

# The Oban Times

## & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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# HAPPY NEW YEAR

### Christmas Eve baby joy for couple

A WEE one made an appearance a day early in order to be home in Bridge of Orchy for Christmas.

Cameron Blair Mckellar was born on December 24 at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, weighing 7lbs 9oz.

Mum Megan Blair said: 'This is our first baby. The nine hours of labour went very quickly.'

Megan and Cameron's dad, Robert Mckellar, live at Auch Estate, Bridge of Orchy.



### Anger grows over delay in fixing life-saving mast

VODAFONE has said it will fix a life-saving mast 'as soon as it can' but after five weeks waiting already volunteers don't have much faith it will be anytime soon.

While pagers remain silent because of a mast problem on Mull, emergency first responder teams on the west coast are being forced to sit by the phone.

The pager mast allows first responder teams on the isle of Luing to carry on life as normal until alerted when a problem arises. One of the busiest teams of volunteers on the west coast, a problem with the Vodafone mast has brought the service and the volunteers to a standstill.

Even the protests of constituency MSP Michael Russell cannot speed up the service. Mr Russell said: 'It is a disgraceful service to an island community and Vodafone is failing to listen to their customers.'

Fiona Cruickshanks, chairwoman of Luing Emergency First Responders, said: 'These

paggers have been 'off' since the weekend of November 21, 2015.

'I have been relentless in my pursuit of a resolution in this matter and have been given various reports about this problem.

'This not only affects pagers for Luing Community First Responders, it also affects the ferry operators' pagers, who provide ferry access to the island for police, ambulance, fire and coastguard. Without these pagers working, the ferry operators and the first responders have to rely on landline communication, which is not always available.

'This is causing massive inconvenience for the health and safety of the people on Luing. It was only with MSP Mike Russell and *The Oban Times*' help that this was resolved the last time.'

A spokeswoman for Vodafone said: 'We're sorry some customers have been affected by signal issues. We need to replace some hardware. We'll get this in place as soon as we can.'

### TIMESLINE

#### Royal Mail praises CalMac workers

WORKERS on the Iona ferry have been praised by Royal Mail staff for getting Christmas cards and presents to the island on time.

In a thank you letter to CalMac, workers on Mull and Iona said the ferry company was so often criticised that they wanted to praise the ferry crew.

The letter said: 'On behalf of the Royal Mail team based on Mull, we would like to thank the crews of the MV Loch Buie (Fionnphort-Iona service). They always go that extra mile when it comes to helping our

teams carry out their job but especially so in the winter/Christmas period. They endure horrendous weather and in the last month the crew has personally taken the mail in adverse weather conditions so that the driver on duty didn't get stuck. We feel in a time when people are very quick to complain that it should be noted they are exceptional crews.'

#### Oban play park's fundraising drive

FRIENDS of Oban Community Play Park are urging people with children or grandchildren under five to get involved with fundraising in 2016.

The organisation is holding its annual general meeting on Saturday January 23 and chairwoman Lynsday Elliot said: 'We really need the community to focus on local fundraising whilst 'team play park' hunt down large grants. We can't do this alone.'

The over-fives play park still isn't open as the flooring cannot be laid because of bad weather, but a company will be on site in January to get rid of the mud so work can start. It is hoped work will be finished by the end of January, weather permitting.

DAVID MUNDELL WANTS TIME CALLED ON SYSTEM OF CENTRALISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE BETTER FUTURE

## Time for a divorce in Argyll and Bute, urges Scotland secretary

LOUISE GLEN  
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BETTER government will only be delivered in Argyll if the area is broken up into four distinct regions, says the secretary of state for Scotland.

David Mundell MP this week echoed the aspirations of SNP MP Brendan O'Hara, who was pleasantly surprised and welcomed the comments.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell this week called for a debate on what new powers historic burghs like Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbel-

town should be given by Holyrood in order to take greater control over their own affairs.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said she was unaware of any comments made by the secretary of state.

In a keynote speech on devolution, Mr Mundell said that councils such as those in Argyll and Bute needed to make their voices heard with the Scottish Government and make the case for greater powers.

He said that Scottish towns and villages risked falling behind their counterparts in the rest of the UK because the

UK Government was already handing back powers to local areas at an unprecedented rate.

Mr Mundell said: 'The issue of devolution to local communities is now an urgent one for Scotland.'

#### REVOLUTION

'There is a revolution going on in local government across the rest of the United Kingdom, with local areas regaining power and responsibility at an unprecedented rate.

'Scotland cannot afford to be left behind as the rest of the UK revolutionises how it

governs itself, giving towns, cities and counties more of the autonomy which our international competitors enjoy. It's time we had a proper debate about devolution within Scotland.'

'And it should be a real debate - because one size does not fit all. What is the right path for our big cities will not necessarily be the right route for our villages and towns to take.

'People in places like Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown should join the debate. Scotland is fortunate to have a

strong network of community councils, often based around historic settlements in which people feel real pride.

'If Argyll and Bute was in Norway, instead of having one council, it would have between six and 10 highly empowered local governments.'

#### VOICES HEARD

'Councils like Argyll and Bute need to make their voices heard and tell the Scottish Government what powers and responsibilities they want to have to shape their futures. That should be national debate, and I today

commit to play my part in that. Devolution is not worthy of the name if it stops at the gates of Holyrood.'

Saying this was not council bashing, Argyll and Bute MP Mr O'Hara said: 'This is a great time to have a debate and I want to be involved.'

'Argyll and Bute is immense in size and most people feel disengaged from politics because of that.

These proposals are long overdue and thinking about the local areas in Argyll and Bute taking over more power is exciting.'

### Lucky reader Janice wins festive hamper

CONGRATULATIONS to Janice Fraser of Nant Drive, Oban, who won *The Oban Times*' Tesco Christmas hamper competition.

Ms Fraser went along to the town's Tesco store on Saturday morning to receive her trolley full of Christmas food and drink, along with a laptop computer, from the manager Brian Ross.

Ms Fraser's prize included everything from champagne to cava, a turkey, Christmas cake, chocolates and much, much more to make it a very

special Christmas for the Fraser family.

'I was going to go round to *The Oban Times* office and drop my entry off, but in the end I ran out of time and posted it; I wasn't even sure it would arrive on time. Then I got the call to say I'd won!' said a delighted Ms Fraser.

ALL SMILES: Janice Fraser after picking up her hamper from Tesco manager Brian Ross. 15\_1011tesco1



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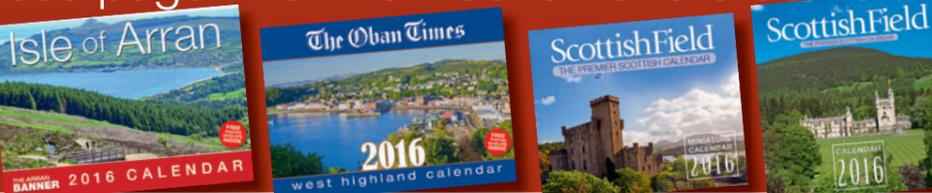
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## Scottish Calendars 2016

see page 7 for main advert and order form



## Mathesons Massive January SALE

Starts 10am Tues 5th

See page 3

Tweedmill, Soroba Road, Oban. Tel: 01631 565195

**CalMac fits new Survitec safety system**

FERRY operator CalMac has become the first in the UK to fit the latest automatic escape slides from SurvitecZodiac. Already used by ferry operators in Scandinavia, the new Survitec Autolaunch slides can be activated by pressing a button on the bridge, or a button beside the slide, rather than needing to be launched and inflated by crew members. This increases passenger evacuation speeds and also leaves the crew free to deal with other emergency procedures. The system has already been fitted onboard CalMac's 450-passenger MV Bute, and an identical system will soon be installed on her sister ship the MV Argyle, both of which are operational on the Wemyss Bay to Rothesay route. MV Courisk, which serves the Mallaig to Armadale route, will be fitted with a similar arrangement at a later date.

**Water charges set to rise in 2016**

HOUSEHOLD water charges in Scotland will rise next year, but are still expected to remain among the lowest in Great Britain. Scottish Water will be increasing their charges by £6 a year for the average household, which will raise the average charge in 2016/17 to £351. Future figures for England and Wales have not been announced yet, but the current average household charge is £385.

**New crofting census issued**

THE CROFTING Commission has issued the 2015 Crofting Census. Crofters are legally obliged to complete and return the census, which was first issued last year, to the commission before the end of the three-month deadline, on March 31. Following the 2014 Crofting Census, more than 9,000 changes were made to the Crofting Commission's Register of Crofts, which is the biggest single update of the register in more than 60 years. For further information, visit: [www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/croftingcensus](http://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/croftingcensus)

**Island transport survey online**

AN ONLINE survey has been launched by transport partnership HITRANS to understand how islanders use air services with the mainland. The five-minute survey hopes to identify areas of importance to passengers and give air users the chance to share their experiences and outline any changes they would like to see. The survey will be open until January 3, and can be found at: <http://bit.ly/Island-AirSurvey>



Basking Shark Scotland, which operates snorkelling and diving tours, recorded most sightings of basking sharks around the island of Coll. Photograph: Basking Shark Scotland

**Scotland's Inner Hebrides is fertile water for spotting stunning sealife**

DAVID MCPHEE  
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MORE than 700 basking sharks were spotted in and around the Inner Hebrides this year and an Oban-based company was at the forefront of the sightings. The majority of the sharks were seen near Mull, Coll and Tiree by Basking Shark Scotland, Oban. Shane Wasik, who owns the

company, said: 'Seeing a shark up close is pretty amazing. We see most of our sightings around Coll, which is our favourite spot. The water is really clear and the beaches are nice. It's lovely up that way. The best day we had was when we had a group out on a really nice day and we saw around 30 sharks. Then, that night, we took another group out and watched the sunset

at Tiree. It was just amazing.' The basking shark is the second largest fish in the world, after only the whale shark, and can grow up to 11 metres in length. These colossal creatures feed only on microscopic plankton, which they gather with their massive mouths that act like nets. But Basking Shark Scotland, which operates snorkelling and diving tours from Oban, Mull

and Coll, don't just see sharks – more than 1,000 cetaceans – whales, dolphins and porpoise – were also recorded this year and one leatherback turtle. Mr Wasik added: 'This year we also saw a leatherback turtle for the first time, which was super exciting, as the chance of seeing them here is very rare. No one had a camera and by the time we went and got one it had gone under the water and

nobody knew how long they were able to hold their breath for. We were all Googling it, and then saw that they were able to hold their breath for 90 minutes. We waited for it to come back up, but didn't see it again. But it was special to see that.' To find out more or to book a tour, visit: [www.baskingsharks-cotland.co.uk](http://www.baskingsharks-cotland.co.uk).

**Skye scholars' hard work honoured with doctorate**

A SKYE lecturer has been made a professor by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Meg Bateman, 56, right, who is an internationally published writer and poet, and a lecturer at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI, was awarded the title for her contribution to scholarship and research in Celtic and Gaelic studies. Having studied and taught at Aberdeen University, achieving a doctorate in classical Gaelic religious poetry, Professor Bateman moved to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI in 1998. The university's principal and vice-chancellor, Professor Clive Mulholland, said: 'The title of professor is the highest level of academic achievement which can be awarded. It is reserved for individuals who are recognised as leaders in



their field and have demonstrated excellence in their work.' Professor Bateman said: 'It feels consolidating of past efforts and like a vote of confidence for things to come. Our principal, Boyd Robertson, who nominat-

ed me, said that the award was like a Christmas present for Sabhal Mòr – it certainly is for my 90-year-old mother. My thanks to the University of the Highlands and Islands for the encouragement.'

**Tourist bed tax would save threatened council services, says Finnie MSP**

HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP John Finnie has proposed a tourist bed tax for Argyll and Bute, which he says could raise the money needed to save threatened council services. Mr Finnie said a tiny charge of just £1 per night would raise millions of pounds to prevent cuts, without hurting Argyll and Bute's vital tourism industry. The proposal comes as part of Mr Finnie's response to Argyll and Bute Council's controversial public consultation on their service choices cuts programme. Mr Finnie said: 'I propose a tourist bed tax to generate income. Argyll and Bute is an exceptionally beautiful part of Scotland and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors, staying

for a total of millions of nights per year. Even a tiny charge – for example, £1 per person per night – would deliver a very significant new revenue stream for the council without creating any disincentive to tourism.' In his consultation response, Mr Finnie welcomed the rejection of a proposed 45 per cent cut to assistants for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN), but particularly criticised the remaining deep cuts to education budgets. Mr Finnie also expressed his hope that the Scottish Government would scrap the Council Tax and replace it with a land value tax, a Scottish Greens policy that the cross-party commission on local tax reform described last week as a 'promising' solution.

**Superfast broadband to isles on track**

THE CREATION of a superfast broadband network serving the islands of Mull, Iona, Lismore, Colonsay, Islay, Luing, Jura and the Craignish peninsula, is progressing well. AB Internet will be partnering GigaPlus Argyll to create and maintain the scheme, with the hope of it being operational by summer 2016. AB Internet is a Lincoln-based specialist broadband installation and maintenance company with a track record of delivering broadband in remote areas. GigaPlus Argyll is a Community Benefit Society created for the communities involved in the project. The company has backing from Community Broadband Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. GigaPlus Argyll has a board of directors, a volunteer steering group and a full-time project manager. Senior management and the project team from AB Internet have visited the area to meet the full GigaPlus Argyll team, to begin surveying the coverage area and to become more acquainted with the ways of the West Highlands. Both GigaPlus Argyll and AB Internet aim to employ local people for the installation and maintenance of the network, and the firms are keen to work with local trades people to construct, install and maintain the network, with details to be announced soon. For more information, visit [www.gigaplusargyll.co.uk](http://www.gigaplusargyll.co.uk)

**Fears over fall in pearl mussels**

MARY SCANLON, Scottish Conservative MSP for the Highlands and Islands, has raised concerns about the fall in numbers of freshwater pearl mussels in Scotland. The mussels are one of Scotland's most endangered molluscs. Ms Scanlon spoke as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) published its recent survey on the subject, which reveals the pearl mussel may now be extinct from several Scottish rivers where they were previously recorded as breeding. Numbers in other rivers appear to be declining nationwide. The report also identified illegal pearl fishing, low freshwater fish numbers, climate change and poor water quality as reasons behind the decline. Ms Scanlon said: 'The Highlands and Islands have a particular responsibility to protect freshwater pearl mussels given a significant proportion of the global population are living in highland waters. Illegal pearl fishing is only part of the reason behind the decline and I am glad SNH is working with Police Scotland to tackle this problem.'

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**Guild coffee mornings help two local charities**

THE GUILD of Oban Parish Church made a cheque presentation to two charities last week. Raising money through its coffee mornings, the guild gave £300 to Iain McKinnon of Lochwatch Loch Awe, and £200 to Oban Friendship Club's Irene MacMillan. Pictured above from left, Chris Fulcher, Babs McIntyre, Irene MacMillan, Margaret McLachlan, Iain McKinnon, Margaret McLean and Reverend Dugald Cameron. 17\_151cheques01



**Inner Wheel are young carers' secret Santa**

OBAN Inner Wheel Club convener Liz Crawford presents a cheque on behalf of the club to Morag MacLean, the manager of the North Argyll Young Carers Centre in Oban. Inner Wheel members donated all their secret Santa money to help the local young carers.

**Final push to save tennis courts**

LOUISE GLEN  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A CAMPAIGN to raise cash for championship tennis courts at Atlantis Leisure Centre, Oban, is hoping for one final push to secure the only facility on the west coast of Scotland. Sports coach and tennis mum Judy Murray and team manager for the Davis Cup Leon Smith have both backed the campaign saying how important the Oban Tennis and Squash Club (OTSC) are for both coaching and developing players. Nick Wesley, Atlantis Leisure manager, said he was hopeful that the campaign would show funders that the town was back-

ing its plans to have the courts back up and running and in full working order again. Mr Wesley said: 'We have started a tennis ball wall where anyone who gives a donation has their name on the wall. 'This has raised the profile of the campaign to everyone coming into the centre. 'We have still got a long way to go, but I am sure that we can get the support we need to secure the cash from sportscotland.' Tennis doubles player and world number 58 in rankings Colin Fleming, who won the Oban tournament twice in 2005 and 2008, and went on to represent GB in the Davis Cup, added his support to the

campaign, saying: 'Best wishes to all involved in the effort to renew the courts in Oban. 'I have played the tournament many times and it is a highlight of the Scottish tennis calendar. 'Renewing the courts would take the tournament to the next level and help attract an even stronger field than usual.' People can donate by going through the Atlantis Leisure website to the Mydonate page.



Buy a Ball

The ball wall at Atlantis Leisure Centre.

**Difficult year, but 2016 will see cinema on the rise**

AN ANNUAL report from Oban Phoenix Cinema shows that in spite of a difficult year, a summer of poor weather and some of the best films are putting the community enterprise in the best position for 2016. Chairwoman Louise Glen will tell the annual general meeting next Thursday that better times are ahead now that the voluntary board has stabilised after a difficult 2014. Ms Glen said: 'Oban Phoenix Cinema, like many businesses in their early years, has gone through a transition. 'While we cannot guarantee that we have settled, the year to March 2015 was one of both turbulence, and then the roots of stability. 'We started the year at only what can be described as a crossroads and certainly our annual report for the year to 2014 reflected the many challenges we had. 'Our figures show that we still have much to offer the public, and since December 2014 we have bought in the services of a film programmer from Lon-

don who is a pensioner with a passion for film, programming some of the best independent cinemas in the country. 'This has had a positive impact on our work and we are showing some of the best films, with a programme second to none. 'During the year we refurbished our second screen. This has instantly had an impact in terms of booking films and using the second screen as a place to see films which no longer attract an audience to the big screen. No one ever said running a community-owned cinema would be easy, but we are building up a reputation for good practice. 'We have retained staff for a remarkably long period of time for the entertainment service industry. We have become members of the Living Wage Foundation and pay all our members of staff over the age of 18 at the national rate.' The AGM meeting starts at 6pm. Following this there will be a screening of a donation-only film for members of the charity.

**St Columba's pupils have festive fun**

ST COLUMBA'S Primary School, Oban were having lots of festive fun on Saturday December 19 at its Christmas family bingo event. Everyone enjoyed a few games of bingo with some great prizes, a Christmas hamper raffle, fabulous festive face-painting, magic reindeer food bags, personalised Christmas decorations and lots of sweet treats and mince pies for everyone. The school raised more than £300 for children and it was a great day. The school would like to thank all the helpers and organisers and everyone who supported it not just at this event but all year round.

**Christmas ceilidh in Taynuilt**

CHRISTMAS was in the air at a ceilidh organised by An Comunn Gaidhealachd, Meur Chruachain at Taynuilt Village Hall. Bodach na Nollaige himself, AKA Father Christmas, was amongst the guests and Taynuilt Primary School Choir performed, led by Ann Barlow, and members of the Isla Sinclair Highland Dancers.

**Noisy couple in court after one argument too many**

A COUPLE had one noisy argument too many and ended up in front of Oban Sheriff Court last week. Andrew MacMillan, aged 35, of 33A Kerrera Terrace, Oban, pleaded not guilty, while Danielle MacIntyre, aged 22, of 10c Alma Crescent, Oban, pleaded guilty to committing a breach of the peace at her home on September 10. During MacMillan's trial two neighbours in Alma Crescent gave evidence that there was lots of shouting, doors slamming and one particularly loud bang during the course of events. During her evidence a female neighbour said she was 'pretty scared' at the sound of it. 'I was nervous and did not know what was going to happen; if it was going to escalate into something more violent than it was,' she said. A male neighbour said that although he had heard arguments between the pair in the past, on this occasion he would have telephoned the police had his mobile phone

been working. The man also said he had to move out of his bedroom into the living room on occasions because of the level of noise due to their arguments. Sheriff Ruth Anderson was told that on this occasion a door had been slammed so heavily that a set of shelves had fallen to the floor. MacMillan was not legally represented and conducted his own defence. 'It has all been blown out of all proportion,' he said, adding that the female neighbour had a 'vendetta' against his partner. Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC found MacMillan guilty and fined him £500. 'I cannot think of anything more miserable than your own peace in your own home being disturbed by the bad behaviour of other people,' she said. Sheriff Anderson deferred sentence on MacIntyre for six months for her to be of good behaviour and to save towards paying a fine.

**Mathesons Massive January SALE**

Starts 10am Tues 5th

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**Tiree**

TIREE High School has appointed two members of permanent staff who will start after the Christmas holidays. Judith MacIntosh was successful in her interview for the vacant primary teacher post this week, taking responsibility for the 25 pupils in the primary campus. Mrs MacIntosh wished to return to her preferred role in the classroom, having been involved in a management role within the school. A spokesman for the school said: 'We are lucky to have such a highly skilled teacher in the classroom.' Meanwhile, Ruth MacKinnon will take over in a job-share position of catering manager in January. The school wished Mrs MacKinnon all the best and thanked Fiona Brown, who extended her role of part-time catering manager to full time over the last five months. Ms Brown will now be able to return to her own working hours as catering manager one day per week.

PUPILS and staff of Tiree High School had a real treat last Tuesday as kitchen staff laid on a Christmas dinner. The school gym hall was transformed with baubles, painted by the children, and Mrs MacLean, and crackers were also supplied to add a festive feel to the feed.

