placing in a suitable container and then putting in the bin. Animal fats and meat juices can also harm birds and such kitchen scraps should not be used to feed our feathered friends.

Scottish Water supports the RSPB's advice to encourage householders to leave out leftovers such as cake and biscuit crumbs, mild grated cheese, cooked rice, uncooked porridge oats, cooked potatoes and bruised fruit. However, Scottish Water is asking customers not to leave out fats from roasting tins, frying pans or pots.

Centuries old Mull byre almost destroyed in hours

A BYRE that has stood for hundreds of years on a Mull croft was almost destroyed in a matter of hours during the recent stormy weather. Martyn said: 'We had been at church and came home to find the byre roof had just gone. We were shocked but I have to admit we found it quite funny. There had been so much devastation, yet a wooden post that was leaning against the building didn't move



Before and after: The byre in Lochdon that was damaged in stormy weather.

Oban Hospice

Oban Hospice Caring for the Future. Donations always gratefully accepted. Please contact Jack Tallan, Care Co-ordinator, Oban Hospice, North Connel, PA37 1RE.

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. West of Scotland Fundraising Office, 1st Floor, Eskdale House, North Avenue, Clydebank, Business Park, Clydebank G81 2DR. Tel 0800 100 6000 in memory of Dawn Joyce.

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

The Oban Times & West Highland Times THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL. Includes a map of the region and contact information for the printing house.

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Tasty fare on offer at fayre. Local baker Beata Borowska, left, with Her Service of Commander's Products, Ardross, and Lochalsh's Clare Holohan, of the West Highland Herbal, were among the stall holders attending the recent LORN Products Christmas Fayre at Benderloch Victory Hall, 19, 25/26/28/31/32.

Full house for Christmas service. IT WAS a full house at An Clachan for the annual Christmas Service organised by Lochaber Rural Education Trust.

Branch Offices: Fort William, Lochgighhead, Campbelltown, Arnan. Includes contact numbers for each branch.

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Fort William appeal for 'white knight'

'In May last year we were on the brink of financial collapse'

REPORT BY STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

FORT WILLIAM FC is appealing for a big-hearted business person - preferably with deep pockets - to help secure its financial future.



Ronnie MacLean: 'white knight' wanted to give the club a financial boost.

The Claggan Park club was facing a funding crisis near the end of last season until a sponsorship drive brought in much-needed income - but repeating that success will be no simple task.

Club chairman Ronnie MacLean told The Oban Times: 'What we really need is a 'white knight' to come in with cash. I'm sure such a person is out there but it would be better if they approached us.'

FOOTBALL

but we have made huge strides forward thanks to local business and club sponsorship champion Stewart MacLean but he's going to have a tough time renewing that next season.

Behind the scenes, Fort William has steadied the ship by bringing in local business experts to the board. Moves are also under way to adopt a more professional approach to accessing external funding from sports bodies such as the SFA and SportsScotland.

Free entry to Saturday's home game

FORT WILLIAM Football Club is inviting everyone to enjoy their home game against Clachnacuddin at Claggan Park on Saturday with free entry for all.

players, the coaching staff and the committee. 'We have made considerable progress off the field this season and, with the support and backing of the community, we can continue to make progress on the field also. 'We are grateful to MacLean Electrical for funding the free entry and sponsoring the day.'

£1,500 sponsorship for Ballachulish Shinty Club



Ballachulish Shinty Club chairman Iain Brown, left, accepts the cheque from Stewart Borland of Highland Titles Charitable Trust.

BALLACHULISH Shinty Club has netted a £1,500 sponsorship deal to help offset running costs in the upcoming season.

SHINTY

invited them down to our new Nature Reserve at Duror and have them running up and down the hills.

The Camanachd Association's Coach Education Calendar 2014

THE Camanachd Association is pleased to promote the initial Coach Education Calendar for 2014. The courses available include Foundation Coaching Certificate in Shinty, UKCC Level 1 Coaching Certificate in Shinty and the recently introduced Foundation Speed Agility Quickness (SAQ) Coaching Certificate in Shinty.

This is a major opportunity for clubs/schools to encourage their coaches to improve their ability to provide quality coaching for the players. Players are also invited to take part in the practical element of the SAQ courses as they can experience the practices.

Captain's XV comes out on top

ON A cold, crisp and clear Boxing Day the Captain's XV played the President's XV as an intra-club tradition. Enough players were present for 12-a-side matches on a day of great fun with much



Kenny Turnbull leads the pack closely followed by team mate Conor Brown.

SHINTY

merriment - and refreshment - involved. The game saw the return of players such as Robin Morgan and Stewart Sandison (1st XV coach).

FOOTBALL

Ellis back at his old stamping ground. FORMER FORT WILLIAM star Sean Ellis will return to Claggan Park in Clachnacuddin on Saturday looking to put one over on his former team.

Lochaber Phoenix boxers plan to hit the ground running in 2014

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club plan to hit the ground running in 2014 as at least half a dozen of their boxers are qualified to compete in the Scottish Intermediate Championships on the first weekend of February.

Aitchison both won the North of Scotland Open Championships against quality opponents and both these boys only lost in the Scottish Open championships to the eventual champions.

BOXING

As he develops, the club are very hopeful that by the time next year's novice championships come along he will go in as one of the favourites.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL COMPETITION

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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.

This week's nearest ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
J Young, Lochgilphead & M Martin, Dervaig, Mull

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 4BH by 12noon Tuesday.

You may hand in 6 to The Oban Times Head Office, Lochaber, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

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LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

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Oban Celtic's Over 35s and Under 35s line-up before the annual Boxing Day match held in memory of Vince Carnie and Jamie Pearson. 16. 01/12/2012

Honours even in Boxing Day memorial match

Over 35s win dramatic penalty shoot-out

THE ANNUAL Boxing Day match organised by Oban Celtic Shinty Club in memory of two former players was played in a typically competitive and friendly spirit.

But this year's game began on a particularly poignant note, as the families of Vince Carnie and Jamie Pearson came to watch the match.

It was the first time in the 19-year history of the memorial match that both families had attended the game and they met with both sets of players on the pitch before the throw-up.

A testing encounter saw the under-35s take a two-goal lead through Alan Duffy but Damien MacIntyre and Sandy MacLeod equalised for the over-35 team. The game then went to a penalty shoot-out with the Over 35s winning 4-3.

The match, which was played at Mossfield, was refereed by John MacGregor, Taynait.

SHINTY

Oban Athletic back in action after the festive break

FOOTBALL

OBAN Athletic get back to action this Saturday when they travel away to take on Antonine in a League Cup game.

This is followed by a home league match against Bellaire on January 11.

Oban Saints youths

YOUTH FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints youth teams return after the Christmas and New Year break on January 11 and 12 with the following fixtures: Broomhill Sports Club v Under 13s; Dumbarton United v Under 14s; Under 15s v Helensburgh; Under 17s v Milngavie FC.

Islay Golf Club

GOLF

RESULTS from the Winter League played 29 December - 1 A Blair 33 pts; 2nd A Livingstone 32 pts; 3 R Quail 32 pts.

Head coaches required for senior and under 21 international squads

SHINTY

FOLLOWING the completion of the term of the current post holders, the Camanachd Association is pleased to invite applications from appropriately experienced individuals for the following positions with the National Senior and Under-21 Men's Squads - Senior National Men's Squad - Head Coach and Under-21 National Men's Squad - Head Coach.

Responsible Post holders will be responsible for the selection and preparation of the Senior and Under-21 National Men's Squads for the annual Shinty/Hurling Internationals against Ireland for seasons 2014 and 2015.

These posts are volunteer positions but will be eligible for a contribution towards expenses.

The Camanachd Association policy is to ensure all representative coaching

appointments are available and advertised on a two-year cycle.

Applicants are invited to submit a letter detailing their suitability for the relevant position. Applications letters should be marked 'Private and Confidential' and sent to The Chief Operating Officer, The Camanachd Association, Alton House, 4 Ballifery Road, Inverness, IV3 5PJ.

Interview Deadline for receipt of applications is 5pm on Monday January 20 2014. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.

For further information on the role or to discuss the matter in confidence prior application, please contact The Chief Operating Officer on 01463 715931 or email torquimacloed@shinty.com.

Markie Dans A lead Oban Pool League after nine wins in a row

POOL

AS THE Oban Pool League headed into the festive break, Markie Dans 'A' sat proudly at the top after their ninth consecutive league win.

A depleted Foley's Bar were the latest victims as the Corran Esplanade side's relentless pursuit of the championship continued.

Their next fixture sees them

come face-to-face with The Cellar Bar for the first time this season and if Markie can somehow prevail it would be their title to lose.

The Cellar Bar's scheduled match against The Creagan Inn was postponed last week, leaving them four points off their bitter rivals and they will hope their lack of match activity

doesn't leave them table-rusty on the eve of such an important match.

Also four points behind with a game in hand is The Lancaster 'A' which returned to winning ways after their previous deflating defeat against the leaders.

The Lancaster 'A', despite sharing venue occupancy with The Outreach, showed no compassion and mercilessly swept aside the bottom side to resume their title charge.