**Gigha**

AN OPPORTUNITY has arisen for a new tenant farmer to take up residence on the community-owned Isle of Gigha. Property firm Bidwells is handling the letting of Ardlamy Farm, a 752-acre productive livestock unit available from April 2016, on behalf of the island's owners, the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust. Ardlamy is on the south-west corner of the island off the Kintyre Peninsula, with modern farm buildings, including a farmhouse, and is being offered as a livestock farm on an initial 20-year limited duration tenancy. Laterally run as a dairy farm with a commercial flock of Blackface sheep grazing the rough hill ground, the farm has grown cereals in the past. The trust is committed to letting the farm to a go-ahead, enthusiastic farmer who will fit in with the island community. Trust chair Paul Currie said: 'Gigha is a beautiful island and our position as the innermost Hebridean island gives us a better than average climate. 'The new tenant of Ardlamy will be able to enjoy all the benefits of island life and yet be close to the mainland.'

**Ballachulish**

THE BALLACHULISH Bridge has passed the milestone of 40 years since it was constructed. It was opened on December 23, 1975, replacing the Ballachulish ferry to link the main Glasgow to Inverness route. The Ballachulish Community Trust celebrated the anniversary by holding an exhibition in the hall of photos and memorabilia relating to the construction and opening of the bridge on November 12 and 13, in a combined weekend which also celebrated 30 years of Ballachulish Village Hall and the 10th anniversary of the community trust's firework display. Crossing Loch Leven and Loch Linnhe, the bridge links

**Oban**

THE AWARD winning Oban Pipe Band is looking to recruit experienced members ahead of the upcoming season. The 2011 Scottish champions, world champions and champion of champions are seeking experienced drummers and pipers. The band, which gained promotion out of Grade 3A, is hoping to become a regular prize winner in Grade 2. The band competes at all the major pipe band championships and also undertakes a number of local events throughout the year. Anyone interested in joining or hoping to find out more can do so by emailing the band's pipe major Euan Drevar - euandewar@hotmail.com; or lead drummer Bobbie Davie - d7umr@aol.com.

**Ballachulish**



ALL SMILES: winners of Ballachulish Primary School's Christmas decoration competition, organised by the school's eco committee.

**Plockton**

PUPILS at the National Centre for Excellence in Traditional Music rounded off a busy year with two well-attended concerts. The Plockton students performed in Applecross Village Hall, raising £500 for Syrian refugees, before a second event in the school hall.



**All roads lead to Barcaldine prizes**

PUPILS at Barcaldine Primary School are on the right track after winning two prizes in a road safety competition. Every year, the Road Safety Unit in Argyll and Bute Council asks school children to design posters, with winners receiving vouchers and the road

safety classroom calendar trophy for their school. Barcaldine achieved firsts in the primary five and primary six category and a 'highly commended' for its primary one pupil. Gillian Stewart, a classroom assistant at the school, said: 'The children

are delighted and the winners are looking forward to spending their winnings.' Pictured are, from left, primary five winner Connor Coombes, primary one commended pupil Orion Windham-Wright and primary six winner Ben MacCorquodale.

**Coll housing project setback but hopes still high**

A HOUSING project on Coll, set up to tackle the issue of a lack of affordable homes, has hit a stumbling block after an application to purchase land was rejected. Development Coll had applied for funding from the Scottish Land Fund (SLF), a body which supports rural communities in owning and managing land and assets. The SLF rejected the application at the end of December after Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA), Development Coll's partner, failed to commit to the project. Development Coll had enlisted the services of an independent company for analysis on three sites for housing, having already consulted the commu-

nity earlier in the year. During a community consultation, the public view was that the need for affordable housing took priority over the location. Three locations offered were visited by the district valuer and planning officer for Argyll and Bute Council, and following this, two were then taken off the market by the owners, leaving just one option, which was submitted to the SLF. A spokesman for Development Coll said: 'Whilst this is disappointing, we have received positive feedback that our application clearly demonstrated need for housing, we had undertaken a good community engagement exercise and demonstrated community

support and benefit. The reason for our rejection was that ACHA did not feel able to commit in writing to partnering with us on this project. The board has invited us to re-apply next year when the next round of funding becomes available. This funding will be more extensive and can include costs for pre-development. At this time the rural housing funding packages will also be available and this should allow us to be certain about where the funding for development will come from if we cannot secure the partnership of a housing association. We thank everyone who has supported this project, in particular the housing group, and we look forward to taking this project forward.'



Rosie Campbell-Preston, who chairs Friends of St Conan's, Liz Mackay, secretary, and Caroline Manson. 15\_150tree05

**Loch Awe**

THERE was a wonderful Christmas spirit when Friends of St Conan's Kirk held its first Christmas tree festival and filled the church at Lochawe village with more than 30 trees. Community groups, schools, businesses and organisations were invited to join in the Christmas festival and decorate trees. Those taking part included Mary's Meals and SAMS marine laboratory to Inverawe Cafe and Shop and The Oban Times.

Dalmally-based charity Mary's Meals decorated a tree in its own colours. 15\_150tree01

**Local businesses, including A MacIntyre and Sons the Builders, entered trees. 15\_150tree02**

A HIGH school student from the Isle of Lewis has been chosen to represent the Western Isles as part of a national programme. Eilidh MacLeod, above, of the Nicolson Institute, is now one of 21 Young Ambassadors for Scotland and will be the voice for young people to raise awareness of additional support needs and education. Eilidh met with her fellow ambassadors for their first meeting on December 8. She said: 'I thoroughly enjoyed meeting up with the other ambassadors. Some were particularly inspiring because of the way they overcame difficulties in all areas of life. I am really glad I have been given this chance to try and make a difference.'

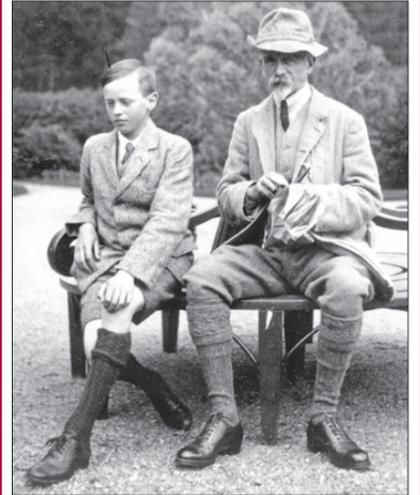
**Lewis**



**MORVERN lines**

**Man's achievements of long ago**

FOR ANYONE interested in man's achievements, there can be no finer sight than some of the great engineering feats undertaken by our Victorian and Edwardian forebears. They may not have been on the same scale as the Cruachan Power Station or the great aluminium works in Lochaber, but one has to marvel and admire what was accomplished with little more than determination, ingenuity and sheer brute force. In 1867, a three and a half ton cast-iron shaft arrived at the head of Loch Sunart by sailing vessel from Greenock destined for the 38-foot water wheel of an ore crusher at the famous Strontian lead mines. Lifting such a heavy, awkward, object out of the ship's hold without being able to come alongside a pier was no mean feat. In fact many cynical bystanders said it could not be done and that it would have to go back from whence it came. Not to be beaten, the mine manager, aptly called Mr Bright, had the ship beached at Ardnastang and a section cut out of one of her sides through which the shaft was levered onto the shore. This, however, was child's play to what was to follow, as it had to be taken more than a steep 1,200-foot high shoulder of Ben Resipol and down the other side to the Corrantee mine, a distance of over three miles. A track had recently been built to Corrantee but it was too steep and narrow for a horse. There was only one solution and that was to pull it to its destination by hand. Mr Bright had the shaft clad in wood and fitted with trams so that it looked like a gigantic roller measuring eight feet wide and six feet in diameter. About 150 local men were summoned, the majority to pull and the remainder to steer and control their precious load down the other side; strong ropes were attached and off they set accompanied by a piper. Mr Bright, like all skilful generals, knowing that an army fights best on its stomach, had carts with barrels of beer, whisky and food following along behind which, according to an eye witness, 'was given out when they were disposed to flag in their endeavours'. Ten hours later, after a great deal of effort, the shaft was delivered. A local correspondent recorded, 'it was a beautiful day, and that it was a very curious sight to see the long string of men winding slowly up the braise, and occasionally stopping, and spreading themselves out on either side of the road, as they rested from their exertions'. The shaft has gone, cut up and removed for scrap, but much of the wheel pit is still to be seen - a monument to a hard day in the life of a Highland village.



George Herbert Strutt of Kingairloch and his son.

When George Herbert Strutt, a cotton magnate from Makeney in Derbyshire, bought the 24,000-acre Kingairloch Estate in 1902, he embarked on a series of improvements of a scale not seen before or since. He enlarged the old mansion-house, built miles of pony paths, erected tastefully designed cottages, a dairy, and a walled garden. He planned to put a road along the coast to Glensanda but the estimate was too high; instead he built an enormous concrete dam in Glengalmadale from which water could be released in dry weather into the Galma River to encourage salmon and sea trout to run up from Loch Linnhe through an elaborate fish-pass. The dam, measuring 400 feet long and 18 feet high, forming a loch of about 14 acres, was a major accomplishment. Sixty men, mostly from Strontian, were employed in its construction which was completed in July 1908 claiming the life of one of them. The men were billeted in a corrugated-iron camp from which they walked home over the hills every weekend - a distance of eight miles. Building the dam and all the associated works meant putting up hundreds of feet of shuttering, importing thousands of tons of concrete which had to be mixed by hand, excavating and moving vast quantities of sand, peat and gravel along a light railway line in horse drawn trolleys.



Glengalmadale Dam, Kingairloch.

In the end the project was not a success. The consultants miscalculated the volume of water the surrounding hills would produce in relation to the size of the overflow. The outcome was that much of the earthworks were washed away in the first spate. Writing to a neighbouring landowner who was considering building her own dam, Mr Strutt replied, 'In October one day my son caught seven sea trout and rose others, so they had evidently overcome their fear of the fish-pass and it gives some hope for the future, but it will take a good many sea trout to justify the expenditure of some £5,500'. (£3 million today in income value). Looking at the superb engineering drawings, correspondence and photographs which still exist, it is evident that the consultants did their best with the equipment available to them at the time but it was not enough.

Iain Thornber iain.thornber@btinternet.com

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## RSPB report details wildlife crimes

RSPB Scotland has published a detailed 20-year review of the illegal killing of birds of prey in Scotland.

The report confirms that 779 protected raptors were illegally killed between 1994 and 2014 - 468 birds of prey were poisoned, 173 were shot and 76 were caught in illegal traps. There were also seven attempted shootings. The figures include 104 red kites, 37 golden eagles, 30 hen harriers, 16 goshawks and 10 white-tailed eagles.

RSPB Scotland's specialist investigations team has been documenting the illegal killing of birds of prey in Scotland to provide a thorough public record of the scale, location and methods of wildlife crime.

This effort, supported by an extensive body of peer reviewed science, has shown the severe impact of criminal activities on some of Scotland's most iconic and vulnerable bird species. The report deals only with incidents that have been confirmed as involving criminal activity, either by post mortem at a government laboratory or by reliable witnesses.

Director of RSPB Scotland Stuart Housden said: 'We recognise that many landowners and their staff have helped with positive conservation efforts for birds of prey, particularly with reintroduction programmes for white-tailed eagles and red kites, and that the majority operate legitimate shooting businesses.'

'But there are still far too many who do not act responsibly and there will be no improvement in the conservation status of raptors until all land management is carried out wholly within the law.'

# Argyll trust celebrates success with plans for expansion

STEVEN RAE  
srae@obantimes.co.uk

A COUNTRYSIDE and coastal trust in Argyll is set for expansion after a year and a half in operation.

The trading arm of Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust, called Act Argyll Ltd, employs three staff in Oban and three in Helensburgh on a four-day contract. Launched in August 2015, employees carry out amenity spaces improvement, groundwork and maintenance, brick work, paving, path laying, landscaping, removal of invasive species, small tree work and small-scale joinery.

The project is supported by the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund, which was procured through Dunbritton Housing Association in partnership with West Highland Housing Association. The company has also received financial support from Argyll and Bute Council, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Act Argyll employs a skills and contracts manager, admin officer and has three trainees in each of its Oban and Helens-



Staff from a variety of organisations attended Act Argyll's open day. 17\_101actargyll01

burgh teams. The trainees are on a 12-month, 30 hours per week contract, earning £11,497, which is 10 per cent above the national minimum wage.

In January, the trust will launch sector-based work academy placements, co-ordinated through JobCentre Plus, giving

eight weeks of work experience with the teams. Act Argyll held its annual open day on December 16, with representatives from West Highland Housing Association, Dunbritton Housing Association, ACHA, Argyll and Bute Council, SNH, FCS, Dunollie, Glenshellach Grow-

ers, JobCentre Plus and Green-shoots H2O in attendance. They were given an update on how Act Argyll Ltd and the trust are operating, and plans for the coming year. The event was held at the trust's Oban premises at Torran Gorm Industrial Estate in Glenshellach Road.

## Angler caught over the limit

AN ANGLER who had driven his car off the road earlier in the day was stopped by police when he returned to the vehicle later.

Stephen Todd, aged 26, of 9 Charles Quadrant, Holytown, Motherwell, failed a roadside breath test at the scene on the A85, near the junction with the A819 road to Inveraray on August 29.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said a passing motorist had reported the car was off the road and when officers went to investigate they found Todd. He was taken to Oban Police Station where he failed to provide another two samples for the breath test.

Mr McGinty said Todd was uncooperative, belligerent and abusive.

Todd's defence agent Paul Sutherland told Oban Sheriff Court last week that Todd's car had gone off the road earlier in the day; one wheel had gone into the soft verge. When police found him there, he had just gone back to make sure the car was still secure.

'He accepts his guilt and he apologises for his behaviour,' said Mr Sutherland.

Todd was at Loch Awe on a fishing trip. Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC fined him £300 and disqualified him from driving for 18 months.

## Santa comes early for Kevin

SANTA CLAUS and his little helper Alexander Story, 6, pick out the winning name in Oban Bay Fish Bar and Restaurant's competition to win an iPad mini.

The name pulled out of the bucket was Kevin Irvine, 27, who is a support and youth worker.

Kevin said: 'It was a nice surprise as I never win these things, so it made my day.'

'It was the cherry to top off the best December I've had.'

To enter the competition customers had to join Oban Bay Fish Bar and Restaurant's or Norries' loyalty club.



Alexander Story is Santa's little helper. 17\_11norries01

## Proposed cuts to advice service funding condemned

PROPOSED cuts to the funding of advice services will threaten the future of organisations such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

It is estimated that it helps put £1.7 million into the pockets of people of Argyll and Bute. Highlands and Islands MSP John Finnie has condemned the proposal, warning that axing these services would actually cost the area money as, without them, many people under claim benefits to which they are entitled.

This would exacerbate the impact of UK government welfare reform plans on Argyll and Bute, which the Highlands and Islands MSP estimates will cost the area more than £760 million every year until 2021.

Mr Finnie said: 'UK Government welfare reform will hit Argyll and Bute hard. Os-



borne's cuts will take more than £7.6 million from the local economy, and of course that burden will be falling on the most vulnerable. Citizens' advice estimates its services puts £1.7 million into the pockets

of people Argyll and Bute, and therefore into the economy.'

A dedicated income maximisation team in Highland Council shows similar results, delivering £3.975 million in financial gain to local people.

'Financial advice services like citizens' advice and in-house advisors bring money into the local economy by making sure their clients claim what they're entitled to,' said Mr Finnie. 'UK Government figures suggest more than £20 billion in benefits is going unclaimed every year. Killing off advice services in the name of 'savings' will hurt local people, hurt the local economy and ultimately hurt the council budget. I'm calling on Argyll and Bute to scrap the proposed cut and guarantee the future of citizens' advice in Argyll and Bute.'

# Blacks Town & Country

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# Viewpoint

## The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 8216

Argyll and Bute must be an area ripe for change. At the moment all decision making is centralised to Kilmory - a place often remote to the constituents it serves because of the geography of Argyll. People in this area have become resilient in getting on and making do, but as the public purse tightens every single

penny is fought over. Islands need special treatment - that has been recognised by Holyrood - but so far not the isles in this area. While there are more inhabited islands in Argyll and Bute than there are in Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles, the same benefits of being an island council do not come to the area. Unlike the aforementioned

council areas, the land mass and islands in Argyll and Bute do not set the area up as an island council by either Westminster or Edinburgh. The debate suggested by David Mundell is welcomed. Let's hope he visits Argyll and Bute soon to discuss these issues. And let's make sure he tells council officers about it.



## Days gone by - panto fun in Connel

This week's flashback photograph comes from the files of *The Oban Times* and features the cast of the Connel pantomime in days gone by. Digital versions of flashback photos for *The Oban Times* can be sent to 'editor@obantimes.co.uk' or prints sent to the editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Anyone who wishes a print returned should include a stamped-addressed envelope.

### Re-think needed on small school funding

Sir, I have been reading with interest the cost to the council to send a child to school in Argyll. It is no surprise islands cost more and this cannot be helped. However the article does not compare the cost of the small schools in Argyll that are within 5/10 minutes drive to the next school, which something can be done about. In other rural authorities in Scotland villages are well and thriving without a school in every village. Take, for example Barcaldine primary. It has four pupils and it would also be cheaper to send them to an expensive private school than the cost of running a school that is only a six-minute drive on a good road to the next school.

Even with adding school transport from Barcaldine to Benderloch it would save the education budget tens of thousands of pounds per year.

Barcaldine, like many other villages, has many international regional companies in the village and would not suffer any loss from closing the school.

Every parent pays taxes. Why should most children in Argyll suffer education cuts while providing exceptionally expensive education to such small schools with a small number of children when it is possible to come up with a solution?

There are many other schools that fall into this category and a long term fairer solution needs to be considered. All children in the authority need to be considered not just the preference of a couple of families. It would not put me off buying a house in a village that did not have its own village school. A 5/10-minute school transport journey is still under the average amount of time it takes for children anywhere to get to school.

I myself had my children moved to a larger school when the council were more efficient. They moved from St John's primary to Park primary in Oban and although we loved St John's it was for the greater good of all children in Argyll. The will of a few families should not be allowed to hamper education for our future generation.

John Sandwell, Ardconnel Road, Oban.

### Balanced approach vital in the media

Sir, Three times in recent weeks, my Oban Times has contained

letters from either a 'Mr A Reid, Dunoon' or in this week's edition, a 'Mr A Reid' who styled himself a 'Liberal Democrat Candidate' for the upcoming Scottish Parliament elections.

All of Mr Reid's letters are critical of the Scottish Government and/or the Scottish National Party, whose MSPs are in a majority in that parliament.

Furthermore, in your edition of December 17, 75 per cent of the letters to the editor are critical of either an SNP MSP (Mike McKenzie) or of the Scottish government.

As well as Mr Reid, once MP and now revealed as candidate for the Scottish Parliament, a David Pollard is given space to criticise SNP MSP Mike Russell. I suspect this is the same 'Dave Pollard' who once aspired to a political post himself.

I place great store on the democratic way my country is run.

One of the guardians of that democracy is the media, whose role in engaging with the general public is instrumental in shaping opinion.

However, if that engagement is not to be seen, or worse to become, insinuating propaganda, then not only is the offending news outlet demeaned, but democracy itself is demeaned. I urge you to continue to ensure a balanced approach in your letters column.

Liam Griffin, by email.

### Problems facing community councils

Sir, I see from the current issue that a further report will be published this week on community councils.

You may be interested in my letter to you of October 28 which you were unable to publish but gave details of the overall position in the Highland region. In Lochaber the position is especially bad with Ardgour, Arisaig Mallaig, Morvern and West Ardnamurchan all being in the 'not formed' category.

My wife was secretary of Acharacle community council until the recent elections when both she and the chairperson stood down, one of the main reasons being that council secretaries are swamped by 'official' communications about matters outside their remit which seem to owe more to the continuance of comfortable, pensionable, employment on the part of the originators than the maintenance of efficient government.

Planning is a particular problem, as it is a core responsibility of community councils, but even in the face of massive objections, as in the case of the industrial-sized

oyster farm development at Newton of Ardtoe, permissions are pushed through by planning committees controlled by Inverness.

At a recent meeting of Acharacle Community Council, senior planner Susan Macmillan admitted that 95 per cent of applications are routinely passed with the majority of the remainder passed on appeal.

Contrast this with 15 years ago when we had considerable difficulty replacing two dilapidated tin sheds with a traditionally designed, slate roofed garage.

The whole department is no longer fit for purpose and if the Highland Council is looking for economies it could do no better than seek redundancies there and in building control.

Indeed one member of the south planning committee has the cheek to return communications from council taxpayers unopened and complaints to the party he represents go unanswered.

Andrew Green, Ardtoe.

### Importance of health professionals' input

Sir, I should like to record my thanks to Dr Laurie for her letter 'Impact of wind farm noise a real concern,' December 17 2015.

It is clearly important that letters from health professionals are acknowledged when they find the time in their busy lives to ensure that we have information about which so many are unaware.

Christine Metcalfe, Loch Avich.

### Top 10 tips for managing asthma

Sir, One in 11 of your readers has asthma and sadly there are warning signs that more people than usual, including children, are seeking help from their GP and NHS 24 because of worsening asthma symptoms.

There is nothing as terrifying as watching a child or a loved one struggle to breathe and sadly this festive period someone will be having a potentially life threatening asthma attack every 10 seconds.

Asthma UK has five top tips for managing your asthma on our website: www.asthma.org.uk/xmastips and I want to remind your readers that they should not be afraid to call for help if they need it; if you are having an attack and your reliever inhaler is not helping, you should call 999.