The Lancaster 'B' hosted The Lochnell in the match of the night and unsurprisingly both sides had to settle for a share of the spoils after a marathon encounter.

However the result leaves The Lancaster 'B' with a five-point cushion in fourth spot. The other two matches epitomise the strength and depth of this year's league as The Lochavullin welcomed Markie Dans 'B' and The Claredon squared off against

The Gluepot with all four teams chasing a top six finish.

In the latter match home advantage just about saw The Claredon over the line and into fifth spot entering into the new year.

Finally, Markie Dans 'B's superior teamwork shone through in the doubles for an impressive away win to fill the remaining top six slot.

Results week 10: Markie Dans A 7 - 3 Foleys Bar; Creagan Inn P - P Cellar; Outreach 0 - 10 Lancaster A; Lancaster B 5 - 5 Lochnell; Claredon 6 - 4 Gluepot; Lochavullin 3 - 7 Markie Dans B.

Fixtures, January 9: Cellar v Markie Dans A; Markie Dans B v Creagan Inn; Outreach v Foleys Bar; Lancaster A v Lancaster B; Lochavullin v Claredon; Gluepot v Lochavullin.

Oban Pool League - Sponsored by The Creagan Inn

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1 Markie Dans A	9	9	0	0	65	25	18
2 Lancaster A	8	7	0	1	59	21	14
3 Cellar Bar	8	7	0	1	57	23	14
4 Lancaster B	9	6	1	2	57	33	13
5 Claredon	9	3	2	4	44	46	8
6 Markie Dans B	9	3	2	4	41	49	8
7 Lochnell	9	3	2	4	40	50	8
8 Lochavullin	9	4	0	5	39	51	8
9 The Gluepot	9	3	0	6	42	48	6
10 Creagan Inn	7	2	1	4	24	46	5
11 Foleys Bar	9	1	0	8	32	58	2
12 Outreach	9	0	0	9	20	70	0

Oban Saints' practise match called off due to a waterlogged pitch

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints had to call off a full scale practise match last Saturday when Mossfield and Glen 2 were declared unplayable after a pitch inspection found both parks to be waterlogged.

Saints club secretary David Buchanan said: "It seems crazy to me that we have a 3G pitch at Oban High School where we could have played the game but because the school is closed so is the pitch."

"We wouldn't want the use of the school, just the pitch. I thought it was a community pitch, but it's no use if the community can't play on it when they need the use of it."

"We have a 5th round Scottish Cup tie on January 11 so it looks like we'll be going into that important game without having kicked a ball in earnest for four weeks due to games being cancelled because of the weather and the 3G pitch at the school being closed."

Weather

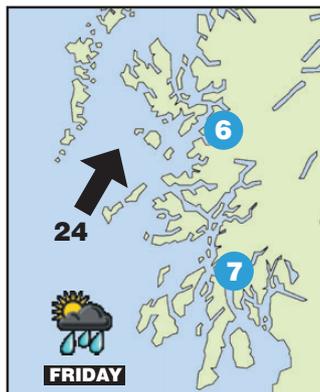
Thursday Light rain
Winds moderate south south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C

Friday Heavy rain showers
Winds moderate south south westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.

Weekend Outlook Light rain
Winds moderate south easterly
Temperatures 4°C to 10°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 2, 2014** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 06.03	4.2 12.23	0.6 18.18 4.1 *** **
Fri 00.40	0.5 06.46 4.3 13.11	0.6 19.00 4.0
Sat 01.27	0.4 07.29 4.2 13.58	0.6 19.43 3.9
Sun 02.14	0.5 08.14 4.1 14.45	0.8 20.26 3.4
Mon 03.01	0.7 09.00 3.9 15.33	1.0 21.10 3.5
Tues 03.51	0.9 09.49 3.6 16.24	1.3 21.59 3.2
Wed 04.45	1.2 10.48 3.3 17.19	1.5 22.59 3.0

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

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

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Concluding this week

Review of the Year 2013



Storm bound couple rescued from bothy

A COUPLE were picked up by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team after stormy weather became too much for them. The pair had been walking from Courour train station to Spean Bridge through wind and snow when they retreated to Lairig Leachach Bothy for shelter last Friday evening. The team was called out when family became worried that the couple had not come home. Rescuers soon found the pair in the bothy. Team leader John Stevenson said: "They were very cold and very wet but not hurt. It's quite a common route they were walking but it got hit badly with snow and I think the weather got the better of them." The rescue team's Land Rover had to be dug out of a snow drift during the search for the stranded couple. The incident was the first rescue the team had faced in over a month as stormy weather kept walkers and climbers out of the mountains. Mr Stevenson said: "The last five or six weeks have been very quiet. We normally are at this time of year but we've been exceptionally quiet this year because of the weather."

Elderly woman seriously injured after being hit by car

AN ELDERLY woman was left seriously injured after she was hit by a car in Oban. The pensioner, believed to be in the area on holiday, was walking near Culcheanna with her daughter when the car, believed to be driven by a local man, struck her on Monday evening. The A&E was closed for two hours from around 4.30pm, causing tailbacks of traffic almost to Ballachulish Bridge and north past the Corran Ferry. When an ambulance attended the scene, the 85-year-old pedestrian was conscious and breathing. Her injuries were described by police as "serious but not life threatening". She was taken to Belford Hospital for further treatment. The driver was not hurt.

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Waverley Cameron Jrn presents Gladys and Jimmy with the framed photographs of the 13 people who are only here today thanks to their daring rescue.

Pair reunited with man they saved 53 years ago

A SPEAN Bridge couple have been reunited with a man for the first time since they saved him from drowning in a dramatic sea rescue 53 years ago. Gladys and Jimmy Johnston plucked Waverley Cameron Jrn and four other men from the Forth of Lorn off Oban on August 20, 1960 after coming across them clinging to their tiny overturned boat just minutes from death. The life-saving feat earned Mr Cameron, now 69, and fellow survivor Michael Acheson went on separately to have children and grandchildren who would otherwise have never been born. And in an emotional reunion, Mr Cameron, an Edinburgh businessman, presented Gladys and Jimmy with a framed collection of photographs showing 13 members of his and Mr Acheson's families who are only here today because of the couple's heroic actions. The meeting was held in a hotel in Milnathort because Mr Cameron's business commitments prevented him from travelling to Spean Bridge. Gladys, 72, told *The Oban Times*: "It was so exciting. We just hugged and hugged and we had tears in our eyes. We was

EXCLUSIVE REPORT BY STEPHEN NORRIS norris@obantimes.co.uk

just so happy and said it was unbelievable to have met us after all these 53 years. "It was the first time since we hauled him out of the water that day. "There are 13 people who would not be here today were it not for our timely rescue. We are going to keep in touch and he would love us to meet with Michael Acheson some time." Mr Cameron, who is "winding down" to retirement after running a technology start-up business for some years, told *The Oban Times*: "It was very nice to meet up with Gladys and Jimmy after such a long time. It was a great pleasure to see them again. "I simply said thank you for saving my life - I don't know how you can thank somebody enough for that. "Directly or indirectly there are 13 people - myself, Mike and our children and grandchildren - who owe their lives to them. "I said I had stayed in touch with my friend Mike Acheson and I told him I was coming to

see Gladys and Jimmy. It was wonderful to see them looking so sprightly. Mike sent his best wishes." Mr Cameron and Mr Acheson, who now lives in France, are the last two surviving members of the five-strong party whose boat, the Babbysham, overturned. Among the others were Mr Cameron's father, also Waverley, the then owner of *The Oban Times*. Gladys and Jimmy, along with friends Tommy and Edie Stevenson from Newcastle, were on Jimmy's converted lifeboat the Silver Wave when they saved the men and their dog, Sputnik. The incident caused a sensation in Oban and hundreds lined the quayside to watch rescuers and rescued arrive safely in port about the Silver Wave. "Recalling the fateful day, Gladys said: "We spotted them miles away and thought they were canoes, remarking how stupid it was for people to be out in such weather. "When we got there were five men in the water and a dog underneath the boat. But we saved them all. Some people thought we should have got more recognition but we thought nothing of it."

West Highland honours double

AN ISLE of Skye hotelier, food writer and charity champion has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List. Lady Claire MacDonald received the medal for her services to the hospitality industry, and to charity in Scotland particularly through Marie Curie Cancer Care. Claire, 65, who along with husband Godfrey have owned the Kinloch Lodge on Streat for 42 years, has written 18 cookery books, many extolling the virtues of local seasonal food. A passionate advocate of Scottish quality produce both at home and abroad.



Jessie Henderson: received a British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List.



Lady Claire MacDonald: OBE for services to hospitality industry and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

can think of very many more people who are more worthy of receiving this award than I. "I suppose what got it for me was the length of time I have been doing it, taking food from Scotland all over the world." On her charity work, Claire said she takes great pride in fundraising for Marie Curie Cancer Care through cookery demonstrations the length and breadth of Scotland. She said: "When to the end of life, no matter what the illness, be it heart failure, motor neurone disease or cancer, normally it is the Marie Curie nurses who go out into the home to look after patients and their families. "Both male and female nurses are saints - they are a special breed of people and it is a privilege to raise funds for them and help them, because they rely entirely on volunteers and charitable contributions. Long may they continue to do so. Meanwhile, the West Highlands scored another success when Jessie Henderson of Fort William was recognised with a BEM (British Empire Medal) for voluntary service and charity in Inverness-shire. Jessie, together with husband Bobby, have raised thousands of pounds for good causes in Lochaber by holding dances in

Local history society meets

LOCHABER Local History Society will have their first meeting of 2014 on Thursday. A third instalment of 'Land Ownership in Lochaber 1746-2012' will be presented by

Richard Sidgwick, an expert on Lochaber's estates. The meeting is open to the public and will be held at the Ben Nevis Hotel on Thursday January 9 at 8pm.

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Potential new Skye airport plans to be unveiled

DESIGNS for a potential new Skye airport will be unveiled next week. Architectural technology students from the University of Highlands and Islands have been working on plans for how the old airport at Ashaig might look if it is reopened. FlySkye, the group behind the campaign for the resumption of commercial flights to and from Skye, will meet with students on Tuesday to see the designs. Representatives from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership will attend the meeting. Members of The Highland Council have also been invited. Plans Ian Blackford, one of the founders of FlySkye said: "The lecturer involved is bringing his students over to Skye to present the plans. "If the airport goes ahead there's no guarantee that the plans will be used, but it's possible and it's helpful for us to see how it could look. We're making very good progress and hopefully there will be more in 2014. The design includes what could be the airport terminal building, a maintenance hangar for a Twin Otter size aircraft, road links, parking and landscaping. The honours students, based at Inverness College, have been using the initiative as a project for their Advanced Professional Practice module.

Police repeat warning about cold call phone scammers

POLICE Scotland have issued a further warning to Highlands and Islands residents about cold callers claiming to be from a bank. The move follows a wave of phone scams targeting households across the region as fraudsters attempt to retrieve personal bank details. Last week *The Oban Times* reported how Fort William supermarket worker Allan Dunleavy's suspicions were aroused when he was contacted by somebody purporting to be from a bank. Mr Dunleavy refused to give out any information. In the latest batch of incidents, callers claim to be from a Visa Debit payment verification department. The fraudster advises their target to hang-up and call the number on their bank card. When the individual does so the caller stays on the line and waits for the person to call the bank. The fake caller then proceeds to act as the bank representative, taking details for their own use. Police are urging people to exercise "extreme caution" and never to give out personal details over the phone. They also advised it is not normal banking practice to ask for account details or PIN numbers via a cold call.

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Fergie's Folk with Fergie MacDonald

IF YOU find television boring on occasions switch to BBC 504 and look for a show called 'The House of Lords'.

I totally disagree with an article I read recently in a national newspaper calling for the government to axe what was described as legalised fraud, and save the country millions. A single visit by a member of the venerable institution can amount to £1,000 plus expenses.

Please don't axe this show. The entertainment value is streets ahead of 'Mr Bean', 'The Two Ronnies', 'Porridge and even Norman Maclean in his prime.

'Noble Lords', as they call themselves, debate serious problems in relation to the nation and its people. With all due respect to our senior citizens including myself, I reckon that most of these performers have lost the plot, age finally having caught up with them.

Dotted around this historic building and usually stretched out on luxurious leather crimson benches you can spot them as if waiting for 'the call' in their twilight years.

The other week was a classic. A top variety performance. The noble lord who was top of the bill got his lines totally mixed up.

I can imagine him in his stately mansion sitting at his desk in front of a roaring log fire sporting plus-four tweeds and slippers and peering through a monocle, preparing his speech and of course adjusting his expenses claim form. All on this sheets of A4 carefully numbered.

However, during his performance in the House of Lords his speech became a complete nonsense. He got his A4 sheets completely mixed up.

Yet, in the true showbiz tradition 'the show must go on' and it will be alright on the night, he acted like a real pro with off-the-cuff gags and one-liners.

He even referred to a test match between England and the West Indies where the fast bowler ran into the batsman and knocked him out. I was bursting my sides laughing.

Deviating away from the debate and items on the agenda didn't matter a toss to his ardent fans - all five of them.

One noble lord was totally 'out of the game' as they say. Slumped in the seat, head back, mouth wide open, shirt collar and tie unfastened, and sound asleep. It was a ghastly death-like sight. It looked to me as if he had passed away.

I spotted a baroness and a noble lord in the furthest away luxurious back bench. They were in a little world of their own like two young lovers in the back row of the cinema.

They seemed to be scribbling little notes to each other and killing themselves laughing and not listening to one word the star performer was saying.

I can only imagine and suspect that this could be an ongoing illicit affair like the ones we used to read about in aristocratic social circles.

Top billing must surely go to the noble lord who sat throughout the show scratching his bald head and looking up to the heavens for a flash of inspiration to complete his crossword.

When the final curtain came down to end the show, cool as you like, he folded up his book of enigmas and put into his briefcase which seemed to be bulging with goodness knows what - probably top shelf literature and expense claim forms.

Eventually every good thing comes to an end as the saying goes. Sitting at a desk in the middle of the floor, the master of ceremonies, dressed in black and wearing this ridiculous curly white wig, brought this hilarious debating farce to a close.

His basic duty in the house is to enforce law and order. Nip potential riot outbreaks in the bud. He will no doubt double up as referee and bounce. To be perfectly honest, these frail old souls could hardly stand up - far less participate in a brawl.

Thankfully the end came quickly. Everybody trooped - or rather staggered out of the auditorium led by this guy twirling a mace.

Our own star, Angus MacColl, Pipe Major of Oban Pipe Band should note this guy's telephone number in case the band drum major has to pull out at short notice.

So there you have it. Rather than talking of giving this show the axe, we should up the ante. Review the wage structure of the noble lords to the standard of stars like Ronaldo, Messi and Maradona.

As far as I am concerned, roll on the next episode - or even repeats would do.



Kinlochleven bright sparks: Back row, left to right, Dani Taylor, Nicci Federici, Emma McFartridge, Patrick MacLean and James Viray. Front, Nicole Farrell, Tyler Murphy and Ashleigh Carson.

Kinlochleven pupils just the business

AN S3 team of budding entrepreneurs from Kinlochleven High School has won a coveted place in the Scotland Real Business Challenge final at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh on February 4.

The eight-strong outfit won through after formulating a healthy drink and saying how it could be marketed to the consumer through a social enterprise business.

They proposed launching a range of fruit 'slushies' to be sold through milk bars and soda fountains in disused cafe premises, sponsored by local authorities and competition

backers Coca Cola. The healthy drinks outlet would cater for young adults and would provide place in the Scotland Real Business Challenge final at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh on February 4.

At the final, Kinlochleven will work alongside Coca-Cola business mentors on a live project and have the chance of winning exciting prizes. Business studies class teacher Michael Farman said: 'Once the idea had taken hold the pupils were really motivated to plan how the operation could work, and investigate the viability of the idea through market research questions to their peers.'



Fort William's Judy Clark, left, with Beth, who is modelling a bespoke dress made from 1,200 recycled coffee capsules and woven cardboard. 652, Judy03

A82 road group looks forward to seeing campaign bear fruit

LOCHABER-based The A82 Partnership, the group pressing for upgrades to the West Highlands' main route between Glasgow and Inverness, is looking forward to their campaign work bearing fruit in 2014.

The new section of road at Pulpit Rock on Loch Lomond-side and the Crianich bypass are both due to open by next summer, while current planning suggest works will start at Glen Gloy, north of Spean Bridge, by mid-2014.

Land acquisition and design are 'progressing' at the bottlenecks where the A82 there has been down to a single lane for over a year after floods undermined the carriageway.

During 2013 the group, after consulting across the West Highlands, decided to focus their efforts on upgrading the road between Tarbet and Inverarnan and Onich and Fort William.

More success came when the Fort William-Cool-A82 Link Road was included in Highland Council's capital programme.

A82 Partnership chairman, Councillor Brian Murphy, said: 'Significant progress was made in 2013 with the completion of the works on Loch Lochy-side and the replacement of the bridge at Bridge of Orchy.'

'This improvement was particularly successful as the installation of a two way temporary bridge resulted in minimal disruption to traffic.'

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Fort designer on track for more success

A FORT William fashion designer look set to weave more magic in 2014 as she plans her first independent fashion show.

Judy Clark will showcase her latest creations at her in Edinburgh on January 23 to add another triumph to add to her long list of achievements.

Judy, 29, is keeping the event under wraps for the moment and declined to divulge further details to The Oban Times.

Locally sourced fabrics such as Harris Tweed and MYB Lace are common features in Judy's edgy yet classic dresses and jackets - but she insists growing up in the West Highlands is not the only inspiration behind the designs.

She said: 'The biggest designers in the world use Scottish material, they're so popular and I'm just lucky to have them on my doorstep. We've got the cream of the crop in fabrics.'

'I have Scottish roots which influences me to an extent but it's normally a collection of ideas from cultures and tribes across the world, combined with historical influences.'

Judy can fashion a dress from anything - one of her latest creations was made of recycled coffee capsules to celebrate the opening of Nespresso's first Scottish boutique store in Edinburgh last month.