Kay Boycott, chief executive Asthma UK, London.

### Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON  
robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

### 2015: The Year in Review

IT WAS a great honour for me to take over the Glasgow Letter at the beginning of 2015.

I have thoroughly enjoyed writing the column thus far although, when I am away with the Skipinnish boys, meeting the deadline can sometimes prove tricky.

I cannot help but raise a smile when I look back at some of the situations and locations in which I have put the articles together: from the library at Glasgow University, hours before an exam, to a hotel room in Jura while a party raged downstairs, or to a croft house in Tiree with the music festival in full swing along the road.

I have written it on a plane journey returning from a gig in Spain and, if you think that is exotic, I have even scribbled notes on a bouncy rib journey from Barra.

Probably the only reason I have always managed to finish it in those challenging circumstances is because it is usually such an exciting column to write.

In my first year writing it, I have been able to cover some of the best events I have ever been to in my life. I wrote fairly extensively about Celtic Connections last January.

Concerts like 'The Crew of the Puffer Present Para Handy' in St Andrews in the Square, Skerryvore and Dàimh-mòr in The Old Fruit-market and 'The Music of Pipe Major Donald MacLeod MBE' in the Mitchell Library proved to be massive highlights of the year for me.

In April, I was privileged to attend the Glasgow Skye Association's 150th anniversary civic dinner in Glasgow City Chambers - an historic and unforgettable evening.

In October, I spent the week at the Royal National Mòd which, as well as some great performances from Glasgow choirs, saw both the An Comunn Gaidhealach gold medals, thanks to Dol-Iain Brown and Catriona Macneil, come back to Glasgow after a wonderful week in Oban.

All the annual association gatherings that I managed to attend in 2015 were excellent events.

In the second half of the year, the dances for the Lewis/Harris gathering, the Tiree gathering and the special 150th Skye gathering were all especially extraordinary evenings with extremely encouraging attendances across all generations.

While I write about those big events in Glasgow this year, let's not forget the smaller - but no less memorable - ceilidhs all over the city, as well as the Gaelic sessions in the Lismore and great nights, often unplanned, in the Park Bar, the Islay Inn and the Snaffle Bit.

Some weeks, of course, the letters have been more difficult to write than others.

Over the course of the year, I have written with great sadness about the passing of Charles Kennedy and, recently, Charlie MacColl - two men from my native Lochaber for whom I had the utmost admiration.

Most weeks, however, the column is nothing but a joy to write.

It has been a truly fantastic year to live in Glasgow and I forecast an exciting year ahead for the Highland and island community in the city.

The last few months, in particular the busy association dances, have made me feel optimistic that the Gaelic scene in Glasgow is returning to its former vibrancy after a period when the gatherings were seeing falling attendances.

In the next few months, there is so much more to look forward to and I cannot wait to cover it in the paper.

For anyone with an appreciation for

Gaelic culture and heritage, this is an incredibly exciting time to be living in the city of Glasgow.

Thank you for reading my Glasgow Letters in 2015 and I wish you whatever you would wish yourself in 2016. Slàinte mhath is gach deagh dhùrachd.

### Clydebank ceilidhs begin again

CLYDEBANK and District Highland Association will hold its first ceilidh of the New Year on Friday January 8 at 7.30pm in Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick.

Admission at the door is £7. Chairman for the evening will be Alasdair MacMillan and artistes will be Rhona Morrison, Fiona Ross, Ruaridh MacDairmid, Seonaidh Rostant, Robert Wood and Kirsteen Grant.

Looks like it will be a great start to 2016 for the Clydebank Highlanders.

### What's on

Thursday December 31: Park Bar Hogmanay Celebrations with Trail West (ticketed).

Thursday December 31: Drotieach Social, Gealbhan na Callaine, Sutherland's Bar in the Argyll Hotel, 973 Sauchiehall Street.

Saturday January 9: Glasgow Skye Association New Year Family Ceilidh, Crawford Hall.

Saturday January 9: Trail West Thank You Gig, Queen Margaret Union, 9.30pm.

Saturday January 23: Glasgow Islay Association Burns Supper.

Friday January 29: Glasgow Uist and Barra Association New Year Dance.

### Pub scene

Park Bar: Thursday January 31: Trail West (ticketed). Friday January 1: Trail West between 5-8pm. Saturday January 2: Eriskay Lilt.

### Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL  
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

THA CIANALAS agus dòchas nàdarra aig àm Bliadh' Ùire, ràith a bha riagh cudromach dha na Gàidheil ged a bha ceann-latha na Seann Bhlidh' Ùire na bu bhitheanta ga comharrachadh aig mòran.

Tha beagan den sin ri fhaicinn fhathast ged is ann mar is trice mar leigseal airson cuirm a chur air adhart agus airgead a thional airson carthannas air choreigin. Fhad 's a tha daoine deònach tionndadh a-mach gu leithid sin agus ma chòrdas e riutha, tha fhios gur e rud math a th' ann.

Chuala mi ministear ag ràdh aig seirbheis tiodhlacaidh bho chionn ghoirid gum bheil gaire na phàirt de leigheas bròin cho math ri rànaich, agus tha e math do dhaoine a bhith an cuideachd a chèile le beagan àbhachdais.

Mar a bhiodh dùil 's dòcha tha saoghal coimearsalta air greimeachadh air àm Bliadh' Ùire mar a tha air a h-uile dad eile agus tha bailtean mòra na dùthcha a' farpais ach cò as motha a ni de dh'othail ciùil is eile oidhche Challainn. Gun teagamh freagraidh sin air an fheadhainn as òige sa mhòr-chuid, ach bidh gu h-àraid an fheadhainn as sinne ag iarraidh 'dhachaigh' mar a tha Donaidh Large Dòmhnallach na òran A' Tilleadh Gu Mo Thìr.

Am faca tusa riamh bodach le cheann liath A' toirt facal às an Leabhar an ceann a' bhùird? Mo bheannachd aig an t-sluaigh 's tric orra mo smuain, Bidh mi tilleadh gu mo thìr aig àm Bliadh' Ùir.

Am faca tusa riamh bodach le pìob chrèadh, No cailleach a' deanamh mharag-choire is flùr? Bidh mi fhìn 's mo dhuaìn a' togail oirn gu tuath, Bidh mi tilleadh gu mo thìr aig àm Bliadh' Ùir.

Gu mì-fhortanach dha mòran againn tha daoine a b' aithne dhuinn aig na 'dachannan' sin a' sioladh às agus tha coigriche a' gabhail an àite, agus tha na taighean-cèilidh Gàidhealach a sior fhàs tearc.

Sin fear de na h-adhbhair gum bheil e cho deatamach

Ailean Caimbeul

dhuinn mar Ghàidheil a bhith a' gabhail a h-uile cothrom agus ar dualchas fhòilseachadh agus a bhrosnachadh. Pàirt den adhbhar gum bheil Mòdan Ionadail agus Nàiseanta cudromach, agus ged a tha cuid nach eil ag aontachadh leis a' bheachd sin, cha ghabh àicheadh nach e Am Mòd Nàiseanta an cruinneachadh Gàidhlig as motha gach bliadhna dha òigridh agus inbich, agus tha Mòdan Ionadail a' deanamh an aon seòrsa brosnachaidh nan sgìrean fa leth fhèin.

Tha mi 'n dòchas gum bi cothrom agaibh uile beagan tlachd a ghabhail nar cuid cànan is ciùil a' cur fàilte air a' Bhlidh' Ùr agus tha mi 'n dòchas gum bi i math dhuibh!

A HAPPY New Year to you all, and whatever 2016 may have in store take a little time 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 welcome. I wish you all that you wish for yourselves!

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)  
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Le taic bho



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# Re-discovered photographs of bygone era

A PACK of pictures that have lain hidden for decades show the town of Oban in a completely different light to that of 2016.

The pack of 12 postcard photographs belonging to Joan Gray,

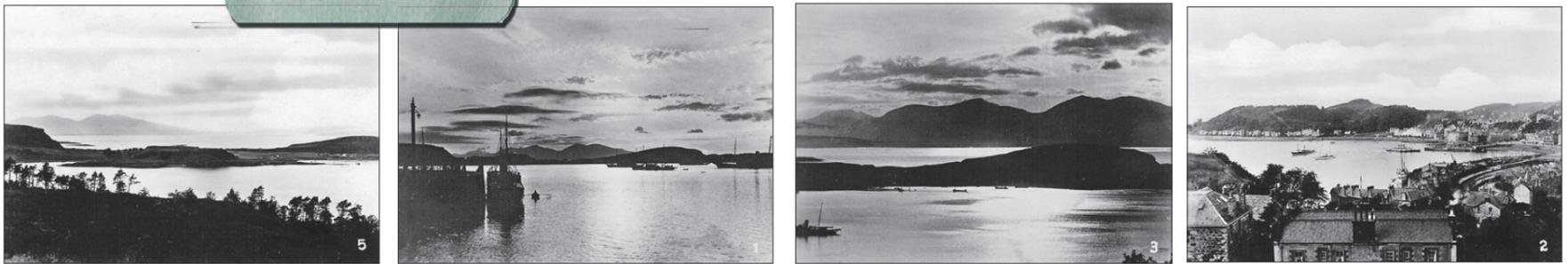
95, are believed to be from the 1930s or 1940s and show how important the town was to a travelling public. The finder of the postcards was Stuart Gray of Clydebank, whose family have

connections to Oban.

Mr Gray, who runs a genealogy service, Scot-Scan Ancestral Research, said: 'When going through some papers of my mother's, I found a pack of 12 photos of old

Oban which are most interesting.

'I don't know very much more about them but I am sure the readers of *The Oban Times* will be delighted to see the town in a bygone era.'

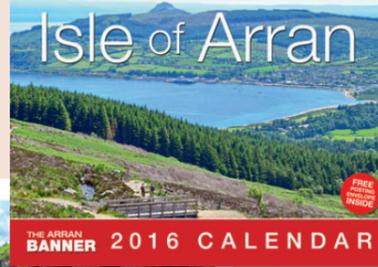


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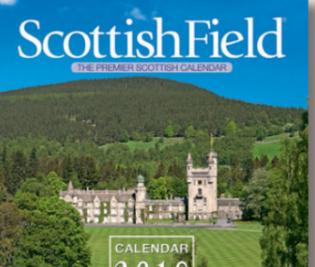
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# Review of the Year 2015

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES



## Teresa finds her guardian angel after paper appeal

AN OBAN woman came face-to-face with her 'Christmas guardian angel' on January 5, after *The Oban Times* launched an appeal to find the unsung hero.

Teresa Russell had turned to her local newspaper after she was rescued from oncoming traffic when her wheelchair lost power on Soroba Road. Teresa forgot to ask for the name of her

intrepid rescuer. James Gray from Kinetic Studios in Oban realised the hero described in *The Oban Times* article was his colleague Garry Whitton, and got in touch. However, video technician Garry was modest about the rescue, saying: 'I just think that's what anyone would have done in that situation. If you see someone needing help, you help.' 16\_t02teresa01



## January and February

A LARGE gathering of well wishers, including solicitors, social workers, police and court staff, left, paid tribute to Sheriff Douglas Small on January 16 at Oban Sheriff Court as he retired from duty.

The 65-year-old judge served the last 14 years of his career in Oban but also sat in Fort William during that time, having previously worked in Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

He praised the law enforcement work in both Oban and Fort William, adding: 'I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here - it was probably the best part of my career.' 16\_t04sheriff01



## Enterprising Lochaber pupils raise hospice cash

ENTERPRISING Lochaber high school pupils raised more than £1,300 for Highland Hospice.

Morvern Harper, Rachael Tozer, Franchesca Smith, Abi Smith and Becky MacInnes, all sixth year, used a start-up grant of £250 from the charity's young apprentice scheme to buy materials which they made into Christmas-themed products and sold at craft

fairs across Lochaber. The £1,317.18 raised, along with a presentation delivered to judges in Inverness, earned the girls third place in the competition. Lochaber high school headmaster Jim Sutherland congratulated the teens and thanked teachers Miss MacCallum and Miss Doherty for mentoring the entrepreneurs throughout the project.



SUCCESS: A Lochaber high school enterprising group raised £1,317 for Highland Hospice by making Christmas crafts.

## Islay high students on song

ISLAY High School music students hoped to be chart toppers with a charity single they wrote, performed and produced entirely in their own classroom.

The single, Home, was performed by the school choir and written by Advanced Higher music pupils Millie Mitchell and Heather Hope,

with a solo from classmate Mairi MacGillivray. The song, released on iTunes at the end of January, was the culmination of the Remembrance Project, a school endeavour organised by senior pupils to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. t06islaysong02

## New head teacher welcomed



A SOUTH Lochaber parent council has welcomed the appointment of a new high school head teacher, after the post was empty for almost a year.

Rebecca Machin, left, formerly deputy head at Wick high school, moved to Kinlochleven on February 18, taking over from Jon McGilp who left after the Easter break last year.

Stewart Borland, chairman of Kinlochleven parent council, called the news 'absolutely brilliant'.



## Pensioners' call for regular bus to tower

DISGRUNTLED Oban pensioners who live near to McCaig's Tower said in February that the lack of a regular bus service and toilets serving the tourist venue was making their lives a misery.

The pensioners, aged between 72 and 84, some of whom had health issues, struggled to walk up the famously steep climb when heading home from the town centre.

The issue was raised at a special Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee meeting in February. Argyll and Bute Council said it worked closely with operators when designing services to ensure best value for the public, and that changes to commercial timetable must be a viable option for the operator before they would be considered. 16\_t07bushill02



CONCERNS: Glencoe boaters worry their club could soon be underwater. From left David Southcott, vice-commodore, Alex Blanc, treasurer, and Robert Watt, commodore. 20\_f06glencoe01

## Boat club flooding fears

THERE were fears Glencoe Boat Club would soon be underwater if more was not done to protect the grounds from fierce winter storms, according to worried members.

The pontoon and foreshore boasts stunning views of Loch Leven but club commodore Robert Watt said viciously high tides in the last three years have caused parts of the club grounds to crumble into the water, as well as damaging boats used to train budding young sailors.

As Glencoe Boat Club

committee bought the grounds from Ballachulish Estates, it does not qualify for funding from Crown Estates so has had to fork out thousands from club funds to pay for emergency repairs.

Mr Watt said: 'We have had to spend large amounts on retaining walls and drains behind the club buildings where landslip and rain were flooding the premises but the main problem has been storm surges which have damaged the pontoon and removed large areas of the foreshore.'



GENEROUS: Lochaber foodbank volunteers included gifts with food packages to help those in need. From left: Pat Leslie, Alec McConachie, Donald Elder and Roia Wilson. 20\_f02foodbank01

## Delight as festive gifts boost food parcels

LOCHABER food bank dished out more than 600 meals over the festive period, but volunteers say the 'tremendous' generosity of the public allowed them to go the extra mile.

The Fort William charity fed 68 people in December and managed to give gifts to families in need thanks to people adding chocolate, perfume and other presents to the usual donations

of food and toiletries. Food bank manager Alec McConachie said: 'It was absolutely tremendous to see. People really thought about what they were donating. We had a collection in Tesco for a week and we had volunteers going over every day to keep up with the donations but more than just the food, people were handing in wee presents for kids as well as perfumes, aftershaves and chocolates.'



From bins to building projects, there were few topics of the day not covered during a special two-and-a-half hour council meeting in Oban's Corran Halls, hosted by the area's councillors. The format, which was applauded at the end of the meeting on February 3, allowed members of the public to ask questions of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee councillors, without the intervention of council officers and lawyers. t07meeting01

## Helping the traffic wardens

A GROUP of elderly parking 'vigilantes' were helping traffic wardens in Oban in February by pointing out cars with no tickets.

The plucky pensioners said they were working to 'clear up the town of bad parking' and patrol the street, pointing out

where drivers have not paid their fee by putting handwritten notes on the cars or phoning the police.

The unappointed wardens were also seen making sure up-to-date information about fines appeared on signs in the town's car parks.



CHAOS: Traffic was gridlocked in Glencoe on Sunday as a result of dozens of visitors to the ski resort parking along the A82. 20\_f04glencoe03

## Glencoe ski resort traffic brings A82 to a standstill

POLICE were called after the A82 road was brought to a standstill by hordes of motorists trying to access Glencoe Mountain Resort on a day of perfect skiing conditions.

Around 200 visitors parked their cars on the edge of the main road, causing huge tailbacks as single-file traffic had to be forced along the high-speed stretch of road between Bridge of Orchy and Fort William.

Deep snow and clear skies had resulted in unprecedented demand from winter sports fans and the centre's car parks were full by early afternoon.

Other passing vehicles, including lorries and coaches, had to wait in traffic jams for more than 20 minutes, while drivers had to be wary of people walking on the road due to the grass verges being several feet deep in snow.

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# Review of the Year 2015



FAREWELL: Fort William primary school pupils prepare to be evacuated. 20\_f13fortps01

## March

### Fort William pupils step back in time

FORT William primary school pupils said their goodbyes to family and friends when they boarded a train to 'who knows where'. The children arrived at the town's train station armed with gas masks, suitcases and name tags on March 20 to learn how it felt for youngsters to be evacuated as part of their project on the Second World War.

Right: Christian Martin, left, and Cameron Stephen on the train to who knows where. 20\_f13fortps02



### What colour is the dress?

THE QUESTION on everyone's lips in March was 'What colour is the dress?' Celebrity 'A-listers' such as Taylor Swift, Justin Bieber and US president Barack Obama speculated over the colour of 'the dress'. For the dress in question presented people with a real visual puzzler: some saw it clearly as a black and blue garment, while many others as white and gold.

It all began when *Oban Times* reader, Caitlin MacNeil, 21, of Colonsay, asked people on her social network site Tumblr: 'Guys please help me - is this dress white and gold, or blue and black?' Five hours later, 16 million people had commented on the colour. The sheer volume of comments set a world record for internet use on one subject. At one point there were more than 5,700 tweets a minute using hashtag #thedress, with 670,000 users on Caitlin's internet pages at its peak, more than has ever been known in the history of the worldwide web. *The Oban Times* revealed the colour of the dress is blue and black. t10dress01

## Safety boat launched on Loch Awe after six-year campaign

SIX YEARS on from a terrible accident that saw four men lose their lives on Loch Awe, a boat was launched in March in recognition of one of the founding members of the safety group set up in the wake of the tragedy. The boat, named the MV Donald John Macdonald, was the culmination of six years of hard work by campaigners for a safety boat in the water. Launching the boat was councillor Donald John MacDonald's widow, Dot, daughter Kirsty and family members from Edinburgh, who were joined by friends and members of the Lochwatch Loch Awe group. Donations came from the bereaved families of the four men who drowned on the loch when they fell from a small boat in the early hours of March 21, 2009. The families of Craig Currie, William Carty, his brother Steven, and Thomas Douglas, donated more than £25,000. 16\_t15boat1



### Shepherd's shock as 15 sheep drown in flood

FIFTEEN sheep were killed when a field in Lochaber flooded. The animals were drowned when the River Spean burst its banks on March 7. Brian Strachan, head shepherd of Galmore Sheep Stock Club, Roy Bridge, said he had to watch as his flock were washed away in the tragic accident, just minutes before a fire engine arrived with a rescue boat. He said: 'It was

terrible. There must have been about three feet of water in the field. I phoned the fire brigade but they didn't bring a boat so we were waiting on another one coming from another station. 'The sheep were okay at first but just before the second vehicle arrived one bolted and the rest followed. The water came pouring in behind them and they were all carried away and drowned.'



### Award-winning coach hits back at rugby body's ban

AN OBAN rugby coach planned to hand back an award he won for volunteering after being banned from all involvement with the sport in March. Tommy Sutherland played and coached Oban Lorne Rugby Club since moving to the town in 2012, as well as helping to re-establish the Argyll and Bute under-16 team in 2013. After receiving a volunteer of the month award in September

2014, Tommy was banned by the game's governing body for nine weeks after he fielded a player for the under-16s who was 13 days too old. After receiving the nine week ban, Tommy said: 'I'm disgusted with the way I've been treated, but particularly with the length of the ban. I've spoken to guys who have been coaching for 30 years and they said they've never heard of anything like this - I'm being made an example of.' 16\_t13tommy01



### Brothers named heroes for Mull community work

TWO BROTHERS from the Isle of Mull were named rural 'heroes' for their work across a number of community projects on the island. Tobermory's Brian and Duncan Swinbanks jointly received the Rural Hero award at the inaugural Scottish event, sponsored by Scottish Field magazine and The Scottish Countryside Alliance. Brian devotes most of his spare time to the Tobermory Harbour Association and arts projects, while Duncan has been heavily involved in the island's swimming pool and rugby club projects. He said: 'It was really nice to win the award with Brian. We both just do things because we enjoy working on projects and working with other people.' t14rural04



### Daily challenges faced by islanders

WITH gusting winds on the Craignure to Oban crossing, the Scottish government minister who is responsible for keeping transport on the move was almost stranded on Mull when adverse weather severely disrupted the ferry service. Derek Mackay, minister for transport and the islands, was on the island to unveil details of the final stage of the roll out for RET on March 25.