'I enjoy working with new and different materials, so when I was approached by Nespresso to create something to mark its first Scottish Boutique I jumped at the chance. I was sticking things together and making things out of recycled objects before I learned how to sew so that was almost like going back to the beginning.'

Judy won Womenswear Designer of the Year at the Scottish Style Awards last month and followed that up with a visit from Italian Vogue. And if wasn't enough, she has just designed a new range of clothing for the staff at Islay whisky distillery Ardbeg.

Judy, now living in Edinburgh, prides herself on her use of Scottish fabrics and the uniforms are no exception as she used bespoke Ardbeg tweed woven at Islay Woolen Mill for the design.

She said: 'Creating a new line with Ardbeg has been wonder-

ful as the inspiration from the whisky and location was endless. From design to the woven cloth, everything was produced in Scotland which really reflects Ardbeg's almost 200-year heritage on Islay.'

'After a hectic year Judy, the only designer still living in Scotland, was back in Fort William in time for Christmas. She said: 'I like coming home to chill out. I love walking up the glens, it's nice to get away from the city.'

Judy graduated from Heriot Watt University in Galashiels in 2006 and has worked with Alexander McQueen but has gone from strength to strength since opening her own Edinburgh-based clothing line.

And looking to next year Judy has plenty in the pipeline, including launching her first ready to wear collection in Milan in February. 'Green Close' features the work of just 10 designers from across the UK - and Judy hopes it will encourage more international stocks to sell their clothes. Pieces from Judy's collection have already been showcased in Japan, Russia, New York and Chicago.

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Rotary's supermarket bag pack boost. The Rotary Club of Lochaber has raised in impressive £3,927 packing bags for shoppers at Morrisons in Fort William. Above, Rotarians David Thomson, left, and David Robertson were among with the club members involved. The club would like to thank the people of Fort William and surrounding area for their support and generosity. 20, 20/01/14/01

Fort population growth falls behind Inverness

FORT William, the biggest town in the Highlands, is falling behind the City of Inverness in terms of population growth.

Highland Council report, created from Scotland's Census results, reveal that the number of people living in Fort William increased by 4.5 per cent from 9,980 to 10,437 between 2001 to 2011.

However, Inverness increased by 21.3 per cent in the same period from 47,160 to 57,232, largely due, according to the report, to a house-building boom in the city.

Figures show 4,430 new homes were built in Inverness in the decade - compared with just 273 in Fort

William. The report states: 'Local population growth is strongly linked to the building of new homes. High levels of population growth have occurred in areas where there has been significant house building.'

The census report also highlights a major increase in those reaching retirement age in the Highlands. Findings show that there has been a 'peak' in the age 56 to 68 age group, who will reach pensionable age in the next few years. This will eventually result in an increase in elderly care needs and costs.

The Highland Council leader, Councillor Drew Hendry said: 'We are aware that a large section

of the population is aging which is why we are channelling resources so we can provide the best quality of life possible for those in need of support.'

'Current actions include working with NHS Highland and other agencies in delivering an integrated health and social care service and the building of two new care homes in Muir of Ord and Tain which began earlier this year as well as funds allocated for refurbishing existing care homes.'

The report will go before the Planning, Environment and Development Committee on January 8.

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New year Citylink bus fare freeze cheer

BUS COMMUTERS using Scottish Citylink services to and from Fort William and Skye to the Central Belt have been given some new cheer after the company announced this week that fares will be frozen from next Monday.

The move contrasts with the remainder of Citylink intercity routes, which will see an average rise of three per cent to cover rising labour, insurance, energy and fuel costs.

The coach operator - a joint venture between Stagecoach and Transport Scotland - highlighted the need to help remote communities such as those in the West Highlands.

Elizabeth Ensoff, managing director of Stagecoach's UK coach division said: 'We are pleased to be able to freeze prices on our

West Highland services to Skye and Fort William as we understand the challenges that travel in rural communities can bring.'

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We will make you smile

The Denture Designers @ Argyll and Bute Cosmetic Dentures have over 40 years experience in hand crafting cosmetic dentures. Postal service available. Teeth whitening service now available.

As mouth cancer is a serious issue in the West of Scotland, please come into our studio to pick up a leaflet on detecting mouth cancer. We are not dentists.

We have hundreds of testimonials from satisfied clients from all over Scotland and from countries as far a field as Russia, Argentina, USA, South Africa and most of the Commonwealth countries.

Most importantly we listen to what the client wants

We can provide Dentures on the same day and also a half hour Denture repair service

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT

1b Combie Street, Oban
01631 566 631

Firefighters called out to tackle Taynuilt Boxing Day blaze

A BOXING Day blaze threatened to ruin Christmas for one resident of Taynuilt after flames ripped through a bungalow.

Two appliances were called out from Oban fire station at 6.35pm after a 999 call to report a fire at the Airds Bay home.

Crews used breathing apparatus when fighting the blaze in the property, with the fire extinguished by 8.25pm.

Firefighters were also seen cutting away sections of the building's roof and throwing out sections of smouldering insulation.

Cameras

As the building is timber-framed, the fire crews returned the following day with thermal imaging cameras to double check the integrity of the structure and rule out the possibility of hidden fire spread.

Nobody was injured as a result of the blaze.

A spokesman for Scottish Fire and Rescue said: 'It is terrible to have a fire at this time of year and thankfully nobody was hurt.'

'We would like to remind people that our free home fire safety visits, including fitting of a smoke detector, can be arranged by phoning us on 0800 0731 999 or by going online www.fire Scotland.gov.uk.'

Police appeal for witnesses to Christmas morning brawl

A CHRISTMAS morning brawl outside an Oban pub has resulted in a doorman being assaulted as he spooked an appeal from police for witnesses.

Trouble broke out in Stevenson Street at around 2.50am, causing the doorman from a nearby pub trying to intervene to try and break things up. He was punched in the left eye.

Witnesses reported a number of assaults afterwards, with the last assault reported at around 3.00am.

Anyone with information about the incident or who was involved should contact Oban Police by phoning the non-emergency number, 101.



Thousands flock to Oban's Hogmanay street party

THOUSANDS of revellers packed into Oban's Station Square on Hogmanay to enjoy live entertainment while bringing in the bells at the town's free street party. Pictured on stage is The Works, which got the crowd jumping, along with ceilidh band Cool an Aire and feet stomping headline act Face the West. Performers on the night also included the winners of the Opportunity Knocks competition, Amy Leigh Boyce and Oban High School's Traditional School of Music, who triumphed after a tough round of auditions held in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls earlier in the year. Oban Pipe Band helped get the night off to a flying start while the evening was rounded off with a colourful display of fireworks. Photo by Stephen Lawson.

Dangerous weapons in Argyll and Bute schools 'exceptionally rare'

CHILDREN aged 12 or younger have had blades taken away from them in Argyll and Bute schools, according to new figures.

Almost 800 dangerous weapons have been confiscated in schools across Scotland, including Argyll and

Bute, over the last three years. But a spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said incidents of this type were 'exceptionally rare' in the area's schools.

She added: 'The vast majority of Argyll and Bute pupils are well behaved

and act responsibly towards others in their schools.

'Incidences of pupils bringing items that could be regarded, depending on use, as weapons have been recorded in schools across Scotland.

'In Argyll and Bute it is exceptionally

rare that this has happened. Any incident would be treated seriously and appropriate action taken. The safety of our pupils and staff is a key priority.

'The council works with pupils and parents to ensure a safe working and learning environment in our schools.

'The behaviour of our pupils overall is something Argyll and Bute can be proud about.'

Alistair Davidson, Oban's acting chief inspector, said: 'It is not aware' of any schools in the town having a problem of this nature.

NEWSDESKS
FORT WILLIAM
 01397 703003
OBAN
 01631 568000

Dunadd - a fascinating glimpse into history

A TINY sign bearing one word, on the side of the road between Oban and Lochgilphead shows the way to one of the west coast's most impressive historic sites.

Dunadd, a landmark of Scotland's history, is spoken in academic circles and revelled in myth and mystery.

It is referred to in the Annals of Ulster twice and believed to have been visited by Saint Columba.

Yet, blink when you drive by it on the A816, and you might never know it was there.

This is the place where kings of Dal Riata were crowned, the centre of an Iron and Dark Age industrial past, and place of fiscal life on the west coast for 16 centuries.

Dunadd is an Iron Age fort rising above Moine Mhor in Kilmartin Glen. The prehistoric site is only a few miles from the sea at Loch Crinan, opening onto the Sound of Jura and perfectly placed to rule a kingdom of both land and sea. Archaeological discoveries at Dunadd show it was serving as a fort in the Iron-Age more 2,000 years ago.

It became the centre of industry for the whole of the area making fine jewellery and pottery. It is the re-use of the site as a centre by the Gaelic kings of the Dal Riata in the sixth to ninth centuries for which it has become renowned.



The view from the top of Dunadd over Moine Mhor towards the ocean. t1dun3

Evidence found on the site shows it was occupied before the turn of the first millennium until the ninth century but retained fiscal importance until June 16, 1506 when commissioners appointed by

James IV, including the earl and bishop of Argyll, met at Dunadd to collect rents and resolve feuds.

The site is complex. Visitors are immediately drawn through a series of natural contours defined by the remnants of dry stone dykes. It was planned to create a feeling of awe and majesty. The summit, which is fairly flat and deceptively large, was once home to the rich and powerful.

While the history of Dunadd is still relatively unknown, three archaeological digs have revealed some of the site's secrets.

In 1905, Professor David Christison wrote the first detailed study on Dunadd.

The scholar didn't visit the site during the excavation, saying: 'The great distance of the locality precluded superintendence, in our usual manner, by regular visits from Edinburgh.'

Site work was carried out from May 1904 to January 1905. It unearthed one of the

most important collections of finds from any early medieval site in Scotland.

Its treasure included tools, weapons, quernstones, imported pottery and motifs and moulds. Collections from the site are in the care of the National Museum in Edinburgh.

Artefacts

The second major excavation of Dunadd was undertaken in 1929 under the direction of J.H. Crawford, secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Its purpose was to study rock stratification, in order to age the site and its artefacts and to clarify problems of dating left by Christison's excavation.

The work on site was undertaken over 24 days with the excavation completed by two local men.

Crawf's work revealed much more about the site and uncovered various metal, glass, stone, clay and pottery artefacts.

The finds were not labelled and therefore little is known

about where on the site they were found.

Crawf's report concluded many more artefacts might be recovered from Dunadd.

Fifty years later, in 1980, it was decided that a limited excavation would take place on the site. Its purpose was to establish dating criteria and look for areas undisturbed by previous excavations.

The excavations of the 1980s produced an outstanding range of artefacts, including an impressive array of high-status metalwork and weapons. Dunadd has produced the largest most diverse range of imported European pottery of any site in the Celtic west.

Dunadd was also a major production centre with the largest most diverse range of imported European pottery of any site in the Celtic west.

While some call for better signs to mark the site, others say it's fine the way it is.

Visitors are able to step back in time almost instantly as they enter the steep slope up into the fort.

If there were more signs to attract people it might detract from the peacefulness of the archaeological site.

For a centre of such historical importance, its relative peacefulness almost makes it unique.

People can still put their foot in St Columba's (replica) footprint, picnic by the imagined throne of the kings and take a look at the breathtaking view towards the Atlantic Ocean.

In recent years there has been talk of another archaeological dig at the site, in order to understand the problems in dating artefacts on the site.

But for now its secrets lie hidden beneath its craggy exterior.

Dunadd is managed by Historic Scotland and is free to enter. Canmore (www.canmore.gov.uk) provides information on more than 300,000 places in Scotland, with over 200,000 digital images. You can also add your own imagery and knowledge to Canmore.

Anguish continues for jailed Connelman's family

Government accused of 'doing almost nothing' to secure release of guard

THE FAMILY of a Connelman has described how their 'heart wrenched' at the news he was to be formally charged after being held in an Indian prison for two months.

Billy Irving, along with 35 colleagues and ten other people, was formally charged on Hogmanay and will face trial in India. The process could take at least one year. It is unclear at this stage whether or not Billy and his co-accused will remain in prison until the case is heard or if bail will be granted.

Speaking on Hogmanay, Billy's girlfriend, Yvonne MacHugh, said: 'Today I had the heart wrenching news that a charge sheet had been filed naming all 35 men and ten others. The injustice of this whole charade is indescribable. I will certainly be glad to see the back of 2013 and hope that 2014 will bring Billy home for good.'

Billy's family also hit out at both the British and Indian authorities after the anti-piracy guard was told on Boxing Day he'd be released last Friday, only to have his hopes dashed once again by another deferral.

Now the ex-soldier's father, Jim Irving, has called for the British Government and the AdvanFort anti-piracy firm he works for to do more to secure his release from the tiny cell he shares with three other men, saying the lack of movement so far has been 'disheartening'.

He added: 'God knows how he's feeling - I know how I feel and it destroyed us as parents.'

Billy, 33, is being held prisoner by the Indian authorities in connection with allegations the captain of an anti-piracy vessel he was on bought diesel and was carrying weapons without necessary licences.

His parents, Jim and Margaret, who live in France, have been in constant contact with Yvonne, with them all saying Christmas was tough knowing the conditions Billy was having to endure.

Jim said: 'It hasn't just ruined Christmas, it's ruined our year. He only went out there in July for a two-month contract and here we are six months later not knowing what's happening. If he had done something wrong it would sit with you a bit easier.'

It was AdvanFort which, on Boxing Day, advised Yvonne that Billy would be released last Friday, but she only found out it hadn't been granted after reading the Indian newspapers, which reported that police opposed bail because the men 'may pose a risk to the public' and could abscond.

Billy's health continues to be a worry for the family, after she suffered a bout of dysentery because of dirty drinking water and recently developed mouth problems.

Yvonne has confirmed that, despite previous assurances, AdvanFort has not paid Billy while he has been in jail.

She said: 'We've been saving to buy a house up here and obviously that money is going to be dwindling to pay Billy's bills.

'It's the company's responsibility that he's in jail so the least it could do is pay him.'

AdvanFort could not be contacted for comment. The UK Government's Foreign Office said it 'continued to provide consular support'.



Santas dash round Tobermory for charity

Christmas came early in Tobermory this year as the town was inundated with Santa on December 22. The event was the second annual Santa Dash, with all proceeds going to Marie Curie Cancer Care. These colourful entrants were greeted with a medal, dram and mince pie at the end.

Photo by Sam Jones.

Community council hits out over Ardfern homes plan decision

COMMUNITY councillors in Ardfern have slammed Argyll and Bute Council for approving a plan which will see 10 houses built - including four private properties.

Craigish Community Council (CCC) sent letters protesting the decision, made at a recent public hearing, to Sally Loudon, council chief executive, and Dick Walsh, council leader.

CCC has criticised councillors who are members of the planning committee for ignoring the Craignish Community Plan (CCP), which states only affordable housing should be permitted on the site of the Glebe. Community councillors also hit out at only four of a possible 12 Argyll and Bute councillors attending the public hearing, describing the situation as 'unacceptable'. Mary Smyth,

chairwoman of CCC, said: 'It has taken just over a year for the CCP to be worth no more than the paper it is written on.'

'We feel very let down by Argyll and Bute Council and councillors who, on the one hand encourage bottom up democratic involvement in planning issues, but who, at the first challenge, have chosen to ignore the community's clearly expressed wishes.'

The planning application, submitted by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, is for six affordable homes and four plots of land to be sold for private housing.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesman said: 'It is not the case that the CCP has fallen at the first hurdle.

'The plan has been used to help determine a number of

significant planning applications in the area. The council said the application also received 120 letters of support and 60 letters of objection.

Mid Argyll councillors Sandy Taylor and Donnie MacMillan explained they were unable to attend the meeting after openly supporting the CCC's plans to purchase the land back from the trustees.

Mr Taylor said: 'In offering my clearly stated support for the community purchase proposal, I had compromised my ability to participate in the planning hearing. I sought legal advice to clarify my position. I could not be seen objectively by other interested parties as acting impartially and fairly, as I had clearly declared my support for the community buy-out which featured in the objectors' case.'



Early archaeologists take a short break during 24 intensive days of digging on the Dunadd site in the 1920s. Photograph courtesy of RCHMS.

Variety of topics at Oban Speakers Club

OBAN Speakers Club heard one member describing his favourite tipple when they met last Thursday. Jim Fraser talked about Craiggellachie and the amber liquid produced in that area. Eamonn Arthur then talked on one of his hobbies 'The roaring stones' and finally Alec Clark spoke on a seasonal subject with the prediction 'We will have snow'.

Kilchrean homes get go-ahead

A PLAN to build 16 houses in Kilchrean has been given the go-ahead, despite an objection from the area's community council. Miller Harris had applied to renew planning permission for the development, which had expired in April last year but had not changed. The application sought to build the houses west of Nurses Houses, with a new vehicle access, 12 parking places and installation of a sewage treatment system. It was accepted at December's meeting of Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee. No other statutory consultee raised any objections.



Amy Underwood receives her award from Gordon Jenkins, chief executive of Construction Skills Certificate Scheme.

Top apprentice Amy builds on success

A PLANT operations apprentice from Dalnallyn, who is the only woman in her class, has been named Construction Specialist Apprentice of the Year. Amy Underwood picked up her award at the recent Scottish Building Apprenticeship and Training Council (SBATC) Apprentice of the Year awards at the Scottish Parliament. Speaking at the awards ceremony, Amy said: 'I was really pleased just to be nominated for the award, but to have won

is absolutely amazing. Construction is commonly thought of as a male occupation. Winning this award proves women can succeed in the industry too.' The 19-year-old is studying for an SVQ 2 in plant operations through the National Construction College while working for John Underwood Plant Hire, based in Dalnallyn. The Construction Specialist Apprentice award is a new category for 2013 and recognises the particular skills of construction

apprentices working in specialist occupations such as operating plant machinery, Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell said: 'I am absolutely delighted that Amy's talents have been recognised by this award. Amy is a shining example of the talented and ambitious workforce the Scottish Government is working to deliver.' Last year Amy also won Plant Operator Apprentice of the Year at the National Construction College Scotland Awards.