Three afternoon sailings were cancelled because of the choppy conditions. However, ferry operator CalMac managed to take to the water on a rescheduled 5.30pm sailing and get travellers back to the mainland. Derek Mackay said: 'I've now experienced first hand the daily challenges many islanders face in making journeys to the mainland.' 16\_t14derek01



# Review of the Year 2015

The Oban Times  
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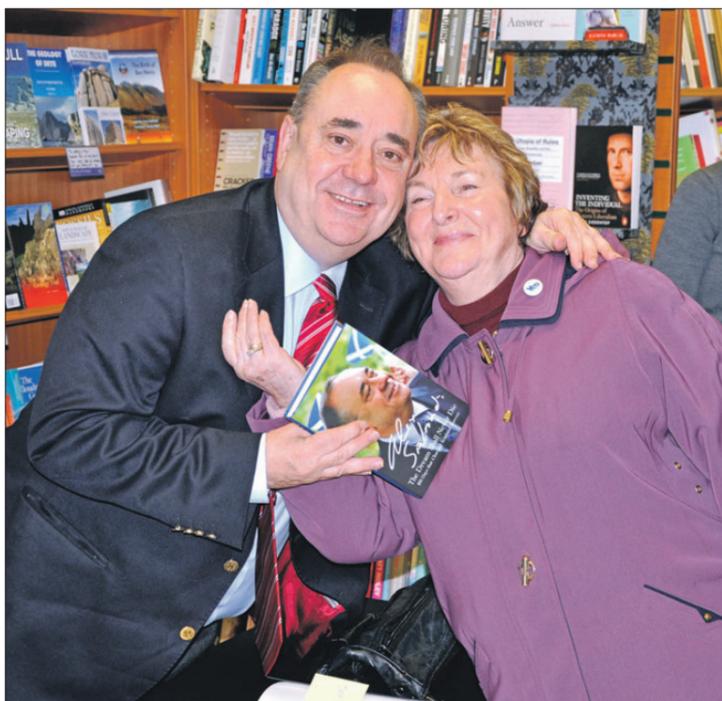


## April

### Former Fort pupils and staff share memories

AS THE last term at Fort William primary school got under way, former pupils and staff visited to say goodbye and share memories. The school merged with Upper Achintore in August, so the event allowed current pupils and staff to learn about the 140-year history of Fort William primary school. Two past head teachers, Angus MacIver and Jennifer Cattanach, joined former pupils to share their favourite memories with the current children of Fort William primary.

**HISTORIC MOMENTS:** former pupils and staff of Fort William primary school met with the current children to recount fond memories of their time at school.



### Oban High Pipe Band impress in New York

OBAN High School Pipe Band was hailed a 'credit to Scotland' by organisers when it made its debut performance at the Tartan Day Parade in New York city on April 12. Led by Benderloch piper Angus MacColl, the band marched behind the Honorary Grand Marshall Tricia Marwick, the presiding officer of the Scottish parliament. Event director of the 17th annual Tartan Day Parade, Camila Hellman, said: 'We were proud to have Oban with us and it was wonderful to see them enjoying themselves.' t16pipeband01



### Former First Minister's book signing

Former First Minister Alex Salmond was in Oban on April 14 for a book signing session at the town's Waterstones store. Mr Salmond is pictured with Xandra Gray, a former English teacher at Oban High School, who was 'delighted' to meet him, having also met him years earlier in Perth. 16\_t16alexsalmond01



### Amazing Purdie a Facebook celebrity

A CAT burglar who brings home socks, gloves, tea towels and cloths has become a celebrity on social media site Facebook in April. Purdie, who lives with owner Fiona Campbell-Smith in a house above Pulpit Hill, Oban, has been bringing home 'odd' items since moving in four months ago. Named after the shop on George Street, Purdie was very ill when he was born and was said to be days from death when Fiona, a cat lover, nursed him back to health. Fiona, a home carer, said she has been amazed at the lengths Purdie has gone to in bringing home his 'swag'. She added: 'It is nice he feels the need to bring home matching pairs of things. I wish my children had been able to do the same.' 16\_t16cat1

### Village residents sent 'quackers'

RESIDENTS of Ballachulish have been sent quackers over the last year with the appearance of mysterious knitted ducks popping up in cafes, shops and telephone boxes around the village. But it has all been water off a duck's back to Merriol Baldwin, the plucky villager behind the invasion, who has finally revealed the reason behind the little mysteries. Since last year the 44-year-old has been crocheting the soft toys and placing them around Ballachulish as part of the Little Yellow Duck project, to raise awareness about blood, bone marrow and organ donation. f16ducks1no



### Couple hit the heights on exciting Nepalese adventure

OUTDOOR enthusiasts Les and Issy Silkowski hit the heights when they embarked on a Nepalese adventure in April. The North Shian couple, who are keen climbers and hillwalkers, travelled all the way to the Himalayas to take on the strenuous Annapurna Circuit in Nepal. During the 16-day trek, retired police officer Les, 57 and receptionist Issy, successfully reached the high point of the trip at

5,416m when they crossed the Thorong-La pass on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. The couple stopped for a break and a read of Scotland's best newspaper, *The Oban Times*. 17nepalclimb1

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# Review of the Year 2015



## Lottery luck for couple

TWO MID Argyll pensioners 'fed up of being skint' were three times lucky when they won £1 million, £25 and a luxury trip to London on the Euro Millions.  
But Betty, 63, and Geordie, 71, from Lochgilphead almost lost out on the win when Geor-

die threw the golden ticket in the bin on June 3.  
The ex-soldier had checked his tickets but threw them away thinking his numbers had not come up. Luckily Betty fished the tickets out of the bin and took them to be scanned in the shop. 08\_a24lotto01

## May and June



## A family affair on special holiday flight

A BENDERLOCH couple were flying high after their son brought them down to earth safely on their return from a holiday in Croatia.  
George and Catherine Hunter's flight of fancy took place on Saturday June 13 when son Alan, who is a pilot for Thomson's Airways, took the controls of the Boeing 737, having re-arranged his schedule without his parents' knowledge.  
Alan, a former pupil of Lochnell primary and Oban high schools, was an aircraft enthusiast from a young age.  
He passed his private pilot's licence at just 16 years old before pursuing his career.



## Stepping out on last Heather's Walk

THE SUN came out just in time for the last Heather's Walk in Lochaber, and the eighth event pushed the total raised for Highland hospice to £70,000.  
Almost 200 people, from babies in prams to pensioners,

turned out for the annual fundraiser in Corpach and raised £6,162.86 in memory of Heather Robertson.  
This brought the total since the first walk in 2008 to £70,000 which made the memorial

walk even more poignant for organisers and friends of Ms Robertson, Margaret Simpson and Sarah Walker as they made the difficult decision to end the annual fundraiser.  
20\_f23heather01



## Steven smashes fund target

OBAN Times reporter Steven Rae raised more than ten times his target for a charity close to his heart in May.  
After winning a Kindle in a raffle, Steven decided to sell it and donate the money to Alzheimer Scotland, after his grandmother suffered from dementia for 10 years. He hoped to raise £100.  
However, friends, family and colleagues offered to donate to the good cause, so Steven set up a JustGiving page instead.  
After making a final donation himself on May 1, the total amount raised was £1,010.  
He presented a cheque and donated the Kindle to dementia adviser Andy Crabb at the dementia resource centre on Oban High Street, which is a partner of Alzheimer Scotland. 16\_t19kindle01



## Remarkable milestone for Mary's Meals charity

DALMALLY-BASED charity Mary's Meals reached the remarkable milestone of feeding one million of the world's poorest children every day, in May.  
Mary's Meals, which began in Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow's tin shed in Dalnally, was feeding just 200 children in Malawi in 2002.  
Magnus, above, said: 'I never sat down and said I'm going to start an aid organisation, or anything like that. And here we are, 23 years later, feeding one million children a day.' t21magnusglobe



## Oban's Oxfam store celebrates 30 years

Oban's Oxfam store on George Street celebrated 30 years of trading on June 15. The staff gathered at the store and spoke of some of the unusual items they had had donated over the years, including two fake Rolex watches, half a Christmas pudding, a toilet plunger and a child's potty. 16\_t23oxfam01



## Festival of the Sea fun

VISITORS to Oban had a whale of a time as the Festival of the Sea got under way on May 22.  
Organised by the Ocean Explorer Centre and supported by the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), BID4Oban, the Scottish Government and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), the festival is a celebration of the relationship between people and the sea.  
More than 30 sea-themed activities took place over the week, including public talks, boat trips and snorkelling. Pictured are the participants at the fishy tales fundraiser at Atlantis Leisure Centre. 16\_t22seafest01



## People of Oban get Rockfield keys

THE KEYS to the Rockfield Centre were finally handed over to the people of Oban on Friday, May 15.  
The battle to keep the landmark town centre building in community ownership will

see the Grade-B listed former primary school start a new era as a community arts, culture and heritage hub.  
A car park adjoining the building now also belongs to the Rockfield Centre.

Oban Communities Trust (OCT), the group that started a campaign to save Rockfield and is now the custodian of the building, said it was 'a momentous step forward'. t21rockfield01

## Couple hit the road for charity cash

A COUPLE who decided to have one last big adventure before a debilitating condition 'takes over' their lives, were in Oban raising cash for Alzheimer's last week.  
Kathleen, who is in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease said she was delighted to be on the trip with her partner, Michael, as it was 'much better than being shoved in a home'.  
She explained there were plenty of things she wanted to say, but because of her condition she was unable to express them to other people.  
The couple, both aged 59, sold their home to finance the journey - and were enjoying their first sunshine when they arrived in Oban. 16\_t25kathleen1



## Hundreds back playpark

HUNDREDS of people backed a campaign for a new play park in a Fort William village.  
The people of Caol, the biggest village in Scotland, have come together in droves to support fundraising for the new facility as they say the current parks are unsuitable for the number of children using them and provide no disabled access.  
One parent, Damian MacDonald, set up a group on Facebook to gauge the interest and said he couldn't believe it when 500 people joined in the first four hours. More than 600 people are now involved.

# Arena

> cinema, radio and what's on listings > leisure ideas > local events



ANGUS MacPhail treats the Oban Times readers to a seasonal music round up in rhyme fitting the tune of The Lochmearie Islands.

Throughout this year fine bands appeared, inside the Oban Times So I give to you a brief review, of some in these wee rhymes Events and pubs and music hubs, at festival and hall They played and sang and music rang, from Campbeltown to Coll

Chorus  
So sláinte Mhór and a Merry Christmas one and all  
The best of festive greeting, and I hope you've had a ball  
The year is nearly over Hogmanay is coming near  
So good wishes for the future and Happ-y New Year

To celebrate achievements great, in 10 years going strong  
Skerryvore, they had in store, a party and a song  
A massive crowd were singing loud, 6,000 it was said  
That number's small compared with all, the notches on their bed

Some say Trail West they are the best, all heroes, every man  
But disaster struck by rotten luck, someone stole their van  
The sneaky thief with disbelief, was angered and in shock  
For in the van, just empty cans, old dráthais and smelly socks!

TMF was nearly left with no-one there to party  
All rallied round and beds found, with welcome warm and hearty  
The wind it howled, the heavens scowled and tents were blown away  
But come the dawn, the craic went on, for those who chose to stay

If you did meet crowds in the street in mid to late October  
The world you'd think was on the brink of zombies taking over  
But no surprise, what met your eyes should not seem strange or odd  
Just hardy folk who'd just awoke from six days at the Mod

And of the Mod I give a nod to Oban Gaelic Choir  
Hard work did yield the sacred shield to which they all aspire  
They kept their nerve and well deserved, they won the L and T  
And Síleas and the choir began a well-earned roaring spree

Back to Argyll it made me smile, Glenfiddich came once more  
To Angus MacColl. The king of all, the pipers on our shore  
Though gold he plays such modest ways, to boast he's not inclined  
When given praise he only says, 'ach aye, the pipes were fine'

We remember too a special few, whose tunes have travelled on  
In Port Charlotte Hotel, Tobermory as well, and Lochaber's Gaelic song  
In Oban too a silence grew, but their music never ends  
So raise a glass to those who've passed, and toast our absent friends

Some weeks ago in hail and snow there happened in Dundee  
The Trad Awards where bands cross swords then join in drinking tea  
And lost or won we all had fun, gave cheer where trophies went  
To Griogair, Daimh and Rura live, and The League of Highland Gents

The Vatersay Boys and their magical noise filled out the Barrow Land  
Many say that of today they are the wildest band  
But us and them and all good men, beginners all are we  
When we compare the legend rare, their Dad - the great DD.

The week before with Donnie Munroe and Manran - What a show  
West Highland bands the Barrowlands filled two weeks in a row  
All their fans proud as I am are sad that Norrie's left  
But both in song will carry on so don't be too bereft

And looking back we've too had craic along the passing year  
Thank you all, gigs big and small for joining in the cheer  
So to conclude we should collude, in festive drams to pour  
So proost and Skaal, good health to all, Salud and Sláinte Mhór

## Everything in the gardens is rosy

ROSES, usually a sign of high summer, were in bloom at National Trust for Scotland gardens all over Scotland on St Andrew's Day 2015, a new survey has revealed. The news comes as some gardens across Scotland are reporting spring bulbs appearing unusually early due to unseasonably mild December weather. The conservation charity surveyed 11 of its gardens, including Argyll's Arduaine Garden, south of Kilmelford, to see what species were flowering on November 30. This year it was roses putting on the biggest fi-

nal floral flourish. These were still in bloom at eight gardens, including Arduaine. Although the flowering season was extended in 2014 too, the reasons for this are different, the conservation charity says. Gardens assistant Kate Barnard, who is analysing the survey, said: 'Last year it was the hot summer that extended flowering times, but this year the summer was pretty mediocre, so it is probably the exceptionally mild November that has allowed plants to continue flowering or to repeat flower.' The National Trust for

Scotland head gardeners have been carrying out an annual St Andrew's Day Flowering Plant Survey each year since 2011 and the records of late flowering perennials, and those that normally flower in spring but are being forced to flower unseasonably early, are being maintained to build up a long term picture of the effects of changing weather patterns on the garden heritage. The conservation charity cares for 70 designed landscapes and gardens of all sizes, with many open to visitors all year round. For more information, visit: www.nts.org.uk.

# The Fifth Day of Christmas

Gil missed the city. He missed his everyday existence - work, friends and the options for entertainment that this place lacked - and was looking forward to going back there before the holidays were over. He thought about the people in his office, and how some of them had become close friends in a matter of months. He wondered what sort of holidays they were having with their families, husbands and wives, lovers. He missed not having a girlfriend, and he was unsure about how to pursue Dot, the woman who sat across from him at work, and who had become the object of his most recent affections. But there were more immediate matters to attend to. There was coal to bring in and the dogs to feed, throw some sausages in a pan with an egg or two and run a bath. It was Saturday night, and that meant going to the pub, three miles away at the other end of the village. He didn't want to dodge any of his chores, but he didn't want to leave the house too late either, otherwise he might miss some good company or maybe not even find a seat in the pub. The alternative was to watch one of four available channels on television, re-read any of a poor collection of books or just go to bed and avoid the draughts the old house let in just about everywhere.

He had enjoyed the family Christmas, but wished he had been able to spend it with someone special, and volunteering to look after the dogs for a couple of nights to let his parents get away had seemed like a good idea at the time. But boredom was Gil's greatest enemy, and within an hour of their departure he remembered why he couldn't wait to get out of this place and do something - anything - to keep him from coming back. The fat pork links were satisfyingly juicy and the eggs from his mum's hens better than any he was ever able to obtain in the city. A chunk of sourdough bread and a large mug of strong tea completed his culinary masterpiece; then he banked up the fire with coal and a couple of logs, set the fireguard and let the dogs outside while he immersed himself in the big old bath with a drop of cologne for extra luxury. He let the dogs back in and set off for the pub just after seven o'clock.

The village was shrouded in thick fog; the streetlights were reduced to a creamy glow that barely penetrated the cold, grey vapour; the houses guarded their warmth behind heavy winter curtains and under coils of chimney smoke. A dog barked nearby, somewhere down near the water, and Gil could see the distant headlight patterns of a car making its way down into the village. He hoped it would be bringing interesting and beautiful people to the pub. He walked through the murk for a little under an hour, encountering no more than the rhythmic lapping of wavelets on the shore, and the periodic halos of light formed by the damp night air.

The pub was a welcome sight. The windows blazed orange with warmth and hospitality, and Gil felt sure he was going to enjoy himself. It was that time of year, between Christmas and New Year, where the real world seems to stop and people get nostalgic, friendly and romantic. Good cheer and merrymaking were the default settings and there seemed like endless opportunities to have a good time, so he was a little disappointed to discover that the place wasn't busy at all. "Gil! Did you have a good Christmas?" Ann asked with a friendly smile. "How's life in the city? I hear you're doing really well." Ann was one of the squadron of part-time barmaids that kept the place open all year, especially when the owners were away skiing or sailing or otherwise enjoying the profits of the licensed trade; a middle-aged widow with a warm heart and, Gil thought, a refreshingly juvenile view

on life. "Did your mum and dad get away all right? I hope it doesn't freeze. You've just missed Lawrie - he said he'd be back soon. What can I get you?" Gil let his face crack into a smile as he answered with what he considered the right mixture of honesty, enthusiasm and modesty. He was aware that he was a bit of a local celebrity, having landed himself a job with one of the best-known advertising agencies in the country. He was proud to tell his mum and dad which television, newspaper and magazine adverts he had worked on, but got quite embarrassed when they told everybody he was the creative genius behind them all. Then he asked for a pint of Guinness - it was too wintry for lager and too early to start on spirits.

He said hello to a couple of worthies at one end of the bar; took his glass and sat at a table near the fire. He had just finished hanging his coat over his chair when the door squeaked open and a young woman walked in and went up to the bar. "Hello again," she said to Ann, "I was just wondering if you have found a ring. Or maybe somebody handed one in." "Hello. Not as far as I know, but I'll check with the kitchen. Have you lost one?" "Yes," said the young woman, "I thought it might be in my glove, but it's not, and I can't think where else it could be. It's not in the car."

Gil noticed that she wore four other rings: two on her right ring finger and two on her left pinkie. Why would she miss one? He wondered if the headlights he had seen in the distance had been her car. Where had she been in the meantime? She should have been in the pub a good 10 minutes before him. He caught himself studying her, and immediately turned his attention to Ann who said that nobody had found a ring, but everyone would keep a look out for one - what did it look like? At this the woman showed the faintest signs of losing her composure.

"It's just an ordinary ring - gold, no stones or anything - just a ring." Her voice faltered a little and Gil thought her bottom lip began a very faint tremble. Selfishly, Gil thought wedding ring and at the precise moment that his imagination stopped mapping a future with this attractive stranger, Lawrie strode into the bar.

"You didn't see a ring, did you?" asked Gil. "I didn't see anything, Gil. I had to feel my way here. Drink?" "I'll get you one - I just got here. Anyway, this lady has lost a ring, and thought it might be around here somewhere." "Hello," said Lawrie, turning to the young woman. "I haven't seen a ring, but I wasn't really looking for one. Can we get you a drink?" "No thanks," she said, smiling, "my friends dropped me off and should be here any minute."

Might explain the car, thought Gil; then said, "Would you like us to help you look for it? Can you remember when you last had it on, and where you've been since?" He thought it was clever to ask innocent questions that might let him find out a little bit more about her. "That's kind of you," she said addressing them both, "but it's so dark outside, and if I didn't lose the ring in here it must be on the ground somewhere. It could be anywhere, really, but we've looked in the car and it we can't find it in the cottage." "The cottage? Are you in a holiday cottage?" enquired Gil. "Yes," she said, "The Point."

"Very nice," said Lawrie. "We didn't see you at the boxing day party." "Oh, we didn't get here until Wednesday night - we had our Christmases with our families." Encouraging, Gil mused. "Are your friends

in a rush to get away? They're welcome to join us too." "We're going back to get something to eat, thank you anyway," she said. "You didn't see my ring on the way in?" "No," said Gil, "but why don't we take a look outside now? Lawrie?" "Sure," he said, holding the door open.

They had just made it outside when a small car pulled up. Gil quickly confirmed that the three occupants were women. More encouraging still, he thought. The young woman went over and spoke to the driver, "Hiya. There's no sign in the pub, but these kind gents have volunteered to look for it outside and offered us a drink. What do you say?" Turning back to Gil and Lawrie, she said, "I'm Ali, by the way, pleased to meet you."

"Gil," said Gil, "Pleased to meet you, too, and this is Lawrie." "Good Evening," said Lawrie, turning his attention to the woman in the car. "Hi," said the driver, "I'm Cara." Presenting her passengers, she said, "This is April, and this is Rose."

"Come on ladies! If we find the ring we can have a drink to celebrate," Lawrie announced cheerfully. The women climbed out of the car and Ali said, "If we find the ring you are both invited to join us for dinner." "What about a drink anyway?" said April, "it's freezing out here."

"The casserole has to come out of the oven in half an hour," said Cara. "The house is only five minutes away," said Rose.

"The car was parked over there earlier, wasn't it?" Ali asked, pointing across the road towards the shore. "It's worth another look." "I'll see if they have a torch," said Gil, feeling practical and chivalrous.

"I've got one here," said Lawrie, switching on a small Maglite and winning the evening's prizes for preparedness and gentlemanly conduct. The group searched the area across the road as best they could - much of the torchlight was reflected by the fog - but there was no sign of a ring.

"It might be better to wait until daylight", offered Gil. "Can we buy you a drink anyway? Get in out of the cold and set up for your dinner? What kind of casserole is it anyway?" "Venison," replied Ali, "OK girls, let's have a quick drink."

Gil ordered a round of drinks. The group sat at the table next to the fire and Gil asked Ali why the ring was so important. "It was my grandmother's wedding ring," she said, "and my favourite." "And you're sure it's not in the house or the car? Or your glove?" "I'm sure. We spent all this time looking."

As Gil was trying to think of ways to stay in this new, exciting and beautiful company, Lawrie shifted in his chair and rested his right ankle on his left knee - the way a lot of men cross their legs - and Gil spotted it immediately. A ring was firmly wedged on one of the heavy cleats on the sole of his boot.

"Don't move!" said Gil, dramatically. "Eh?" said Lawrie. With exaggerated hand movements Gil reached over and plucked it free, like a magician making something appear from nowhere.

"Is this your ring, Ali?" "Yes! Yes! Wow! Amazing! Thank you." The group applauded. "So we're invited to dinner?" asked Lawrie. "Yes. Drink up! Thank you, thank you!" she beamed, and kissed Gil on the cheek. "It was on my boot," said Lawrie, feigning offence.

Ali leaned across the table and kissed him too. "You heard her," said Gil, "drink up!"

Johnston Adams

# SCOTS

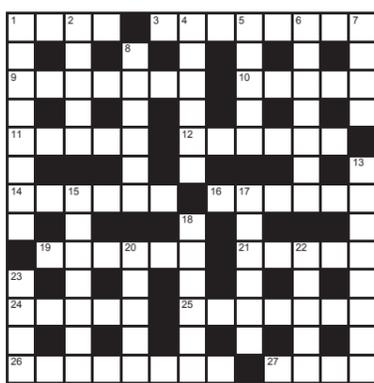
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### Across

- 1 Cancel (4)
- 3 Adventure (8)
- 9 Nonsense (7)
- 10 Pen (5)
- 11 Man-made fabric (5)
- 12 Overwhelming influx (6)
- 14 How long a computer is operating (6)
- 16 One who stops breathing for a short time (6)
- 19 Business person (6)
- 21 Shrub with leathery leaves (5)
- 24 Large long headed beast with antlers (5)
- 25 Advent (7)
- 26 Pay to pass along (4,4)
- 27 Covet (4)

### Down

- 1 Of the honeysuckle family (8)
- 2 Dental filling (5)
- 4 Hinder (6)
- 5 Dislike intensely (5)
- 6 Entertainer (7)
- 7 Bounce back (4)
- 8 Assumed name (6)
- 13 Frozen sweet (3,5)
- 15 Hurly-burly (7)
- 17 Flan base (6)
- 18 Fighting force (6)
- 20 Gloomy, in poetry (5)
- 22 Energise (5)
- 23 Give off light (4)

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



# Social scene

## Oban High School Jingles

# Chunks and Trail West top the bill as Oban students dance the night away



CORRAN HALLS: The jingles in full swing. 17\_t1jingles14

AROUND 500 Oban High School pupils got dressed up and made their way to the Corran Halls recently for their annual school dance. The jingles is organised by senior pupils at the school, who booked Chunks and Trail West for the night's entertainment.

Head teacher Peter Bain said: 'We have more than 500 pupils thoroughly enjoying the entertainment and that's the main thing. The organising committee did a fantastic job.'

Paul MacKay of Chunks, said: 'It was good, we really enjoyed it. We have played at the event for the last few years and it's always a great night.'

A spokesman for Trail West said: 'It was a good night. They are always an enthusiastic lot and very keen dancers, which makes our night a lot more enjoyable.'



TRAIL WEST: The Tíre traditional music band Trail West kicked off the ceilidh. 17\_t1jingles12



THUMPS UP: The night gets a thumbs up from Oban High School pupils. 17\_t1jingles11



FRONT ROW: The girls take some time away from listening to Chunks to pose for a photograph. 17\_t1jingles01



GIRLS: A group of girls pose for a photograph together. 17\_t1jingles02



DANCE FLOOR: Pupils at Oban High School stop dancing for a minute to get a photograph. 17\_t1jingles03



SELFIE: Stevie Finlayson from Chunks gets a selfie with the crowd towards the end of the set. 17\_t1jingles07

## Quiz buffs challenged to test knowledge on television

QUIZ show fanatics in the West Highlands have the opportunity to show off their trivia talent in a new television show being produced by ITV.

The show, 500 Questions, will test general knowledge skills in a 10-round format, where 50 questions are asked in each. The show is an

adaptation of the US show of the same name. For more information, or to apply, visit: [itv.com/beontv/500questions](http://itv.com/beontv/500questions), by January 29.

## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

To advertise in our community noticeboard call 01631 568000

**Oban U3A monthly meeting**  
Tuesday 5 January 2016 at 10.30am  
Studio Theatre and café area, Corran Halls, Oban  
There will be a talk this month, so do come along.

**Oban and Lorn Lions Club Old New Year Ceilidh in aid of CHAS**  
January 16th 2016  
Royal Hotel, Oban  
Tickets available from Wool and Needlecraft Centre, Oban  
7.30 for 8.00  
£5.00 including stovies

**Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club Hot Supper Dance**  
Friday 8th January 2016  
At 7.30pm, Royal Hotel  
Music by Iain Anderson  
Scottish Dance Band  
Tickets £15  
Available from Oban Music or by telephoning 01631 562077

**Advertise in the Community Noticeboard for just £16.21 (plus VAT)**  
This section is available to charitable organisations with a charity number.  
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**FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB Musical Evening**  
on Tuesday, 5 January, 2016 at 8pm  
GUEST ARTISTS:  
Liam Stewart Trio  
Railway Club Invertochy  
All Welcome  
Admission £4.00 ... Tea & Raffle Extra  
IN THE EVENT OF A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION BY ANY GUEST ARTIST THE COMMITTEE WILL FIND AN ALTERNATIVE ARTIST

**Comunn Gaidhealach an Obain Old New Year Buffet Ceilidh**  
Masonic Hall, Oban  
Sat 9th January 2016 at 7pm  
Mary Catherine MacNeill, Mòrag MacNeill, Freddie MacKenzie, Alasdair MacDonald, Alasdair MacLean  
Fear an Taigh: Danny MacRae  
Admission £10

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<p><b>Diciadain 30 Dùbhlachd / Wednesday 30 December</b> Rona - Dileab Chlann Eardsaidh Raghnaill 9t / 9pm</p> <p><b>Feis Chiùil Thiriodh / Tíre Music Festival - Skerryvore</b> 10.55t / 10.55pm</p>	<p><b>Diluain 4 Faoilleach / Monday 4 January</b> Trusadh - Siar gu Siorraidh! / Trusadh - Mon the West! 9t / 9pm</p> <p><b>Port</b> 10t / 10pm</p>	<p><b>Dimàirt 5 Faoilleach / Tuesday 5 January</b> Kerry's Kirsty: Rothan gu Robhanais 8.30t / 8.30pm</p> <p><b>Bannan - Series 2</b> 9t / 9pm</p>
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Feis Chiùil Thiriodh / Tíre Music Festival

Port

Kerry's Kirsty: Rothan gu Robhanais

**BBC ALBA**

## Cèilidh na Bliadhna Ùire 2015

### Hogmanay Cèilidh 2015

**A' Bhàthach, An Innis Iaraich, Siorrachd Pheairt**  
Beò air BBC ALBA, Oidhche Challainn | 11.30f - 1.15m  
The Byre at Inchyra, Perthshire  
Live on BBC ALBA, New Year's Eve | 11.30pm - 1.15am

The Cathy NicDhòmhnaill agus Kirsteen NicDhòmhnaill a' gealltainn ceud mìle fàilte dhuibh. A' seinn 's a' cluich air an oidhche mhòir bidh Iain 'Costello' MacIomhair, Skipinnish, Màiri NicAonghais, Glenfinnan Ceilidh Band, Robyn Stapleton, Còmhlan Pioba Bhlàr Athaill agus Còisir Ghàidhlig Sgìre Obar Pheallaigh.

Join Cathy MacDonal and Kirsteen MacDonal as they bring in 2016 with Iain 'Costello' MacIver, Skipinnish, Mairi MacInnes, Glenfinnan Ceilidh Band, Robyn Stapleton, Vale of Atholl Pipe Band and Aberfeldy and District Gaelic Choir.

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Sat 2nd January - Wed 6th January 2016

**Crimson Peak (15) 139mins**

Mon: 17:30  
Crimson Peak - In the aftermath of a family tragedy, an aspiring author is torn between love for her childhood friend and the temptation of a mysterious outsider. Trying to escape the ghosts of her past, she is swept away to a house that breathes, bleeds...and remembers.

**Hector (15) 107mins**

Sat, Sun: 17:30, Mon: 19:45, Tue, Wed.  
Hector - Hector has been living on the motorways for years. His once comfortable family life has been replaced by a never-ending tour of service stations that offer him shelter, anonymity, washing facilities and food. The story follows his journey south from Scotland on his annual pilgrimage to a temporary Christmas shelter in London where he finds comfort, friendship and warmth. Over the course of his Homeric journey, Hector decides to reconnect with his long estranged past. As his previous life catches up with him, the story of how he came to be leading a marginal life begins to emerge.

**Snoopy and Charlie Brown: The Peanuts Movie (U) 113mins**

Sat, Sun, Mon: 12:00, Tue, Wed: 16:00  
Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the rest of the beloved "Peanuts" gang make their big-screen debut, like they've never been seen before, in state-of-the-art 3D animation. Snoopy, the world's most lovable beagle and flying ace embarks upon his greatest mission as he takes to the skies to pursue his arch-nemesis The Red Baron, while his best pal, Charlie Brown, begins his own epic quest. From the imagination of Charles M. Schulz and the creators of the ICE AGE films, THE PEANUTS MOVIE will prove that every underdog has his day.

**Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens (12A) 156mins**

Sat, Sun, Mon: 12:30, Tue, Wed: 16:30

**3D version:**

Sat, Sun: 14:20, Mon: 14:30, Wed 18:10

A continuation of the saga created by George Lucas set thirty years after Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi (1983).

**The Danish Girl (15) 140min**

Sat, Sun: 17:30, Mon: 20:15, Tue, Wed: 21:00  
The remarkable love story inspired by the lives of artists Lili Elbe and Gerda Wegener. Lili and Gerda's marriage and work evolve as they navigate Lili's groundbreaking journey as a transgender pioneer.

**The Good Dinosaur (PG) 121mins**

Sat, Sun, Mon: 15:15, Tue, Wed: 19:15  
"The Good Dinosaur" asks the question: What if the asteroid that forever changed life on Earth missed the planet completely and giant dinosaurs never became extinct? In this epic journey into the world of dinosaurs, an Apatosaurus named Arlo makes an unlikely human friend. While traveling through a harsh and mysterious landscape, Arlo learns the power of confronting his fears and discovers what he is truly capable of.

**The Lady in the Van (12A) 124mins**

Mon: 17:30  
A man forms an unexpected bond with a transient woman living in her car that's parked in his driveway.

**COMING SOON**

**In the Heart of the Sea - 08/01/16**

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MONDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Jim Edge, 1700 Drivetime With Danni Hay, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen

TUESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are Made of This with Ken Hunter, 1330 The Quiz with Danni Hay, 1500 Lesley Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 1900 Sounds Scottish with Archie Cameron, 2000 Highest Praise with Stuart, 2100 Elaine Lamb, 2300 Northern Soul with Gordon Covey

WEDNESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Sound Scottish (repeat), 1000 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Elaine Lamb, 1700 Drivetime with Campbell and Coll, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len & Ken, 2100 Gordon's Grooves

THURSDAY: 0800 Morning show, 1100 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with DJ Taz, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY: 0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Weekend Warmup with Ian Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 1845 Sports View, 1900 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 2000 Friday Night with Innes, 2100 TFI Friday with Jim Lawn

SATURDAY: 0900 Swingin' Sixties, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crosner, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis

SUNDAY: 0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Allan, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott

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OT

# Fort William sleeper train staff join strike over carriage defects

**EMMA CRICHTON**  
ericrichton@obantimes.co.uk

FORT William employees of the Caledonian Sleeper joined fellow staff from all over Scotland in industrial action.

The small group made their voices heard at the town's train station as part of a 48-hour strike in a dispute with operator Serco over defects on carriages after talks held at conciliation service ACAS failed to resolve the issue.

Employees on the picket line on December 22 said they are 'embarrassed' at the service they provided customers, who can pay more than £200 for a ticket, as trains often had no heating, hot water, inoperable toilets and broken lights.

Serco stated all problems had either been resolved or were in the process of being repaired.

The five members of staff at the Fort William picket asked not to be named.

One said: 'Sometimes we can't give the guests a hot drink with their breakfast in the morning or can't even give them a hot breakfast. Other times we can give them a hot

drink and they have to use it to warm themselves up because the heating is broken and the carriages are freezing. Then we have to tell them there's no hot water to wash their faces.'

Another added: 'It's embarrassing having to treat guests like that, especially when they have paid for a good service and are excited about the journey. We want them to enjoy the trip and do our job the best we can but we end up having to take all the stick because things aren't working.'

'We don't blame the customers for being angry about it. If you paid for a stay in a hotel then arrived to be told there's no heating or hot water and you can't have a cooked breakfast you wouldn't be happy. It's the same thing.'

The industrial action came after members of the RMT union voted to back the 48-hour strikes over December 22 and 23, meaning the last sleeper services before Christmas had to be cancelled and passengers were refunded. Strikes also took place in Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and London.



EMBARRASSED: Fort William staff of the Caledonian Sleeper Service took part in a strike before Christmas. 21\_01sleeper01

Peter Strachan, managing director Caledonian Sleeper, called the strike 'entirely unnecessary' and apologised to customers affected.

He said: 'We attended further talks at ACAS on Monday with every intention of working with the RMT to resolve this dispute. I am therefore extremely disappointed that we have not been able to do so given the many and varied issues that they have raised have either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved through a robust and detailed repair and maintenance plan. The RMT has chosen to press ahead with this industrial action just before Christmas and during one of the busiest times of the year. I am particularly sorry for our guests who will now be significantly inconvenienced by this entirely unnecessary 48-hour strike. The Caledonian Sleeper team has already contacted almost 95 per cent of our guests who were due to travel to offer full refunds or re-bookings and we would urge anyone we have not yet spoken to, to please contact us.'

## TIMESLINE

### Marks and Spencer food store for Fort

THE GREEN light has been given for a Marks and Spencer Simply Food store in the North Road shopping centre of Fort William.

It is understood work could begin in spring 2016 after Cheshire-based Morbaine Limited was granted planning permission. Members of Highland Council's south planning application committee approved the application in Inverness last week.

### Power cut phone advice from MSP

A HIGHLAND politician is urging people to keep a corded phone at home for power cuts.

Rhoda Grant, MSP for the Highlands and Islands, said it is the best way to stay connected during outages as many cordless phones don't work without mains power.

Rhoda said: 'If the lights go out, it makes a difference to be able to contact Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution, other public services or family while safe and warm at home.'

### Grant boost for young learners

MORE young people in school and college will be eligible for a grant in the new year.

The income limit for the Education Maintenance Allowance will be increased from January 1 for students aged between 16 and 19 studying at school or college. Currently to receive the £30 per week grant, household income must be less than £20,351 for one dependent child or £22,403 for two but last week Highland Council announced this would be raised to £24,421 for one child and £26,884 for two.



Lochaber fire and rescue group manager Pat McElhinney, front centre, and emergency service partners want to pass on life saving CPR skills.

## Learn life-saving re-start a heart skills at open day

MORE than 140 people in Lochaber could be trained to save a life in just one day, as part of a campaign at Fort William Fire Station.

An open day will be held on January 9 providing 25-minute training sessions in CPR as part of a 'Re-start the Heart' campaign in partnership with the British Heart Foundation.

Lochaber group fire and rescue manager Pat McElhinney is urging the people

of Lochaber to attend: 'The self-teach DVD and practical session only take about 25 minutes to complete and those who volunteer for the training will possess the skills which could save the life of someone suffering from cardiac arrest.'

'I would like as many community members to receive this very important training as it could literally save a life in our area. In a rural area like ours, reaction time will make

the difference between life and death and this training could make the difference. We can train 10 people per 25-minute session so it is possible to train more than 140 people in the day if all sessions are full.'

Individuals who are interested can visit the fire station on the day but groups such as scouts, work parties or friends are asked to contact the fire station in advance on 01397 707670.

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Primary seven pupils at Lochside RC organised a successful Christmas fair. The class ran a cafe and set up stalls selling festive goodies as part of their enterprise project.



Santa's helpers Millie Smith, left, and Samia Simmonds, both P7, helped Santa and his elf at the Caol Christmas Cracker event. 21\_01christmas01

## Festive fun in Lochaber



Volunteers and guests at the Plantation Community Association's senior citizens' Christmas lunch.



Freddie Smith from Corpach took part in Kilmallie Community Centre's carol singing.



Lucky Nathan Slezas, primary three, won a bike at the Ballachulish Primary School Christmas fair.



The primary one and two pupils at Caol Primary School prepare for their Nativity play.



Glencoe Primary School's Nativity, the Sleepy Shepherd, was enjoyed by family and friends.

More photos next week

# Farming

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## The board's origins in pre-WWII Scotland



Farm workers in the early 20th century.

ESTABLISHED in 1937, the Agricultural Wages Board and district agricultural wages committees set pay and conditions for farm workers.

Aimed at ensuring fairness all round, for both staff and employers, the board fell under the control of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland.

The Oban Times article reproduced right is from an archive owned by Inveraray historian Rae Macgregor, originally compiled by her father.

As war raged in Europe, the board announced revised wages for district 11, covering Argyll and the rest of the west Highlands, effective from November 28, 1940.

Under the revised order, a male general farm worker aged 20 and over would earn £140/week. A shepherd of the same age group is better off, getting £152, a wage broadly in line with cattlemen and ploughmen.

Women on farms were less well paid. Looking at *The Oban Times*

summary, a female general farm worker aged 18 and over would expect to be paid £99/week. Milkers were allocated a wage of £14 for the first cow, with an extra £3 for each additional milker. With small herd numbers in the 1940s, this would have meant a wage well under £100/week for most - but interestingly, if applied to modern herd sizes, a reasonable living could be made. Whether the modern dairy farmer could afford £450/week is perhaps a moot point.

The wages order goes on to cover all sorts of aspects of pay and benefits, including the provision of a house, potatoes, milk, coal and peat. A farm worker's house-cow would be valued at £12 (1940 value) per cow in lieu of wages (in other words, deducted from pay).

In modern terms, your milking cow in the byre would mean your pay packet would be lighter to the tune of £700 per year for each beast.

### AGRICULTURAL WAGES (REGULATION) (SCOTLAND) ACTS, 1937 AND 1940

*Oban Times - 30/11/40*  
HOLIDAYS WITH PAY, ACT, 1938

THE SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL WAGES BOARD Hereby Give Notice that they have made an Order fixing revised minimum rates and overtime rates of wages, and holiday remuneration for Agricultural Workers employed in the area of District No. 11 Agricultural Wages Committee, i.e. the area comprising the counties of Argyll; Perth (Highland District Council area and the Western District Council area so far as included in the parishes of Callander, Aberfoyle, Balquhider and Killin); Inverness (District Council areas of Barra, Harris, Lochaber, North Uist, Skye and South Uist); Ross and Cromarty (District Council areas of Gairloch, Lewis, Lochbroom, Lochcarron and South West). In terms of the Order the new rates become effective on 28th November, 1940.

Copies of the Order may be obtained from the Secretary of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board, St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh, 1. A summary of the main provisions of the Order is as follows:—

#### MINIMUM RATES OF WAGES

##### WEEKLY RATES

Workers Employed by the Week or Longer Period

MALE WORKERS except as specified hereafter, 20 years and over, 48/-; 18 and under 20, 39/-; 16 and under 18, 28/-; 14 and under 16, 21/-.

SHEPHERDS (except hogg-herding Shepherds) 20 years and over, 52/-; 18 and under 20, 44/-; 16 and under 18, 32/-. HOGG-HERDING SHEPHERDS, 20 years and over, 51/- (Shepherds' minimum rates require to be increased by 1/6 per week in respect of each dog which such workers are required to keep and feed).

CATTLEMEN, BYREMEN, PLOUGHMEN and HORSEMEN, 20 years and over, 53/-; 18 and under 20, 44/-; 16 and under 18, 31/-.

FEMALE WORKERS, 18 years and over, 34/-; 16 and under 18, 28/-; 14 and under 16, 20/-.

MILKERS, 5/- per week for the daily milking of one cow and 1/- per week for each additional cow milked daily.

Where a worker is required to provide board and lodging for another worker the appropriate minimum rate shall be increased by 20/- per week when board and lodging is provided for a worker of 16 years or over and by 18/- per week when the worker boarded and lodged is under 16 years; when board only is provided the increase shall be at the rate of 2/3 per day in respect of each worker boarded.

## New subsidy payments become slightly clearer

MANY Argyll farmers will now have their first insight into the estimated value of their new Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) entitlements for this year and coming years.

The Scottish Government has written to some 16,000 BPS applicants across the country, and though many farmers are still unclear on when their vital support payment will arrive, the majority will receive their 70 per cent part-payment by the end of January.

The rest paid is due to be paid by the end of March with the balance payment of 30 per cent to be delivered to everyone by the end of April.