Growing concern over fresh dental move delays

NHS HIGHLAND has promised the protracted move of general NHS dental services into the purpose-built facility at Oban's hospital won't turn into a saga despite fresh delays. Three months have passed since the new unit at Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban was opened, but only for specialist referrals. NHS Highland had hoped the Argyll Square Dental Practice would move into to handle patients on a general appointment basis, but no agreement has been reached between the parties to allow the move - despite previous assurances agreement would be reached by the end of 2013. And it has emerged that the town's councillors have not been kept abreast of developments, with councillor Roddy McCuish warning the body it risks losing

the trust of the public if it is not more forthcoming. Confirming the delay, a spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'NHS Highland is working closely with the dental practice in Argyll Square with regard to the date for its relocation to the centre and we remain hopeful that this will take place early in the new year. The practice will provide the full range of routine NHS dental care to the local population. The salaried dental service which is already based in the centre will continue to treat more complex cases on referral, including orthodontics.' Patients in Campbelltown have to wait approximately two years for an agreement to be reached for the town's dentist to move into a purpose-built facility at the town's hospital, but the spokesman said that

wouldn't be the case in Oban. The spokesman added: 'There has been a slight delay but it is still going to happen.' Councillor McCuish said: 'I can understand there are delays in new projects but I'm extremely disappointed that the local councillors have not been informed of this. It's always good to keep the public aware of what is happening because that is what earns public trust. I would expect the legal aspect of this to be sorted out before moving in - it's like building a house, you don't do it unless you've got someone to move in. As we all know, the Argyll Square practice is up several flights of stairs and this situation prevents disabled people having access to their dentist. I hope this is sorted out as quickly as possible.'

Call for council property sales to be outsourced

SALES of disused council property should be outsourced to prevent protracted delays, according to an Oban councillor. Fred Hall made the comments after learning of the problems Swedish firm Bombardi Publishing has had in trying to buy the Kilbowie House in Oban from Argyll and Bute Council. After months of silence, the company was left feeling like the authority 'didn't want to sell' the building - with a closing date only announced after Michael Russell MSP and The Oban Times contacted the authority about the building. Mr Hall says the systems and processes the authority currently goes through before selling property is slow, inefficient and

costing the taxpayer money. He has also said the system is 'open to manipulation' by councillors, who he says might stall on a decision to sell a property else it harm their chances of re-election. 'If I was a businessperson the delay would convince me to locate the business elsewhere. It shouldn't take this long. The decision to sell currently comes to the Area Committee and each of the bids are considered when it finally goes to a tender. That shouldn't happen - they should just get these buildings sold. If you hand the sale of property to a commercial agent and put them on a commission to sell, it is in their interests to get the highest sum possible - and they're good at it.'

A previous motion by Councillor Hall to hand the sale of excess property to commercial estate agents was defeated at Kilnary last year. Citing Rockfield Primary School and Castle Toward as other examples of where a commercial agent would have progressed a sale quicker, he added: 'I would like to know how many investment opportunities in our community have been lost because of the estates department's slowness in progressing issues. Income raised by the sale of property could be used to refurbish schools, making them more energy efficient, thereby saving money in the revenue budget that could be used to fund teachers, for example.'

Scottish Water urged to clarify emergency plans after homes left without water for 24 hours

RESIDENTS in Kilchrean have urged Scottish Water to clarify its emergency response plans after households were left without water for nearly 24 hours. Despite an abundance of rain in the weekend before Christmas, some homes in Kilchrean ran dry. Many residents contacted Scottish Water to complain but were told by one operator that bottled water would only be delivered if the system was

down for 12 hours. After 15 hours, one resident took delivery of 12 crates of water. One resident said: 'Scottish Water did not seem to appreciate that some residents are pensioners, others have small children, some are ill and there are also those who have bed and breakfast visitors. Surely all residents should have been given a supply of drinking water.' The fault had occurred after leaves and debris from recent

storms blocked the intake to the Taynuilt/Kilchrean water treatment works. Blockage A spokesman for the company said: 'Although we were immediately on site to clear the intake, the blockage resulted in low amounts of water in the network and customers at higher points may have noticed an intermittent or no supply. Most customers in the Taynuilt and Kilchrean area remained in supply. The customers in the

higher areas of Kilchrean were most affected. We introduced tankers of water into the network to keep water flowing to customers in higher areas and to clear air locks in the water network. We also delivered bottled water to all customers who requested it and we apologise to any customers we could not reach.'

Newsdesks 01631 568000 01397 703003 facebook

Oban lifeboat proves its worth in extreme weather

OBAN lifeboat has been proving its worth in extreme weather conditions over the festive period. With no ferries or helicopters available last Friday morning, the lifeboat was launched at 10.22am to bring a seriously ill elderly man from Craignure, Isle of Mull to hospital on the mainland at Oban.

A paramedic from the Oban ambulance depot accompanied the crew. Wind The lifeboat coxswain John Hill opted to steer a less-than-direct course for the mainland, against a south-westerly force six wind, making the passage a little less bumpy for the casualty.

On December 20 the lifeboat launched in a force seven wind to answer a Mayday call that two small open boats, with one person in each, were overdue at a fish farm in Loch Melfort. The lifeboat had to be recalled shortly after launch when the missing boats were found on the north side of the loch.

Hotel workers warned over thefts

HOTEL workers have been urged to be on their guard after a series of thefts from staff quarters in recent weeks. The warning comes after police received two reports of thefts, with sizeable sums of cash going missing as a result. The first theft is thought to have happened sometime between December 15-22, when more than £600 was stolen from staff quarters at the Dalnallyn Hotel. Police were called to a second reported theft at Oban's Lancaster Hotel on December 23, when £200 was stolen from a staff room within the hotel. Oban's chief inspector, Alistair Davidson, said: 'There's been a substantial amount of money taken from staff quarters. There's been quite a few of these incidents being reported and we'd ask for hotel workers to be vigilant. If you see anyone in or around staff quarters who is causing suspicion or just shouldn't be there, give us a call.'



Brave souls take dip in chilly river. Brave Killin souls ignored chilly conditions to take a Boxing Day Dip into the River Lochay - all in aid of the community-supported Falls of Dochart Nursing Home. A large turnout ignored the high waters to dip into the river organised by Anna Nicholson. This group of 'Scooby Doo' from the local Food Cafe in Tyndrum are, from left, Lizzie Watson, George Miller, Colin McGeorge, Ellen Cattnachan and Lester Haynes. Photograph by The Studio, Killin.

Majority of council invoices paid within 30 days of receipt

ARGYLL and Bute Council pays around 90 per cent of invoices sent to it within 30 days - but a minimum of £1.43million remains unpaid so far this year. Figures obtained by The Oban Times show that, in the current financial year, the council has received 1,431 invoices for work or services to a value of more than £10,000. Of those, 1,288 have been paid on time, leaving 143 unpaid within the 30 days. One was unpaid for 181 days as the supplier hadn't provided construction industry tax details. Another invoice in that period, for a sum under £5,000, has gone unpaid for 234 days as an agreement was served on the supplier and the council is required to retain the payment until the matter is resolved. In the 2012/13 financial year, at least £2.6million was not paid within the 30 day period to suppliers invoicing for work or services to the value of £10,000, with that figure hitting a minimum of £3.5million in the 2011/12 financial year. Other reasons given for delays in payments are the supplier owed the council more than it and the supplier had gone into administration. The longest period between the council receiving an invoice and making payment is 550 days, for work valued under £5,000. In this case the company failed to provide tax details.

OBAN STOVE CENTRE. Wishing you a cosy New Year. We look forward to seeing you in 2014. COMPLETE IN HOUSE FITTING SERVICE HETAS. Old Crofters Yard, Soroba Rd, Oban, Argyll, PA344HU. Tel: 01631564790 Fax: 01631562919 info@obanstovecentre.co.uk

Oban cinema handed green grant boost

OBAN Phoenix Cinema is set to go green after being handed a £50,000 boost. New lighting, insulation and draught-proofing will be installed at the community-owned picture house after it was named one of the winners in the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund. A total of £47,269 will see the cinema take on a new member of staff and the long-awaited regulator valves will be installed

on the radiators to ensure the auditorium is the right temperature for everyone. Cinema manager Carol Devine said: 'Eleanor MacKinnon (cinema outreach officer) has done a lot of hard work in the application process and we're thrilled by the award. The process was quite gruelling but we were hopeful. It was quite a big deal and there were a lot of people in it. The award means we'll have

to employ a new member of staff specifically to deal with implementing the requirements of the climate challenge award.' Part of the award means the social enterprise will become a hub for helping people reduce their carbon footprint, acting as a prime example of how reducing your carbon footprint can not only help the environment, but drastically reduce your bills. The big thing for people will be the long-awaited installation of

valves on the radiators, meaning it won't just be hot or cold in the cinema. 'We'll be doing lots of other things too to help reduce the carbon footprint of the cinema and, obviously, reduce our overheads.' Support Reopened in the summer of 2012 with a showing of Brave, the cinema has enjoyed terrific support from the community since a volunteer group got together to see the old Highland Theatre reopened.

A high-profile fundraising campaign saw several events in the community, including several bring and buy sales, bag packing and themed events - culminating first in the purchase, then in the refurbishment of the George Street premises. Among the cinema's high profile backers were Skyfall star Judi Dench, Harry Potter's Hagrid, Robbie Coltrane, and Tilda Swinton of We Need to Talk About Kevin.

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Oban Celtic's Over 35s and Under 35s line-up before the annual Boxing Day match held in memory of Vince Carnie and Jamie Pearson. 16, 17/obantimes

Honours even in Boxing Day memorial match

Over 35s win dramatic penalty shoot-out

THE ANNUAL Boxing Day match organised by Oban Celtic Shinty Club in memory of two former players was played in a typically competitive and friendly spirit.

But this year's game began on a particularly poignant note, as the families of Vince Carnie and Jamie Pearson came to watch the match.

It was the first time in the 19-year history of the memorial match that both families had attended the game and they met with both sets of players on the pitch before the throw up.

A testing encounter saw the under-35s take a two-goal lead through Alan Duffy but Damien MacIntyre and Sandy MacLeod equalised for the over-35 team. The game then went to a penalty shoot-out with the Over 35s winning 4-3.

The match, which was played at Mossfield, was refereed by John MacGregor, Taynuilt.

SHINTY



The teams were piped onto the field by Michael MacKinnon. 16, 17/obantimes

Oban Athletic back in action after the festive break

FOOTBALL

OBAN Athletic get back to action this Saturday when they travel away to take on Antonine in a League Cup game. This is followed by a home league match against Bellairre on January 11.

Oban Saints youths

YOUTH FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints youth teams return after the Christmas and New Year break on January 11 and 12 with the following fixtures: Broomhill Sports Club v Under 13s; Dumbarton United v Under 14s; Under 15s v Helensburgh; Under 17s v Milngavie FC.

Islay Golf Club

GOLF

RESULTS from the Winter League played 29 December - 1 A Blair 33 pts; 2nd A Livingstone 32 pts; 3 R Quail 32 pts.

Head coaches required for senior and under 21 international squads

SHINTY

FOLLOWING the completion of the term of the current post holders, the Camanachd Association is pleased to invite applications from appropriately experienced individuals for the following positions with the National Senior and Under-21 Men's Squads - Senior National Men's Squad - Head Coach and Under-21 National Men's Squad - Head Coach

Responsible

Post holders will be responsible for the selection and preparation of the Senior and Under-21 National Men's Squads for the annual Shinty/Hurling Internationals against Ireland for seasons 2014 and 2015.

These posts are volunteer positions but will be eligible for a contribution towards expenses.

The Camanachd Association policy is to ensure all representative coaching

appointments are available and advertised on a two-year cycle.

Applicants are invited to submit a letter detailing their suitability for the relevant position. Applications letters should be marked 'Private and Confidential' and sent to The Chief Operating Officer, The Camanachd Association, Alton House, 4 Balliharry Road, Inverness, IV3 5PJ.

Interview

Deadline for receipt of applications is 5pm on Monday January 20 2014. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.

For further information on the role or to discuss the matter in confidence prior application, please contact The Chief Operating Officer on 01463 715931 or email torquill.macleod@shinty.com.

Markie Dans A lead Oban Pool League after nine wins in a row

AS THE Oban Pool League headed into the festive break Markie Dans 'A' sat proudly at the top after their ninth consecutive league win.

A depleted Foley's Bar were the latest victims as the Corran Esplanade side's relentless pursuit of the championship continued.

Oban Pool League - Sponsored by The Creagan Inn	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1 Markie Dans A	9	9	0	0	65	25	18
2 Lancaster A	8	7	0	1	59	21	14
3 Cellar Bar	8	7	0	1	57	23	14
4 Lancaster B	9	6	1	2	57	33	13
5 Claredon	9	3	2	4	44	46	8
6 Markie Dans B	9	3	2	4	41	49	8
7 Lochnell	9	3	2	4	40	50	8
8 Lochavullin	9	4	0	5	39	51	8
9 The Gluepot	9	3	0	6	42	48	6
10 Creagan Inn	7	2	1	4	24	46	5
11 Foleys Bar	9	1	0	8	32	58	2
12 Outreach	9	0	0	9	20	70	0

does't leave them table-rusty on the eve of such an important match.

Also four points behind with a game in hand is The Lancaster 'A' which returned to winning ways after their previous deflating defeat against the leaders.

The Lancaster 'A', despite sharing venue occupancy with The Outreach, showed no compassion and mercilessly swept aside the bottom side to resume their title charge.

The Lancaster 'B' hosted The Lochnell in the match of the night and unsurprisingly both sides had to settle for a share of the spoils after a marathon encounter.

However the result leaves The Lancaster 'B' with a five-point cushion in fourth spot. The other two matches epitomise the strength and depth of this year's league as The Lochavullin welcomed Markie Dans 'B' and The Claredon squared off against

the Outreach for the first time this season and if Markie Dans can somehow prevail it would be their title to lose.

The Cellar Bar's scheduled match against The Creagan Inn was postponed last week, leaving them four points off their bitter rivals and they will hope their lack of match activity

doesn't leave them table-rusty on the eve of such an important match.

The Outreach showed no compassion and mercilessly swept aside the bottom side to resume their title charge.

POOL

OBAN Saints had to call off a full scale practise match last Saturday when Mossfield and Glen 2 were declared unplayable after a pitch inspection found both parks to be waterlogged.

Saints club secretary David Buchanan said: 'It seems crazy to me that we have a 3G pitch at Oban High School where we could have played the game but because the school is closed so is the pitch.'

'We wouldn't want the use of the school, just the pitch. I thought it was a community pitch, but it's no use if the community can't play on it when they need the use of it.'

'We have a 5th round Scottish Cup tie on January 11 so it looks like we'll be going into that important game without having kicked a ball in earnest for four weeks due to games being cancelled because of the weather and the 3G pitch at the school being closed.'

Oban Saints' practise match called off due to a waterlogged pitch

FOOTBALL

The Camanachd Association's Coach Education Calendar 2014

THE Camanachd Association is pleased to promote the initial Coach Education Calendar for 2014. The courses available include Foundation Coaching Certificate in Shinty, UKCC Level 1 Coaching Certificate in Shinty and the recently introduced Foundation Speed Agility Quickness (SAQ) Coaching Certificate in Shinty.

The cost of the Foundation Coaching & Speed Agility Quickness courses is £30 and the Level 1 course is £100 but 50 percent funding support is available from sportsotland on www.sportsotland.org.uk within Coaching - UKCC funding.

The Level 1 course is United Kingdom Coaching Certificate

(UKCC) accredited and all courses have been developed in relation to the United Kingdom Coaching Framework and the principles of Coaching Scotland.

- 1) Saturday 11th January 2014: Foundation Course Fee £30. Portree High School, Viewfield Road, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9ET. Theory and Practical: 09.30am to 4.00pm
- 2) Sunday 19th January 2014: Foundation Course Fee £30. Ardnamurchan High School, Stronitain, Acharacle, PH36 4JA. Theory and Practical: 09.30am to 4.00pm
- 3) Saturday/Sunday 25/26th January 2014: UKCC Level 1 Course

Fee £100 St Ambrose High School, 65 Townhead Road, Coatbridge, ML5 2HT. Theory & Practical: 10.00am to 6.00pm both days. (Follow up coaching assessment at the candidates Club/School. Date agreed with candidate)

- 4) Saturday/Sunday 1/2nd February 2014: UKCC Level 1 Course Fee £100 Inverness High School, Montague Row, Inverness, IV3 5DZ. Theory & Practical: 10.00am to 6.00pm both days. (Follow up coaching assessment at the candidates Club/School. Date agreed with candidate)
- 5) Saturday/Sunday 8/9th February 2014: UKCC Level 1 Course

Fee £100. Ballachulish Camanachd Club, Jubilee Park, Ballachulish, PH49 4JS. Theory & Practical: 10.00am to 6.00pm both days. (Follow up coaching assessment at the candidates Club/School. Date agreed with candidate)

- 6) Sunday 23rd February 2014: SAQ Foundation Course Fee £30. Lochaber High School, Camaghael, Fort William, PH33 7ND. Theory: 10.00am to 12.30pm. Practical: 1.00pm to 4.00pm (Open to all players - No charge)

Applications must be returned five days prior to the Foundation Courses and 14 days prior to the Level 1 courses.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

WIN £850

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.

This week's nearest ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
J Young, Lochgilhead & M Martin, Dervaig, Mull

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 4JH by 12noon Tuesday.

You may hand in 6 to 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 Wyman Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

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, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4JH

Name
Address
Tel No.

Please tape your £1 coin here

Fort William appeal for 'white knight'

'In May last year we were on the brink of financial collapse'

REPORT BY
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

FORT WILLIAM FC is appealing for a big-hearted business person - preferably with deep pockets - to help secure its financial future.

The Claggan Park club was facing a funding crisis near the end of last season until a sponsorship drive brought in much-needed income - but repeating that success will be no simple task.

Club chairman Ronnie MacLean told The Oban Times: 'What we really need is a 'white knight' to come in with cash. I'm sure such a person is out there but it would be better if they approached us.'