Scottish Government has calculated the number of entitlements a BPS claimant may be allocated based on the land declared on their Single Application Form in 2015. As some fields are still being assessed before being allocated to the right payment region

NFU Scotland's director of policy, Jonnie Hall, commented: 'Members are understandably going to compare their estimate of their BPS total in 2015 with their final Single Farm Payment Scheme (SFPS)

payment for 2014. It is worth remembering that it does not cover any coupled support for suckler calves or hill ewe hoggs that will be received.

'While everyone's first step on transition will be different, a lot of our members will see a significant fall in their payments in that first step - especially heavily stocked livestock producers.

'Those with land in either Payments Regions 2 or 3 - ie rough grazing - may also be concerned by an apparent shortfall in their number of entitlements compared to their eligible hectares declared.

'This is because the Scottish Government has applied a reduction coefficient on all payment region 2 and 3 land.

'In effect, 90 payment entitlements will be allocated for every 100ha of rough grazing. This will mean that across the two rough grazing payment regions, there will be fewer entitlements allocated, but of a higher value. There will be no financial impact, but some margin to cover potential ineligible land going forward.'

## Centenary trust wound up after achieving aims in two years

NFU SCOTLAND'S Centenary Trust, which has awarded more than £217,000 to 73 projects across the country during its lifetime, has now been dissolved.

Created to mark the union's centenary in 2013, funds for the trust were raised through the generosity of NFU Scotland members as well as a specially-bottled malt whisky organised by the Banffshire branch and sales of a centenary book.

During its time, the trust delivered on its key objectives of encouraging as many children as possible to learn more about where their food and drink comes from and to visit a farm; to educate farmers, their employees and their children on health and safety in the countryside, with a special emphasis on children's safety; and to assist in bringing forward a meaningful apprenticeship programme for the farm sector.

Of the money awarded by the trust, £145,000 was given to educational activities, with £43,000 for rural training and £29,000 to health and safety projects.

The final four awards, totalling 10,000, will be: £3,840 to Royal National Lifeboat Institution; £1,920 to Crucial Crew; £1,920 to Kitchside Agricultural Museum and £1,920 to Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue.

Projects supported have ranged from schools setting up vegetable gardens to the purchase of 'milkable' fibreglass cows that can give pupils a real hands on experience of where their food comes from. This 'hands on' approach extended to three countryside classrooms on wheels allowing volunteers to take aspects of the farm directly to young people.

For farm visits, portable hand washing facilities were bought using funds and trust money has enabled children to attend the Royal Highland Show.

NFU Scotland Centenary Trust treasurer George Lawrie commented: 'Over the last three years, the fund has helped many projects educate a huge range of people - from farmers and their employees to school children and teachers.

'What has been achieved has been fantastic and we thank all those who have been involved in raising money, giving donations, or submitting applications.

'We are bringing the trust to a close but it will be great to see projects that have benefited from funding continue to educate and inform in the coming years. That is a fitting legacy to mark the centenary of the union in 2013.'

## Wages board retention will reduce competitiveness - union

IN A move criticised by farming leaders, the Scottish Government has decided to retain the Agricultural Wages Board.

The decision follows a government review and public consultation on the future of the body, which has the power to set minimum pay rates, holiday entitlement and certain other conditions of service for agricultural workers in Scotland.

Analysis of industry earnings for the Scottish Government found that scrapping the board would drive down wages, particularly for young apprentices

and migrant workers. A government statement also stated that there was no evidence that abolishing the board would help create more jobs in farming.

The rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead said: 'Workers must be paid a fair wage for the job that they do. As well as being the right thing to do it is important in attracting people into the industry, which is vital for the future of Scottish agriculture.'

'The evidence in favour of retaining the Scottish Agriculture Wages Board is compelling. It

continues to perform an important role in protecting the rights of farm workers - many of whom are paid low wages - which in turn underpins the rural economy.'

NFU Scotland chief executive Scott Walker said: 'The Scottish Government's decision to retain the Agricultural Wages Board without any change to it functions or remit risks crop production moving out of Scotland.'

'For labour intensive crops such as hand-picked fruit and vegetables this decision will have a huge impact on an

industry that operates in a very competitive environment.

'With a national minimum wage, a new national living wage and rules governing working time, why the Scottish Government has decided to retain the board when we have all these other rules in place simply cannot be understood by growers.'

'Retailers and consumers simply won't pay for these additional costs, and instead of creating jobs the risk is that there will be fewer farms and fewer farm workers in Scotland in the years to come.'

## Market reports

### STIRLING

#### Cattle sold at Cally Marts, Stirling

ON THURSDAY December 17, Caledonian Marts Ltd sold 159 cattle, comprising 87 prime bullocks and heifers, 10 bulls, two OTM cattle and 60 cast cows.

Prime bullocks sold to 248p per kg twice for a Limousin from W Dandie and Son, Learielaw Farm, Broxburn, to T Johnston, butchers, Falkirk and a Limousin from J Gardner and Son, Spittal Farm, Cardenden to D Campbell and Son, butchers, Callander and to £1,597.12 gross for a Limousin from Learielaw.

Prime heifers sold to 248p per kg twice for a Limousin from D Dickinson, Brockwoodlees Farm, Canonbie to Hugh Black and Sons, and a Limousin from WM Pet-

tigrew, Faskine, Airdrie and sold to £1,548.80 for a Limousin from Brockwoodlees.

Young bulls sold to 179p per kg from J Wightman, Coxhill Farm, Candie and to £1,341.00 from Messrs Brown, Caprickhill, Kilmarnock.

Under 36-month cattle sold to 182p per kg or £1,263 gross for a Charolais from J Bilsland, Spittal Farm, Drymen.

**Leading Prices**  
Bullocks  
246p, 242p and 238p Brockwoodlees; 230p Learielaw; 228p Kinneil Mill; 224p Spittal and Parkfergus; 222p Kinneil Mill  
Heifers  
244p Brockwoodlees; 242p Carriston and Brockwoodlees; 240p Bankhead (2); 232p Howkerse; 230p Dullomuir; 220p Howkerse

**Other Leading Prices p/kg**  
Limousin  
122p Carriston; 115p Pirnhall; 114p Kirkton Highland  
100p West Gartmore; Beef SH; 97.5p Wester Colliehat  
White SH  
91p Glenturret

**Other Leading Prices Per Head**  
Limousin  
£880 Carriston; £840 Pirnhall; £820 Kirkton; £810 Glenturret  
White SH  
£810 Glenturret  
Beef SH  
£700 Wester Colliehat  
Friesian  
£700 Cochno  
Highland  
£500 West Gartmore  
Ayrshire  
£470 Machribeg  
Jersey  
£320 Graham's Dairy

**Stirling prime sheep sale**  
UNITED Auctions sold 3,528 prime sheep, including 2,601 lambs, selling to an average of 162.9p/kg. Also sold were 927 ewes and rams at the sale, held on Tuesday December 22.

**Selected prices:**  
Lambs per head  
Harviesmailing (BTex) £89; Druidsdales (Tex) £90; Leyden (Suff) £84.50; South Flanders (Char) £86; Ballinloan (Chev) £80; Easter Burchyvie (Mule) £72.50; Craigend (BF) £67.50.

Lambs per kilo  
Harviesmailing (BTex) 203p; Braeside of Lindores (Tex) 191p; Lower Raith (Suff) 169p; South Flanders (Char) 148p; Ballinloan (Chev) 166p; Coulsill (Mule) 158p; Marvingston (BF) 161p.  
Ewes  
Hill of Errol (Tex) £145;

West Lethans (BTex) £137.00; Middle Ballat (Tex) £114.50; Newton of Crathie (TexX) £107.00; Kilwinnet (Cont) £105.50; Formal and West Lethans (Suff) £91.50; Loanhead of Duchally (Chev) £91.50; Ardoch (Mule) £75.50; Doldy (BF) £72.50.

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# West Coast **MOTORING TIMES**

✔ DRIVETIMES ✔ SAILING TIMES ✔ GARAGES ✔ CAR DEALERSHIPS ✔ MOTORING NEWS

## Guild of Experienced Motorists welcomes proposed increase in driver mobile phone penalties

ROAD SAFETY organisation GEM Motoring Assist has welcomed the news that drivers breaking the law by using their mobile phones could soon receive harsher penalties. Under proposals just announced, the current fine for using a phone while driving would increase from £100 to £150 and drivers would lose an additional point from their licence, taking the total penalty points to four. The penalty for HGV drivers would double to six points and first time offenders would also be made to attend an educational course.

The proposals form part of new wider road safety measures due to be announced this week and which will be consulted on next year. 'Using a mobile phone at the wheel is reckless and costs lives,' said GEM chief executive David Williams MBE. 'Our members consistently rate it as one of the most dangerous actions performed by drivers.'

'GEM welcomes the proposed harsher penalties, but warns that they must be accompanied by effective enforcement. This would then help to create a worthwhile deterrent and a 'safer' road environment for everyone.' Using a phone while behind the wheel was a factor in 21 fatal accidents and 84 serious incidents on the road last year.



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CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR REFUSE COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

OBAN AND LORN

Refuse and recycling collections due on Friday 25th December will be collected on Sunday 27th December. Refuse and recycling collections due on Friday 1st January will be collected on Sunday 3rd January. Moleigh Recycling and Civic Amenity Site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

MULL AND IONA

Refuse and recycling collections due on Friday 25th December will be collected on Saturday 26th December. Refuse and recycling collections due on Friday 1st January will be collected on Saturday 2nd January. Glengorm Recycling and Civic Amenity Site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

TIREE

Collections due on Monday 4th January will be collected on Wednesday 6th January. Gott Bay Recycling and Civic Amenity Site will be closed from 25th - 28th December and from 1st - 4th January. Information is also available on the Council website and from your local office.

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CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD FIRST REGISTRATION OF COMMON GRAZINGS

The Crofting Commission have registered the following Common Grazings on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Balnoe Common Grazings, Tiree  
Registration Number: CG214

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may appeal to the Scottish Land Court. The appeal must be brought within 9 months from the date of this advert and should be made directly to the Land Court.

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home)

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

First Registration of a Croft

Mr Innes Bell has registered 3 crofts at Glenegadale and Glenmachrie and Kildalton and Oa on the crofting register held by the registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 27/07/2016. Details of the registrations can be found at [www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home). The crofting registration numbers are C1865 C1864 C1863.

First Registration of a Croft

Mr Stephen Ham has registered the croft 2 Murlaggan (share), Kilmornaig on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 17 September, 2016. Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C2075

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**PERSONAL NOTICES**

**THANK YOU**

Friends of the late Peggy MacPherson would like to thank everyone who very generously supported their recent coffee morning. £1395.00 has been donated to friends of Oban Hospice in memory of Peggy.

I would dearly love to make contact with the family members of the late Archy Macdonald formerly of Dunmar Court and N Uist. His daughters Annie and Marina both live in Oban but I have no contact address for them.  
allansummers@iprimus.com.au or Site 7, Wallacia Caravan Park, Alwyn Ave, Wallacia, N.S.W. Australia.

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**BIRTHS**

**HILL - WOTHERSPOON** - Graham and Denise are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their beautiful son Henry James Hill, born on November 30, 2015 at RAH, Paisley. A wee brother for Donald.

**DEATHS**

**DOUGAL** - Unexpectedly at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, after a long illness, on December 18, 2015 aged 58 years, Morag Dougal, beloved mother, sister, sister-in-law and auntie. Funeral will take place at Kilchrean Parish Church on Wednesday January 6, 2016 at 1.00 pm., thereafter to Kilchrean Cemetery.

**EDMOND** - Peacefully, at the Belford Hospital, on Christmas Eve, Fay Edmond, beloved wife of Charlie, much loved mother of Peter and Sandy, and adored granny of Susan, James, Ruari and Caitrin. Memorial service will be held on Thursday December 31, 2015 at 11.30am in St. Ciaran's Parish Church, Achmacarry, thereafter the funeral service will be held on Tuesday January 12, 2016 at 2.30pm in Clydebank Crematorium, North Dalnottar. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired to RNLi can be given at the service or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

**FERGUSON** - Suddenly at the Mid Argyll Hospital on December 27, 2015, Charles John Ferguson, aged 79 years, of Roseheart, Dun Mor Avenue, Lochgilphead. (Former Senior Nursing Officer, Argyll and Bute Hospital). Dearly loved husband of Dadi Crawford, much adored father of Charles and Lorna, respected father-in-law of Fiona and Andrew and uncle and cousin to all the family. A good neighbour, dear friend and former work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held in Kilmartin Parish Church on Thursday December 31, 2015, at 11 a.m., thereafter to Achnacree Cemetery. All friends are respectfully invited to attend.

**HENRY** - At Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary on Tuesday December 22, 2015, Sandra, beloved wife of Sandy, 69 Millburn Street, Kirkcudbright, formerly of 3 Orkney Place, Fort William. Interred at St. Cuthbert's Church yard on Wednesday December 30, 2015.

**HOUGHTON** - Suddenly on December 26, 2015 at the Southern General Neurology Department, Michael Houghton aged 48, loving husband of Myra, stepfather of Chris and Justin and beloved son of David and Muriel, brother of Linda and uncle of Isla, passed away after a short illness.

**MACKINNON** - Mary Flora. Peacefully at Almond View Care Home on Monday December 21, 2015. Flora beloved wife of the late Iain, a much loved mum to Angus, Lachie, Margaret, Christine, Fiona, Linda and Alastair and a loving granny to all the family. Dedication service at Clydebank Coop Funeral Home, Hume Street, Clydebank, G81 1XL on Wednesday December 30, 2015 at 11.00am. Funeral service will take place at Heylipol Church, Isle of Tiree on Wednesday January 6 at 1.00pm, thereafter to Kirkcubbin Cemetery. All friends are respectfully invited.

**MILLER** - Peacefully, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on December 21, 2015, in her 69th year, Susan Margaret, (Sue), dearly beloved wife of Bill and sister and aunt. Will be sorely missed. Cremation service will take place at Perth Crematorium, on Thursday December 31, 2015 at 2.00 p.m. Family flowers only please. A retail collection/donations will be taken for Macmillan Cancer Support.

**PATTERSON** - Peacefully, in the care of Moss Park Nursing Home on Saturday December 26, 2015, Frank W. Patterson, aged 92 years. Loving husband of the late Rae, also a loving father, father-in-law, grandad and great-grandad. Sadly missed by all. Funeral service will be held on Saturday January 2, 2016 at 2pm in Duncansburgh-MacIntosh Parish Church; thereafter a private committal will be held at Inverness Crematorium. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired to Moss Park Residents' Fund can be given at the church door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

**WILLIS** - Bill. At Lorn and Islands Hospital on Sunday, December 20, 2015, husband of the late Doranne, father of Caroline, Frances and Mark. Funeral at Lismore graveside on Wednesday December 30, followed by refreshments in Lismore Hall.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**SIMMONDS** - The family of the late Rita Simmonds, who died on December 11, 2015 would like to thank, all relatives, friends and neighbours, for their kind expressions of sympathy. Thanks also to the Reverend Canon MacNeil for his uplifting service, many thanks to the North Argyll House, for their care and comfort given to our mother in her last years. Thanks to Hamish Hoey and son for their caring and efficient funeral arrangements, and to the Lancaster hotel for providing all the catering.

**MEMORIALS**

**CAMPBELL** - In loving memory of our beautiful mum and wonderful nana Jean, whom God called to become an angel on December 31, 2013. Our hearts are still broken. As we miss you every day. - Ann Marie, Malcolm and Catherine Lillian x We love you nana - Lee, Megan, Bethannie and Amy xx

**FERGUSON** - In loving memory of my dear mother Jessie, died January 2, 2011. Loving and kind in all her ways Upright and just to the end of her days Sincere and true in her heart and mind Beautiful memories she left behind. - Daughter Anne.

**HAY** - On the 1st anniversary of the death of Mary Catherine (née Beaton) of Iona, who passed away on December 31, 2014, aged 64 years. No verse can say No flowers can repay How much we lost one year ago today. - The family.

A loving gran so gentle and kind What a wonderful memory you have left behind - Stephen, Declan, Cameron and Lucy.

**HAY** - Mary. In loving memory of Aunty Mary. Thinking of you, always remembered. - Claire, Blair and girls.

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

**LAUDER** - Precious memories of our darling son Stephen, who died so tragically on January 4, 2014. We lost a son with a heart of gold Worth more to us than wealth untold The flowers we lay upon his grave may wither and decay But our love for him that lies beneath Will never fade away Love and miss you loads. - Ma and dad xxx.

**LAUDER** - In loving memory of our dear brother and uncle Stephen, who died January 4, 2014. We will always love and remember you. - Billy, Kevin, Gillian and families x. Sadly missed in every way. - Ann x.

**MACCALLUM** - In loving memory of Henrietta (Babs), who died December 30, 2010. Still sorely missed and loved. - Roberta, Stephen and Robert.

**MACINNES** - In loving memory of Duncan (Eriskay), 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 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 xx.

**MACLELLAN** - Treasured and cherished memories of our darling Christopher who was suddenly taken from us on January 1, 1991. Loved and remembered 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. Remembering you is easy I do it every day It's the heartache of losing two of you That never goes away Love you always. - Mum, 29 Glenpark Street xx. Remembering you always Forgetting you never. - Ian, Rory, Daniel, Donald, Christine and Marina xx.

**MACPHAIL** - Treasured memories of a dear husband, dad and 'Shesh', John, Ardmay, Tiree, who passed away December 26, 2004 and loved ones gone before and after. Sweet is your memory Precious your name Deep in my heart You will always remain - Jean, Tere x Though absent you are very near Still loved, still missed and very dear. - May, Irene and families, Oban and Tiree.

**MAITLAND** - In loving memory of a dear brother-in-law and uncle James, who died December 23, 2012. Treasured memories of days gone by. - Love Lorraine, Paul, Jill and Kyle.

**MCKINNON** - Treasured memories of my dear husband Charles McKinnon, who died suddenly on December 28, 2005, also my dear mother Catherine Brown, who died July 26, 2001. Memories of our days together Live within my heart forever. Also remembering loved ones gone before and since. - May, Colonsay.

**MCLEISH** - In loving memory of my mum Morag, passed away January 3, 2011. Always remembered. - Christine and family.

**MUNN** - In loving memory of Mary Ann, a dearly loved mother, mother-in-law and granny who passed away December 28, 2008. Close in our hearts you will always stay Loved and remembered every day. - Neil, Mairi-Anne, Kieran, Kyle and Ryan.

**New Bishop of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles appointed**

POPE Francis has today appointed Monsignor Brian McGee as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. The diocese has been vacant since April 2014 when Bishop Joseph Toal became the Bishop of Motherwell. Mgr. McGee is currently Vicar General of the Diocese of Paisley and Parish Priest of Holy Family Parish, Port Glasgow.



Bishop-Elect Monsignor Brian McGee of Argyll & Isles

Reacting to his appointment, Bishop-Elect McGee said: 'It was very humbling, and indeed frightening, to be informed by the Papal Nuncio that Pope Francis had nominated me to be the new bishop of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. 'However, after reflection and prayer I now face this mission with quiet but definite confidence. 'Yes, I remain aware of my limitations but I am even more aware of the power of God's grace which, with our co-operation, overcomes our shortcomings. Experience has taught me that positively answering God's invitations is always to our own advantage.'

Bishop-Elect McGee added: 'I am excited about coming to the diocese of Argyll and the Isles. It has an ancient and proud heritage whose roots stretch back almost one and a half thousand years preceding even its spiritual father, Saint Columba. 'Since then, the consistent witness to Christ and the contribution to the National and Universal Church have been immense and I pray that it will continue to be so. I am also mindful of the diocese's rich Gaelic character and I, although not yet a Gaelic speaker, will endeavour to promote its rightful use in the worship of God.'

We have entered into the Year of Mercy. 'I am inspired by this Jubilee's ethos and I hope to be a bishop that has an unshakable trust in God's mercy, unafraid to acknowledge my own need of God's mercy and one who shows mercy to all, especially those who are most in need. Pope Francis wrote of our Faith Communities being oases of mercy. 'Please God, as individuals, as parishes and the diocese as a body will be a constant oasis of mercy to all. 'I cannot deny that it is a wrench for me to leave the Diocese of Paisley. This was where I wanted to minister from my youth and I have always been very happy there. I would like to thank Bishop John Keenan, and his predecessors, as well as the clergy, religious and lay faithful of Paisley Diocese for their encouragement over many years. 'I recognise that I have much to learn about the diocese of Argyll and the Isles and

I hope to be a good listener. It is an area I already love. I grew up in Greenock daily enjoying beautiful views of the Cowal Peninsula, Bute and Arran and I still savour them from my parish in Port Glasgow today. I have holidayed and trekked throughout the diocesan boundaries from my earliest childhood to the present day. 'I have made several pilgrimages to Iona. I already look forward to living within what will be my new diocese and I sure that I will naturally come to love its people.'

Bishop John Keenan of Paisley said: 'Many congratulations to Bishop Elect Brian on his appointment by Pope Francis to the See of Argyll and the Isles. I am not at all surprised that he has been chosen for this important office. Since appointing him as my Vicar General and getting to know and see him at work I have been highly impressed by his wisdom about the ways of the Church, his personal commitment to living the Gospel and his sense of service to the clergy and people of the diocese. 'He is loved and respected dearly by his own parishioners in Holy Family, Port Glasgow, who will miss him, and his elevation leaves big shoes to fill in the diocese of Paisley. 'I can assure the clergy and people of Argyll and the Isles that they are getting a Pastor who will give his all to serving them with justice and who will lead them with energy and vision. 'He will be a valued member of the Bishop's Conference which will benefit from his fresh perspective and thoughtful discernment.'

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**GRADUATED**



**Dr Fiona Morrison** graduated from Bournemouth University with a PhD in Scottish History following research undertaken at Stirling and Bournemouth Universities into the development of tourism in Argyll in the 18th and 19th centuries. Fiona is the daughter of Maimie and the late John Morrison, Driftwood, Polvinister Road, Oban.

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**Thought for the week**

With the nights still dark and the days cold it is good to be positive looking into the coming year. So with a wee Hogmanay dram in my hand here are my predictions for 2016. Hearts will win the league, Lulu will top Eurovision, Putin and Elton John will marry, Bruce will make a Strictly comeback and Oban Gaelic Choir will win the Mod (again!). Ok, only the last one is certain and who knows about the others. The point is we cannot foretell with certainty what the future will bring. Throughout 2016 our lives will contain highs and lows around family life, work and our other commitments. Locally, in an era of tight budget restrictions and cuts there will still be magnificent work done by councillors and staff. Internationally we will have to face extremists whilst reaching out in mutually enriching

friendship to peoples of many cultures. The Christian faith encourages us to face what will come with eyes open. For in Christmas we have just celebrated Jesus of Nazareth being born into the reality of the world. God-in-Christ goes with us through all that will come in the days, weeks and months to come. Faith is not avoidance but hopeful and purposeful travelling. And as we go into 2016 may there be blessings to come in your life. The blessing of the One who was, who is, and who is to come be upon you all, redeeming your past, filling your present, lighting up your future, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Rev Dugald Cameron

**LIFE lines**

**Enjoy your mistakes**

When I first joined a Gaelic Choir I was unable to make the same faces that the other members of the choir were making. I thought I would be able to mask my lack of guttural sounds and silent spitting, but with a choir master like Raymond Bremner, nickname the panther, - this was never going to work. So I had to take the long route and it is a journey I am not afraid to admit that I am still on. When I started writing for a living I thought I knew it all. I was able to write about what I wanted, when I wanted. Sadly I had no idea about the use of colons, commas or indeed the many variants of any given word in any sentence. I am still learning, I am sure most readers will agree. Life is not about getting things right on day one. Life is not an extended game of X Factor where one week you are kicked out and you can't get up again. Life is about learning and developing. I want to quote Winston Churchill on this very matter: 'I go from one mistake to another without any loss of enthusiasm.' Enjoy all the mistakes you can in 2016 - I hope you learn from them. J.M.

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# The Nine-Holers of the West Coast

by Derek MacAdam

THE WEST coast of Scotland is famous for its wonderful scenery, abundance of wildlife, the friendliness of its people. Scotland as a whole is famed the world over as the home of golf, possessing many of the most famous courses in the world, bringing tourists in their droves to play the fine courses.

What is less famed is Scotland's abundance of glorious nine-hole courses. There are nearly 200 of these fine courses scattered the length and breadth of the country kept going by small bands of enthusiasts. Most people if tested could name many of Scotland's greatest courses.

The big championship centres where the top golfers clammer to play every year.

Yet how many could name more than four or five, if that, of the nine-hole starters.

These fine courses offer everything, and perhaps more, than their bigger, better known cousins.

They command respect for the challenge they offer with a test for every standard of player, high or low handicapper.

They can be found in city centres, in the glens and hills of the Highlands and ringing every coastal region.

They deserve far better than to be 'Scotland's best kept secret'.

And nowhere are there better nine-holers than in the west. Taking just a small snapshot of the area from Inveraray to Ullapool there are 16 of these superb smaller courses.

For any golfer, whether from home or abroad, whether a solid striker or a happy duffer, these courses make the perfect holiday venues. They also, of course, offer regular club golf for those lucky enough to live close by.

These courses have much to recommend them. They are not expensive to play.

Few of them charge more than £20 for a round, or even a day's golf compared to maybe five times as much on a championship course.

They are quiet. It is rarely necessary to book a start time. Sometimes it is possible to have just a single party going round.

Of these 16 courses many are in useful groupings which means that during the course of a four-day short break it would be easy to play four or maybe even five courses. And that highlights another advantage of a nine-hole course. It takes only an hour-and-a-half to two hours to play a complete round.

A crowded 18-hole course could easily take up to five hours, which

is a massive slice out of the day, especially on holiday when maybe some members of the party can resist the joys of a stimulating game in glorious surroundings.

Recent surveys have established that many regular golfers are finding it difficult to find the time to play 18 holes and for this reason the popularity of the smaller course is growing.

In the southern area of the region of the west of Scotland there are nine-holers at Lochgoilhead, Lochgilphead, and Inveraray. From a base in one of the fine hotels in Inveraray it is entirely possible to play all these courses over the period of a few days.

The furthest flung of these is Lochgoilhead, approached by a six-mile, single track road from the Rest and Be Thankful, and situated in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

This course is part of the Drimsynie Hotel and Leisure Centre. The relatively short course follows the head of the loch before crossing the River Goil.

At Lochgilphead there is a wee terror of a course behind the famous Argyll and Bute hospital. Watch out for the steeply climbing par three third which plays far longer than its 114 yards.

Inveraray course is just a mile south of the immaculately planned town at the heart of Clan Campbell, where the seventh is a particularly lovely hole.

The tee shot is through a narrow gap in the trees and the approach to the green has Loch Fyne and the surrounding hills as a backdrop.



The long par five - Macilleathan at Vaul Golf Club, Tiree.

overlooked by the brooding heights of mighty Ben Cruachan.

The jury is still out as to which of these neighbouring courses is the best - truth to say they are both outstanding.

Apart from many water hazards there is a wealth of wildlife at Dalnally and birds of prey, herons and otters can all be seen, while a rare pine martin has also been spotted. Taynult is a challenging parkland course enjoying views up Loch Etive. It has been claimed that the ninth is one of the best holes anywhere - on any course.

A trip to the Isle of Seil is always rewarding. The journey leads across the romantic Bridge over the Atlantic. This is a challenging coastal layout with the



Isle of Seil Golf Club.



Lochgilphead Golf Club.



Tobermory Golf Club.

Oban would be a fine place to stay for the next grouping of four courses, or seven for the really adventurous. These first four are at Dalnally, Taynult, the Isle of Seal and the Links at Eriska. Both Dalnally and Taynult are

rank amongst the finest in the world. The locals know to keep their heads down from the view to avoid adding strokes to their handicap.

The seventh is a truly wonderful par three across a gully to a small green with a rocky outcrop at the back. The tee shot needs to be pinpoint accurate.

Another ferry trip awaits the adventurous golfer to the low-lying isle of Tiree, famous as the wind surfing capital of the world. Equally noteworthy is Vaul golf course, laid out by the navy in 1886. In the springtime the maichair is alive with wild flowers scattered across the fairways which can mean finding the ball is a real challenge.

A stay in or around historic Fort William offers access to more fine nine-holers. A few miles to the east is the lovely Spean Bridge course hiding behind the railway station. Situated on gently sloping ground beneath Ben Nevis there are few facilities, but the course is in fine condition.

The eighth hole is undoubtedly the most difficult and is described by a member as being a 'rascal of a hole'. Trees to the right of the fairway appear to drag a loose tee shot inexorably in that direction.

Further east still is Fort Augustus, a course bounded on one side by Scots pines lining the Caledonian Canal and on the other by the heather and gorse covered Glengarry Mountains. Two sets of tees mean an outward half is very different to the homeward half.

On the road to Mallaig to the west of Fort William nestles the gorgeous Traigh nine-holer, described by one newspaper as probably 'the most beautifully sited nine-hole golf course in the world'.

Only the members of Tobermory would disagree. The views embrace the cocktail islands of Rum and Egg and the Cuillin

mountains of Skye. This links course has attracted many famous players and lots of recent publicity when a sink hole appeared on a fairway; damage which should now be totally repaired.

The last nine-holer in this group is Dragons Tooth at Ballachulish named after the dramatic hill towering over the course.

A favourite hole is the ninth played over a burn, through a stand of trees to a small green close to the welcoming clubhouse.

At the northern extremity of this trip through nine-hole heaven are the final three courses at Lochcarron, Gairloch and Ullapool where a stay at Mallaig would be a convenient centre for all of them.

A beachside course which de-

mands some care where it plays across the main road, Lochcarron is a shortish but demanding course where several of the holes play around an ancient church.

About a mile south of the village the Gairloch course is another with stunning views to the south and west.

Wildlife on show can include the occasional sea eagle, seals, minke whales, porpoise, dolphin and red and roe deer.

This should not be a distraction as, with several fairways crossing each other, it is best to be alert for shouts of 'fore'.

The friendly clubhouse not only stocks The Nine-Holer Guide but has fine food during the season together with changing rooms, and club and trolley hire.

Ullapool where one of the newer nine-holers in Scotland was opened by that most famous of royal golfers HRH Prince Andrew, in 1998.

Laid out along the banks of Loch Broom, extensive views carry the eye to the Summer Isles. This is a gorse and parkland layout with 18 tees playing to nine greens.

The 16 nine-hole courses featured here offer the most inspiring collection of courses in a relatively small area anywhere in the world.

There is only one thing to do now. Go there. Play them. It is essential that they are more than just a best kept secret.

Derek MacAdam is the Author of The Nine-Holer Guide published by Luath Press, Edinburgh.



Dalnally Golf Club.



Taynult Golf Club.

## SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1700

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



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

L Lamont  
Glencruitten Drive  
Oban

A MacLulich  
Nant Drive  
Oban

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.

**Easy to enter**

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

**Competition rules**

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

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

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

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

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 Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

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



Please tape your £1 coin here

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Address .....

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## New American football club being formed in Oban

### American football

IF ANYONE hears the word 'football', and immediately think of touch-downs, blocks, blitzes and buttonhooks, they will be excited to hear that a new club is being formed in Oban next year.

Oban Knights will be the town's first ever American football club, aimed at youths aged between 14 and 18, with the hope of expanding into senior and women's teams in the future.

Fiona Blakey, who lives in Tainuill and has been a fan of the game for 25 years, is the driving force behind the venture.

She explained: 'My son Sorley has really been getting into the game recently and he's 16. He went training with Inverclyde Phoenix in Greenock and also in Edinburgh but the travelling is just too much. There's no provision for American football in the area, so anyone in Argyll who is interested has to travel to either Alloa or Greenock.'

'We're starting off a team for 14 to 18 year old boys, after a taster session earlier this year at Oban High School where 30 people turned up, which was really positive.'

Oban High School, Active Schools and Atlantis Leisure are all supporting the club as it aims to organise and play some friendly matches next year. To begin with the club is to play 'flag football' a lower-impact version of American football where a flag is removed from the ball carrier rather than proper tackling.

Once the club has raised funds for proper equipment, which it is to do with the help of Active Schools, it will progress into full-contact participation.

Ms Blakey added: 'If anyone is interested in playing or coaching, we are on the lookout for volunteers. We would also like to hear from anyone who would like to be involved in the organisation and board of the club. Finally, we are also in need of sponsors to help us with insurance and equipment costs.'

'Active Schools has offered to contribute towards the cost of coaching qualifications and Disclosure Scotland, which is excellent.'

Murray Hamilton, principle teacher of PE at Oban High School, welcomed the news. He said: 'We had a 'come and try' session at the school during lunch hour on December 10 and 30 boys showed up, which was good.'

'I've included American football into lessons at school for around four years with the seniors, and the past year for third and fourth year pupils. It's quite a good leveller as none of them tend to have played it before, so they're learning from scratch.'

'The PE department is happy to support the club in any way it can, as the more sports youngsters are playing, the better. I think it could take off well as an 'off-season' sport.'

Anyone interested in getting involved can contact Fiona Blakey by email: fiona@no16.net



The Oban Knights' logo



Both Oban Celtic shinty teams face the camera before the annual Boxing Day fixture at Mossfield. Photos: Kevin McGlynn

# Penalty shoot-out decides annual Boxing Day match

OBAN Celtic Shinty Club's Golden Oldies took on the Young Guns in the annual Boxing Day challenge match at Mossfield Stadium last Saturday.

The game was played on a bitterly cold day but the pitch was in remarkable condition despite the recent heavy rain and credit should go to the groundstaff for having the pitch playable.

The teams were piped on to the pitch by Michael MacKinnon before referee Alex MacVicar got the game in motion.

It was always going to be a game of two halves with the strong, biting cold wind playing its part.

The Young Guns had the advantage of the elements in the first half and the Golden Oldies had keeper Scott Buchanan to thank for a string of fine saves although he stood no chance

## Shinty

when South Division One Player of the Year Daniel Madej fired an unstoppable shot high into the net to give the Young Guns the lead which they held till half time.

Unfortunately Lee Askew had to leave the field with a nasty shoulder injury soon after as did Ally McKerracher who caught a stray stick in the mouth.

After the break and with the elements in their favour, the Golden Oldies took control and Sandy MacLeod netted a well-taken equaliser before Stuart MacGregor put them in front.

However, Alan Mackie restored parity near the end to send the game into a penalty shoot out with the Golden Oldies winning the memorial trophy 2-1.



Piper Michael MacKinnon leads the teams on to the field before last Saturday's match.



Duncan Forgive leads Lee Askew from the field with what proved to be a dislocated shoulder and broken collar bone. Everybody wished Lee a speedy recovery.



Daniel Madej tries to get his block in to prevent George Reid from clearing his lines.



Ally McKerracher shows Calum Fox his lip which required six stitches in a visit to the hospital.



Golden Oldies keeper Scott Buchanan made three important saves during the penalty shoot out which his team won.

## How the south shinty teams performed last season

AS THE year draws to a close it is time to reflect on the fortunes of the south clubs in 2015.

Kyles Athletic finished runners up to Newtonmore in the Marine Harvest Premiership and also reached the final of the Camanachd Cup beating their Badenoch rivals 3-2 in the semi final at Tainuill. However, the Tighnabruach men lost out 2-1 to Lovat in the final.

There was consolation for Kyles though as they retained the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Celtic Society Cup defeating Oban Camanachd 3-1 in the final.

Oban Camanachd, after a remarkable run of only two defeats in 10 games cemented their place in the premiership for next season, avoiding automatic relegation and the dreaded play-off scenario.

Manager Ian Hay is positive that, with all players available, there is optimism at the club of a good season ahead.

Hay said: 'The importance of premiership shinty in Oban cannot be overstated as it will ultimately benefit the game in general in the Oban area.'

The club's under 17s and under 14s

continue to flourish. The under 17s are coached by David MacCuish, Scott Buchanan and George Easton with Stephen Sloss and Brian Logan in charge of the under 14s.

A spokesman for the club said: 'We are pleased with the progress of all our teams and the array of talent at all levels augers well for the future.'

'The club wishes all their loyal band of supporters a happy New Year and look forward to their continued support next season.'

Oban Camanachd will take on an Oban Camanachd Veterans team in the annual New Year fixture. The match will be played at Mossfield on Saturday January 9 with a 1pm throw-up.

The numbers for last week's Oban Camanachd Lotto drawn in Coasters were 2, 13, 18. There were no winners. The next draw was made on Monday December 28 with a jackpot of £300 up for grabs.

Inveraray had a poor season by their own high standards and were relegated from shinty's top flight and will play in the National Division next season. The club

were dealt another blow when veteran goalkeeper Graham 'Toad' MacPherson announced his retirement from the game.

Bute won South Division One but by the narrowest of margins - on goal difference from Lochside Rovers. The islanders will now play in the National Division, having turned down the opportunity to play there last season.

Lochside also lost out in the Sutherland Cup final to Newtonmore although they won the JC Trophy and had the consolation of Gareth Evans being named South Division One Manager of the Year and the evergreen Brian MacCallum finishing top scorer in the division.

Oban Celtic may be disappointed with their third place finish behind Bute and Lochside Rovers in South Division One.

However, Daniel Madej must be congratulated on winning the South Division One Player of the Year award.

Inveraray's second team finished in fourth spot with Kyles second team in fifth, two points ahead of Aberdour in sixth place.

Tainuill, under the direction of David

## Shinty

Thomson, finished seventh in the division, recovering from a slow start to finish the season well.

Glenorchy had a stop-start season finishing in eighth place. Strachur struggled in the division finishing in ninth with Kilmory bottom of the table with three points.

Col Glen won South Division Two from Tayforth with Glasgow Mid Argyll in third place.

Bute finished fourth with Oban Lorn playing their first season in South Division Two finishing in a creditable fifth place to establish themselves in that division.

The management team of David 'Jocky' Martin, Donald MacVicar, Les Kinivg and Tony Howlett will hope the team can kick-off next season.

Glenorchy were sixth, three points ahead of Ballachulish and Aberdour, who finished bottom of the table on goal difference from Ballachulish.

## Oban Saints prepare for vital Scottish Cup fixture

### Football

OBAN Saints have been preparing for their biggest match of the season so far as they take on last year's beaten Scottish Amateur Cup finalists Craigshill Thistle.

The game is scheduled to be played at Glencrutton on Saturday January 9 with a 2pm kick-off. Referee James Gallagher is in charge.

Craigshill reached the final of the Scottish Cup last season only to lose out to Harestanes who, incidentally, defeated Saints in the West of Scotland Cup last season.

Craigshill had two players - Shaun Martin and David Swan play alongside Saints captain Donnie Campbell for the Scottish amateur international team.

They defeated Airdrie 1-0 at the Excelsior Stadium in November and Donnie was very impressed by the two Thistle players.

He said: 'They were both excellent players and if the rest of the team are anything like them then we are in for a tough game.'

Saints manager Alex Craik said: 'We know it will be a difficult game against one of the best amateur teams in the country but it's a home tie and we can't ask for more than that.'

Harestanes beat us 3-1 in Kirkintilloch last season but we gave them a good run for their money. The score was 1-1 with 10 minutes to go before they scored two late goals to knock us out of the cup.

'We seem to do well against the so-called better teams so I'm sure the boys will be up for the Craigshill game.'

'It's difficult for us at this time of year, with the 3G being pitch closed for the holidays, we've got nowhere to train properly, although we managed a spin class at Atlantis Leisure last week which kept the boys ticking over.'

'Thankfully the 3G will have reopened before we play Craigshill so we can get one good session in before the game.'



Donnie Campbell

## Colin Edgar, Col Glen Shinty Club

### Football

AFTER a long illness Colin Edgar passed away on Sunday December 20.

Edgar played for many years for Col Glen Shinty Club as well as for Bute for a short period.

His funeral service was due to be held on Wednesday December 30 at Greenock Crematorium.

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**WEATHER**

**Thursday** Light rain  
Winds moderate southerly  
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.

**Friday** Cloudy  
Winds strong south south easterly  
Temperatures 4°C to 6°C.

**Weekend Outlook** Heavy rain on Saturday  
Light rain on Sunday  
Winds strong south easterly  
Temperatures 3°C to 5°C.

**Stop Press:** New pontoons recently installed by North West Marine at Kyle Lochboisdale for visiting yachts

**TIDAL INFORMATION**  
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 31, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	03.18	1.3	09.02	3.6	16.00	1.7
Fri	04.01	1.5	09.43	3.4	16.47	1.9
Sat	04.49	1.7	10.32	3.2	17.43	2.0
Sun	05.43	1.8	11.39	3.1	18.48	2.1
Mon	00.51	3.0	06.41	1.9	13.13	3.1
Tues	02.14	3.1	07.44	1.9	14.31	3.2
Wed	03.09	3.2	08.49	1.8	15.25	3.4

Ardrihaig	-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		

**Ferry Crossings/Sea States**

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

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

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

## Fort William sleeper train staff join strike over carriage defects

**EMMA CRICHTON**  
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

FORT William employees of the Caledonian Sleeper joined fellow staff from all over Scotland in industrial action. The small group made their voices heard at the town's train station as part of a 48-hour strike in a dispute with operator Serco over defects on carriages after talks held at conciliation service ACAS failed to resolve the issue. Employees on the picket line on December 22 said they are 'embarrassed' at the service they provided customers, who can pay more than £200 for a ticket, as trains often had no heating, hot water, inoperable toilets and broken lights. Serco stated all problems had either been resolved or were in the process of being repaired. The five members of staff at the Fort William picket asked not to be named. One said: 'Sometimes we can't give the guests a hot drink with their breakfast in the morning or can't even give them a hot breakfast. Other times we can give them a hot

drink and they have to use it to warm themselves up because the heating is broken and the carriages are freezing. Then we have to tell them there's no hot water to wash their faces.' Another added: 'It's embarrassing having to treat guests like that, especially when they have paid for a good service and are excited about the journey. We want them to enjoy the trip and do our job the best we can but we end up having to take all the stick because things aren't working. 'We don't blame the customers for being angry about it. If you paid for a stay in a hotel then arrived to be told there's no heating or hot water and you can't have a cooked breakfast you wouldn't be happy. It's the same thing.' The industrial action came after members of the RMT union voted to back the 48-hour strikes over December 22 and 23, meaning the last sleeper services before Christmas had to be cancelled and passengers were refunded. Strikes also took place in Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and London.