Ronnie MacLean: 'white knight' wanted to give the club a financial boost. 20, 52101000001

'A major issue is renewing the sponsorship from all the individuals and businesses in this harsh financial climate. Without their sterling support this season

the club would not have survived financially.

'In May last year we were on the brink of financial collapse

FOOTBALL

...but we have made huge strides forward thanks to [local businessman and club sponsorship champion] Stewart MacLean but he's going to have a tough time renewing that next season.'

'We also have a consultant drawing up a business plan which will be a step towards getting more sponsorship in and getting grant assistance, which is something we have been sadly lacking for many years.'

Eleven year-old Cameron Whyte, 12 year-olds Keir Johnstone, Robert MacDonald, Dan Nixon, 14-year-old Robbie Hall and senior Denver Small are all in a position to mount a serious challenge for their respective titles.

Successful to date
The year 2013 was perhaps the club's most successful to date - and now they aim to build on that in 2014 with the foundations in place to push on for more improvement.

Club official Steve Docherty said: 'Title wise our boxers produced good results all year which was very pleasing.'

'At the start of 2013 youth boxer Chris Bradley and junior James

Aitchison both won the North of Scotland Open Championships against quality opponents and both these boys only lost in the Scottish Open championships to the eventual champions.

'Cameron Whyte has exploded onto the Scottish boxing scene, capturing both the Scottish Open and Novice championships whilst Keir Johnstone annexed the Scottish Novice title.

'Dan Nixon and Robert MacDonald have both got bags of potential and I truly believe they have a future that involves winning titles also.

'Robbie Hall was beaten finalist in the North of Scotland championships but has really knuckled down in training and shown great signs of improvement and self belief and will certainly be a dark horse in the Intermediate championships.'

'Nineteen year-old senior Denver Small returned in October after a couple of years away and

should he still has such a high degree of natural ability that it would be a shame if he never boxed for any titles during his career.'

Storming
Success for the club also came in the potent frame of youth boxer Igor Silivinski, who not only won the Scottish Open title but came second in the British championships, storming through the Welsh number one and two in the process.

As the 17 year-old has begun to mature outside the ring his performances inside it have matured also helping him to develop into a formidable boxing machine as he has gone from strength to strength.

Meanwhile, the emergence of unbeaten senior light heavyweight Jonny Donnelly, who has shown an ability that belies his experience in the squared circle, gave Lochaber Phoenix a further fillip.



Denver Small, right, is back boxing competitively for Lochaber Phoenix after a two-year absence. 20, 51150001

Lochaber Phoenix boxers plan to hit the ground running in 2014

FOOTBALL

Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club plan to hit the ground running in 2014 as at least half a dozen of their boxers are qualified to compete in the Scottish Intermediate Championships on the first weekend of February.

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BOXING

As he develops, the club are very hopeful that by the time next year's novice championships come along he will gain in one of the favourites.

The same can be said for 15 year-old light heavyweight Angus Anderson, who in his victorious first bout showed great heart and desire and no shortage of skill.

Strength in depth
As well as the established boxers the club boasts quite a bit of strength in depth, with their first bouts including Joss Poole, Lee Bruce and Leon Smith.

Anyone wishing to come along to training is more than welcome with sessions on every weekday apart from Friday at 5.15pm for under 16s and 6.30pm for over 16s at the boxing gym in Ben Nevis Industrial Estate.

Wet and windy
Wheeler's

After a very wet December, West Highland Wheelers struck lucky and held the third round of their Winter League on a dry day in Glen Loy on Sunday.

Conditions under the wheels were a tad muddy but that did not deter those wishing to blow off some of the Xmas excesses.

Liam Moynihan proved to be just too fast for Joe Barnes on anything that pointed uphill rather than down and came through as the winner.

Stephen Dent was well clear in third place with Alex Dent creeping up the leader board to a fine seventh place.

Mairi Meldrum coped well with the conditions to lead the ladies home, ahead of Elizabeth Adams and Fiona Thompson.

Next trip is a lovely figure of eight out at Invergarry on January 19. Thanks to Ben, Ewan and Colleen for marking and timing.

Results: Liam Moynihan 31:06; 2 Joe Barnes 31:22; Stephen Dent 38:10 (1st Junior); 4 Neil Wright 42:10; 5 James Shiley 42:30; 6 Steve Bradley 43:30; 7 Alex Dent 43:50 (2nd Junior); 8 Mairi Meldrum 44:30; (1st Lady); 9 Kuba Poljanec 44:50; 10 Gavin Lindsay 45:55; 11 Elizabeth Adams 46:00; (2nd Lady); 12 Fiona Thompson 48:20 (1st Lady); 13 Bradley Wells 49:40; 14 Hannah Barnes 50:00; 15 Brian Harbour 50:10; 16 Andy Rogers 51:00; 17 Frances Dean 52:45; 18 Gordon Watson 54:30; 19 Marek Poljanec 56:07; 20 Kim Cameron 58:15; 21 Marcus Austin 59:47.

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Free entry to Saturday's home game

FORT WILLIAM Football Club is inviting everyone to enjoy their home game against Clachnacuddin at Claggan Park on Saturday with free entry for all.

Kick off will be at 3pm, with gates open at 2pm. Lochaber Pipe Band will entertain the crowd prior to kick off.

Spectators will be invited have a say in the future development of the club by becoming members of the new Fort William Football Club Community Company.

Club chairman Ronnie Maclean said: 'This is an opportunity for the wider community to enjoy a good game of Highland League standard football and to appreciate the commitment of the

players, the coaching staff and the committee.

'We have made considerable progress off the field this season and, with the support and backing of the community, we can continue to make progress on the field also. We are grateful to Maclean Electrical for funding the free entry and sponsoring the day.'

Performances improved
Team manager Danny Conlon, said: 'Our performances have improved significantly on the field this season and we have brought in a number of key new players to Claggan Park.'

This New Year fixture is a great opportunity for us to put more points on the board. A race night will be held in the evening.

£1,500 sponsorship for Ballachulish Shinty Club



Ballachulish Shinty Club chairman Iain Brown, left, accepts the cheque from Stewart Borland of Highland Titles Charitable Trust.

SHINTY

BALLACHULISH Shinty Club has netted a £1,500 sponsorship deal to help offset running costs in the upcoming season.

Highland Titles Charitable Trust donated the cash under its ongoing support for its local community support programme.

The trust, which is based in the Channel Islands, manages woodland estates in Lochaber and Argyll.

Delighted
Local representative Stewart Borland said: 'We've left it up to the club to decide how best to use the money but are delighted to have our charity's brand - Conserving Scotland one square foot at a time - carried by the lads and on display at the home ground.'

He added: 'Maybe as part of their training regime we should

SHINTY

invite them down to our new Nature Reserve at Duror and have them running up and down the hills.'

Pleased
Accepting the cheque on the club's behalf, chairman Iain Brown said: 'Ballachulish Shinty Club are pleased to welcome Highland Titles as one of their key supporters for the coming years.'

'We intend to be running with senior and junior teams again this year and that, along with teams competing at under-17, under-14 and primary school ages and the financial support of our business community is critical.'

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'We intend to be running with senior and junior teams again this year and that, along with teams competing at under-17, under-14 and primary school ages and the financial support of our business community is critical.'

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Captain's XV comes out on top

ON A cold, crisp and clear Boxing Day the Captain's XV played the President's XV as an intra-

club tradition. Enough players were present for 12-a-side teams on a day of great fun with much



Kenny Turnbull leads the pack closely followed by team mate Conor Brown.

SHINTY

merriment - and refreshment - involved. The game saw the return of players such as Robin Morgan and Stewart Sandison (1st XV coach).

The game itself was a closely fought contest with the Captain's XV managing to score five tries against the opposition's three.

High regard
The Boxing Day game has always been held in high regard at LFKC and this one was no exception with a well attended sideline crowd.

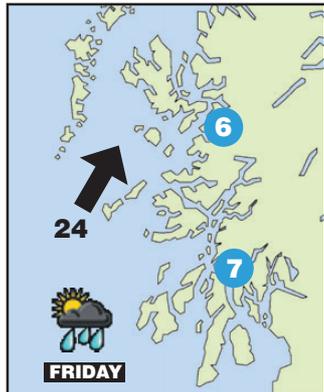
First team player Jack Baxter said: 'A big thank you to all who played, supported and helped organise the event.'

Weather

Thursday Light rain
Winds moderate south south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C

Friday Heavy rain showers
Winds moderate south south westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 7°C

Weekend Outlook Light rain
Winds moderate south easterly
Temperatures 4°C to 10°C



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 2, 2014** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	***	**				
Thur	06.03	4.2	12.23	0.6	18.18	4.1	***	**
Fri	00.40	0.5	06.46	4.3	13.11	0.6	19.00	4.0
Sat	01.27	0.4	07.29	4.2	13.58	0.6	19.43	3.9
Sun	02.14	0.5	08.14	4.1	14.45	0.8	20.26	3.4
Mon	03.01	0.7	09.00	3.9	15.33	1.0	21.10	3.5
Tues	03.51	0.9	09.49	3.6	16.24	1.3	21.59	3.2
Wed	04.45	1.2	10.48	3.3	17.19	1.5	22.59	3.0

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

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

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