EMBARRASSED: Fort William staff of the Caledonian Sleeper Service took part in a strike before Christmas. 21\_f01sleeper01

Peter Strachan, managing director Caledonian Sleeper, called the strike 'entirely unnecessary' and apologised to customers affected. He said: 'We attended further talks at ACAS on Monday with every intention of working with the RMT to resolve this dispute. I am therefore extremely disappointed that we have not been able to do so given the many and varied issues that they have raised have either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved through a robust and detailed repair and maintenance plan. The RMT has chosen to press ahead with this industrial action just before Christmas and during one of the busiest times of the year. I am particularly sorry for our guests who will now be significantly inconvenienced by this entirely unnecessary 48-hour strike. The Caledonian Sleeper team has already contacted almost 95 per cent of our guests who were due to travel to offer full refunds or re-bookings and we would urge anyone we have not yet spoken to, to please contact

### TIMESLINE

#### Marks and Spencer food store for Fort

THE GREEN light has been given for a Marks and Spencer Simply Food store in the North Road shopping centre of Fort William. It is understood work could begin in spring 2016 after Cheshire-based Morbaine Limited was granted planning permission. Members of Highland Council's south planning application committee approved the application in Inverness last week.

#### Power cut phone advice from MSP

A HIGHLAND politician is urging people to keep a corded phone at home for power cuts. Rhoda Grant, MSP for the Highlands and Islands, said it is the best way to stay connected during outages as many cordless phones don't work without mains power. Rhoda said: 'If the lights go out, it makes a difference to be able to contact Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution, other public services or family while safe and warm at home.'

#### Grant boost for young learners

MORE young people in school and college will be eligible for a grant in the new year. The income limit for the Education Maintenance Allowance will be increased from January 1 for students aged between 16 and 19 studying at school or college. Currently to receive the £30 per week grant, household income must be less than £20,351 for one dependent child or £22,403 for two but last week Highland Council announced this would be raised to £24,421 for one child and £26,884 for two.



Lochaber fire and rescue group manager Pat McElhinney, front centre, and emergency service partners want to pass on life saving CPR skills.

## Learn life-saving re-start a heart skills at open day

MORE than 140 people in Lochaber could be trained to save a life in just one day, as part of a campaign at Fort William Fire Station. An open day will be held on January 9 providing 25-minute training sessions in CPR as part of a 'Re-start the Heart' campaign in partnership with the British Heart Foundation. Lochaber group fire and rescue manager Pat McElhinney is urging the people

of Lochaber to attend: 'The self-teach DVD and practical session only take about 25 minutes to complete and those who volunteer for the training will possess the skills which could save the life of someone suffering from cardiac arrest. 'I would like as many community members to receive this very important training as it could literally save a life in our area. In a rural area like ours, reaction time will make

the difference between life and death and this training could make the difference. We can train 10 people per 25-minute session so it is possible to train more than 140 people in the day if all sessions are full.' Individuals who are interested can visit the fire station on the day but groups such as scouts, work parties or friends are asked to contact the fire station in advance on 01397 707670.

**Mathesons Massive January SALE**

Starts 10am Tues 5th

See page 3

Tweedmill, Soroba Road, Oban. Tel: 01631 565195

### People urged to be prepared to guard against fire and accidents this winter

THE PEOPLE of the Highlands are being urged to stay safe this winter, in one of the busiest times for the fire and rescue service. There are more house fires in December and January than any other time of year, as well as more road accidents as a result of ice and flooding. Senior fire officer for Highland Scott Hay said: 'Every year Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) sees a peak in emergency calls due to winter weather. We urge the public to take action now and be prepared for whatever hazards might come in the next few months. This winter SFRS will work closely with local communities and partner agencies to keep Highland residents safe from fire and other emergencies - but as

always, we need the public's help to reduce the amount of preventable fires we might see in the coming months. During a cold winter we use central heating and gas fires more often so the time to fit and test carbon monoxide alarms is now. It's also important to ensure that any chimneys or flues have been swept and are in a good, clean, working order. Winter weather also brings unexpected and dangerous conditions to our roads. It's important to ensure that your vehicle is serviced, well maintained and that drivers take the necessary precautions when driving in bad weather.' Mr Hay also encouraged people to check in on elderly friends, relatives and neighbours during this time.

### Safe driving campaign

A HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP has launched a campaign to encourage safe driving this winter. Scottish transport spokesman David Stewart said: 'At this time of year, only drive if you have to, always make sure you clear snow and ice from your vehicle windows, never even consider driving if you have taken drink or drugs, obey road signs and traffic laws and if you are at all unsure about driving, the best thing is not to. If drivers follow those four rules, there will be less collisions and, in many cases, injuries this winter.'

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# Festive fun in Lochaber



Primary seven pupils at Lochside RC organised a successful Christmas fair. The class ran a cafe and set up stalls selling festive goodies as part of their enterprise project.



Santa's helpers Millie Smith, left, and Samia Simmonds, both P7, helped Santa and his elf at the Caol Christmas Cracker event.



Volunteers and guests at the Plantation Community Association's senior citizens' Christmas lunch.



Freddie Smith from Corpach took part in Kilmallie Community Centre's carol singing.



Lucky Nathan Slezas, primary three, won a bike at the Ballachulish Primary School Christmas fair.

More photos next week



The primary one and two pupils at Caol Primary School prepare for their Nativity play.



Glencoe Primary School's Nativity, the Sleepy Shepherd, was enjoyed by family and friends.

# Mathesons Massive January SALE

Starts 10am Tues 5th

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Tweedmill, Soroba Road, Oban. Tel: 01631 565195

FW

## Christmas Eve baby joy for couple

A WEE one made an appearance a day early in order to be home in Bridge of Orchy for Christmas.

Cameron Blair Mckellar was born on December 24 at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, weighing 7lbs 9oz.

Mum Megan Blair said: 'This is our first baby. The nine hours of labour went very quickly.'

Megan and Cameron's dad, Robert Mckellar, live at Auch Estate, Bridge of Orchy.



## Anger grows over delay in fixing life-saving mast

VODAFONE has said it will fix a life-saving mast 'as soon as it can' but after five weeks waiting already volunteers don't have much faith it will be anytime soon.

While pagers remain silent because of a mast problem on Mull, emergency first responder teams on the west coast are being forced to sit by the phone.

The pager mast allows first responder teams on the isle of Luing to carry on life as normal until alerted when a problem arises. One of the busiest teams of volunteers on the west coast, a problem with the Vodafone mast has brought the service and the volunteers to a standstill.

Even the protests of constituency MSP Michael Russell cannot speed up the service. Mr Russell said: 'It is a disgraceful service to an island community and Vodafone is failing to listen to their customers.'

Fiona Cruickshanks, chairwoman of Luing Emergency First Responders, said: 'These

paggers have been 'off' since the weekend of November 21, 2015.

'I have been relentless in my pursuit of a resolution in this matter and have been given various reports about this problem.'

'This not only affects pagers for Luing Community First Responders, it also affects the ferry operators' pagers, who provide ferry access to the island for police, ambulance, fire and coastguard. Without these pagers working, the ferry operators and the first responders have to rely on landline communication, which is not always available.'

'This is causing massive inconvenience for the health and safety of the people on Luing. It was only with MSP Mike Russell and *The Oban Times*' help that this was resolved the last time.'

A spokeswoman for Vodafone said: 'We're sorry some customers have been affected by signal issues. We need to replace some hardware. We'll get this in place as soon as we can.'

## TIMESLINE

### Royal Mail praises CalMac workers

WORKERS on the Iona ferry have been praised by Royal Mail staff for getting Christmas cards and presents to the island on time.

In a thank you letter to CalMac, workers on Mull and Iona said the ferry company was so often criticised that they wanted to praise the ferry crew.

The letter said: 'On behalf of the Royal Mail team based on Mull, we would like to thank the crews of the MV Loch Buie (Fionnphort-Iona service). They always go that extra mile when it comes to helping our teams carry out their job but especially so in the winter/Christmas period. They endure horrendous weather and in the last month the crew has personally taken the mail in adverse weather conditions so that the driver on duty didn't get stuck. We feel in a time when people are very quick to complain that it should be noted they are exceptional crews.'

### Oban play park's fundraising drive

FRIENDS of Oban Community Play Park are urging people with children or grandchildren under five to get involved with fundraising in 2016.

The organisation is holding its annual general meeting on Saturday January 23 and chairwoman Lynsday Elliot said: 'We really need the community to focus on local fundraising whilst 'team play park' hunt down large grants. We can't do this alone.'

The over-fives play park still isn't open as the flooring cannot be laid because of bad weather, but a company will be on site in January to get rid of the mud so work can start. It is hoped work will be finished by the end of January, weather permitting.

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## DAVID MUNDELL WANTS TIME CALLED ON SYSTEM OF CENTRALISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE BETTER FUTURE

# Time for a divorce in Argyll and Bute, urges Scotland secretary

LOUISE GLEN  
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BETTER government will only be delivered in Argyll if the area is broken up into four distinct regions, says the secretary of state for Scotland.

David Mundell MP this week echoed the aspirations of SNP MP Brendan O'Hara, who was pleasantly surprised and welcomed the comments.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell this week called for a debate on what new powers historic burghs like Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbel-

town should be given by Holyrood in order to take greater control over their own affairs.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said she was unaware of any comments made by the secretary of state.

In a keynote speech on devolution, Mr Mundell said that councils such as those in Argyll and Bute needed to make their voices heard with the Scottish Government and make the case for greater powers.

He said that Scottish towns and villages risked falling behind their counterparts in the rest of the UK because the

UK Government was already handing back powers to local areas at an unprecedented rate.

Mr Mundell said: 'The issue of devolution to local communities is now an urgent one for Scotland.'

### REVOLUTION

'There is a revolution going on in local government across the rest of the United Kingdom, with local areas regaining power and responsibility at an unprecedented rate.'

'Scotland cannot afford to be left behind as the rest of the UK revolutionises how it

governs itself, giving towns, cities and counties more of the autonomy which our international competitors enjoy. It's time we had a proper debate about devolution within Scotland.'

'And it should be a real debate - because one size does not fit all. What is the right path for our big cities will not necessarily be the right route for our villages and towns to take.'

'People in places like Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown should join the debate. Scotland is fortunate to have a

strong network of community councils, often based around historic settlements in which people feel real pride.'

'If Argyll and Bute was in Norway, instead of having one council, it would have between six and 10 highly empowered local governments.'

### VOICES HEARD

'Councils like Argyll and Bute need to make their voices heard and tell the Scottish Government what powers and responsibilities they want to have to shape their futures. That should be national debate, and I today

commit to play my part in that. Devolution is not worthy of the name if it stops at the gates of Holyrood.'

Saying this was not council bashing, Argyll and Bute MP Mr O'Hara said: 'This is a great time to have a debate and I want to be involved.'

'Argyll and Bute is immense in size and most people feel disengaged from politics because of that.'

These proposals are long overdue and thinking about the local areas in Argyll and Bute taking over more power is exciting.'

## MULL lines



### Guild coffee mornings help two local charities

THE GUILD of Oban Parish Church made a cheque presentation to two charities last week.

Raising money through its coffee mornings, the guild gave £300 to Iain McKinnon of Lochwatch Loch Awe, and £200 to Oban Friendship Club's Irene MacMillan.

Pictured above from left, Chris Fulcher, Babs McIntyre, Irene MacMillan, Margaret McLachlan, Iain McKinnon, Margaret McLean and Reverend Dugald Cameron. 17\_151cheques01



### Inner Wheel are young carers' secret Santa

OBAN Inner Wheel Club convener Liz Crawford presents a cheque on behalf of the club to Morag MacLean, the manager of the North Argyll Young Carers Centre in Oban.

Inner Wheel members donated all their secret Santa money to help the local young carers.

# Final push to save tennis courts

LOUISE GLEN  
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A CAMPAIGN to raise cash for championship tennis courts at Atlantis Leisure Centre, Oban, is hoping for one final push to secure the only facility on the west coast of Scotland.

Sports coach and tennis mum Judy Murray and team manager for the Davis Cup Leon Smith have both backed the campaign saying how important the Oban Tennis and Squash Club (OTSC) are for both coaching and developing players.

Nick Wesley, Atlantis Leisure manager, said he was hopeful that the campaign would show funders that the town was back-

ing its plans to have the courts back up and running and in full working order again.

Mr Wesley said: 'We have started a tennis ball wall where anyone who gives a donation has their name on the wall.'

'This has raised the profile of the campaign to everyone coming into the centre.'

'We have still got a long way to go, but I am sure that we can get the support we need to secure the cash from sportscotland.'

Tennis doubles player and world number 58 in rankings Colin Fleming, who won the Oban tournament twice in 2005 and 2008, and went on to represent GB in the Davis Cup, added his support to the

campaign, saying: 'Best wishes to all involved in the effort to renew the courts in Oban.'

'I have played the tournament many times and it is a highlight of the Scottish tennis calendar.'

'Renewing the courts would take the tournament to the next level and help attract an even stronger field than usual.'

People can donate by going through the Atlantis Leisure website to the Mydonate page.

Buy a Ball



The ball wall at Atlantis Leisure Centre.

### Difficult year, but 2016 will see cinema on the rise

AN ANNUAL report from Oban Phoenix Cinema shows that in spite of a difficult year, a summer of poor weather and some of the best films are putting the community enterprise in the best position for 2016.

Chairwoman Louise Glen will tell the annual general meeting next Thursday that better times are ahead now that the voluntary board has stabilised after a difficult 2014.

Ms Glen said: 'Oban Phoenix Cinema, like many businesses in their early years, has gone through a transition.'

'While we cannot guarantee that we have settled, the year to March 2015 was one of both turbulence, and then the roots of stability.'

'We started the year at only what can be described as a crossroads and certainly our annual report for the year to 2014 reflected the many challenges we had.'

'Our figures show that we still have much to offer the public, and since December 2014 we have bought in the services of a film programmer from Lon-

don who is a pensioner with a passion for film, programming some of the best independent cinemas in the country.'

'This has had a positive impact on our work and we are showing some of the best films, with a programme second to none.'

'During the year we refurbished our second screen. This has instantly had an impact in terms of booking films and using the second screen as a place to see films which no longer attract an audience to the big screen. No one ever said running a community-owned cinema would be easy, but we are building up a reputation for good practice.'

'We have retained staff for a remarkably long period of time for the entertainment service industry. We have become members of the Living Wage Foundation and pay all our members of staff over the age of 18 at the national rate.'

The AGM meeting starts at 6pm. Following this there will be a screening of a donation-only film for members of the charity.

### St Columba's pupils have festive fun

ST COLUMBA'S Primary School, Oban were having lots of festive fun on Saturday December 19 at its Christmas family bingo event.

Everyone enjoyed a few games of bingo with some great prizes, a Christmas hamper raffle, fabulous festive face-painting, magic reindeer food bags, personalised Christmas decorations and lots of sweet treats and mince pies for everyone. The school raised more than £300 for children and it was a great day.

The school would like to thank all the helpers and organisers and everyone who supported it not just at this event but all year round.

### Christmas ceilidh in Taynuilt

CHRISTMAS was in the air at a ceilidh organised by An Comunn Gaidhealachd, Meur Chruachain at Taynuilt Village Hall.

Bodach na Nollaige himself, AKA Father Christmas, was amongst the guests and Taynuilt Primary School Choir performed, led by Ann Barlow, and members of the Isla Sinclair Highland Dancers.

### Noisy couple in court after one argument too many

A COUPLE had one noisy argument too many and ended up in front of Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Andrew MacMillan, aged 35, of 33A Kerrera Terrace, Oban, pleaded not guilty, while Danielle MacIntyre, aged 22, of 10c Alma Crescent, Oban, pleaded guilty to committing a breach of the peace at her home on September 10.

During MacMillan's trial two neighbours in Alma Crescent gave evidence that there was lots of shouting, doors slamming and one particularly loud bang during the course of events.

During her evidence a female neighbour said she was 'pretty scared' at the sound of it.

'I was nervous and did not know what was going to happen; if it was going to escalate into something more violent than it was,' she said.

A male neighbour said that although he had heard arguments between the pair in the past, on this occasion he would have telephoned the police had his mobile phone

been working. The man also said he had to move out of his bedroom into the living room on occasions because of the level of noise due to their arguments.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson was told that on this occasion a door had been slammed so heavily that a set of shelves had fallen to the floor.

MacMillan was not legally represented and conducted his own defence.

'It has all been blown out of all proportion,' he said, adding that the female neighbour had a 'vendetta' against his partner.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC found MacMillan guilty and fined him £500.

'I cannot think of anything more miserable than your own peace in your own home being disturbed by the bad behaviour of other people,' she said.

Sheriff Anderson deferred sentence on MacIntyre for six months for her to be of good behaviour and to save towards paying a fine.



Shinty players from Fort William junior, senior and ladies teams and a few from Kilmallie joined the mix for a fun 'sixes' Boxing Day tournament at An Aird.

## Darren Duncan bowls them over with 185

### Ten pin bowling

AFTER week 10 of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats stay at the top of the scratch division with 48 points followed by The Creeps with 38 points. Ardtoe & Co are in third place on 30 points.

The handicap division is much closer where British Legion Fort William still lead with 36 points followed by The Creeps on 33 points and Ardtoe & Co next on 31 points.

Individually, the best game was rolled by Darren Duncan (The Creeps) with 185. Other good scores this week came from Brian Johnstone (Alleycats) with 181 and Gary Cowan (Ardtoe & Co) with 179. The top handicap game was shared by Darren Duncan and Brian Johnstone with 229.

These two also shared the top two-game handicap series of 430 whilst Darren Duncan had the had the top two-game scratch series all to himself with 342.

Team wise Alleycats had the best scratch game of 599, the best handicap game of 782 and the top two-game scratch series of 1,124. British Legion Fort William meanwhile had the top two game handicap series of 1,508.

The top scratch average is held by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 158 followed by Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 152 and Ben Weller (The Creeps) on 150.

## Fort William face nine-game fixture backlog

### Football

FORT William's home game against Rothes, due to be played at Claggan Park last Sunday, was postponed because of a waterlogged pitch.

This latest postponement means the Lochaber club go into 2016 with a backlog of nine fixtures.

Fort William presently lie in second bottom place in the league five points ahead of Rothes.

The Fort are next in action when they travel to take on Buckie Thistle this Sunday.

The team are back in action at Claggan Park on Saturday January 9 when they play host to Keith.

# Fort William Ladies developed into a league winning team

IT MIGHT have taken Fort William Shinty Club more than a century to start a women's team, but the ladies made up for lost time, winning the league in their first attempt. After starting up in spring, the girls entered two teams into the development league and their first team managed to win the league and gain promotion in the process.

Player and co-coach Katherine Ann Gall said: 'We started because Fort William Shinty Club didn't have a ladies team and we wanted to see if there was any interest.'

'At first only five people came, but after a couple of weeks it started to grow.'

'Six weeks later we had 15-20

people coming and now we have 26 players on the books.

'The first season went great. Because we had so many players we put two teams in to a development league and one of the teams won the league. The other came last.'

'The team that won the league will play in South Division 2 next year and the other team will stay in the development league.'

'Being involved in the team is great. It's a good atmosphere and it gives you something to get out there and train for.'

For the up and coming season, Fort William has appointed a new manager for the ladies team - Elaine Wink.

Elaine has played shinty since

### Shinty

she was little and last year she played with the Glengarry's ladies side.

Wink will coach alongside Gall with help from the development team coach Ashleigh Fraser.

Wink said: 'I won't be playing this year. I want to focus on one thing, so I'm going to focus on coaching.'

'The main thing this year will be making sure the girls have fun, learn and improve.'

'Any big wins will be a bonus. I don't think we'll win the league this year, but you never know.'

The girls do, however, have a secret weapon among their ranks



Fort William ladies after winning the development cup.

- Zoe Smith. Smith, 16, boasts a world record. She was the first female to play in a senior men's shinty team at a premier league level.

Wink said: 'Zoe will most definitely be playing for the ladies this year. She is a vital player and is helping a lot of the new players

develop. 'Zoe and Ashleigh Fraser were both unable to play in the development league last year due to the experience they both had in the game, however, they were also a vital part of the coaching and training team.'

'They both plan on playing for

the 10 aside team that will enter the South Division 2 league.'

Shinty training for the Fort William Ladies will be in the Nevis Centre on January 11 from 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

The first training session is free for new players and then £2 per session thereafter.



Fort William Shinty Club ladies pick up the development league prize.



The first women to win prizes at Fort William Shinty Club's annual dinner dance. 21\_301shintyladies02



The Presidents' Select and Harlequins braved the cold for a pleasant afternoon of friendly rugby on Boxing Day, followed by a family get together in the clubhouse at Lochaber Rugby Club.



Members of Lochaber Athletics Club and the odd pet braved the Boxing Day cold for their annual run from Torlundy.

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**Stop Press:** New pontoons recently installed by North West Marine at Kyle Lochboisdale for visiting yachts

**WEATHER**

**Thursday** Light rain  
Winds moderate southerly  
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.

**Friday** Cloudy  
Winds strong south south easterly  
Temperatures 4°C to 6°C.

**Weekend Outlook** Heavy rain on Saturday  
Light rain on Sunday  
Winds strong south easterly  
Temperatures 3°C to 5°C.

**TIDAL INFORMATION**  
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 31, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST

Date	am			pm		
Thur	03.18	1.3	09.02	3.6	16.00	1.7
Fri	04.01	1.5	09.43	3.4	16.47	1.9
Sat	04.49	1.7	10.32	3.2	17.43	2.0
Sun	05.43	1.8	11.39	3.1	18.48	2.1
Mon	00.51	3.0	06.41	1.9	13.13	3.1
Tues	02.14	3.1	07.44	1.9	14.31	3.2
Wed	03.09	3.2	08.49	1.8	15.25	3.4

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

Ardrihaig	-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		

**Ferry Crossings/Sea States**

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