

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Lone hero Len averts dry Christmas crisis on Colonsay

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IT'S THE stuff of island Christmas nightmares: you've stocked up all the food and drink for the big day, ready for anything your hungry and thirsty family might demand, and then the water pipe springs a massive leak in a remote spot that needs a helicopter to get to.

That was the logistical challenge facing 10 households on Colonsay when a three-inch mains pipe burst the day before Christmas Eve, depriving households of water to boil their potatoes and sprouts for Christmas dinner, or even make a consoling cup of tea.

Scottish Water engineers were dispatched to dispense bottles of water and find the troublesome leak.

They tracked it down to a remote part of a beach, but accessing the spot with all their equipment proved too difficult a task.

So they decided to hire a helicopter or a boat to get there, and in the end plumped for a rigid inflatable vessel to speed them 60km across the sea from Oban.

The boat left on Christmas Eve morning, but the weather was so awful the boat had to return to the mainland.

Just when all looked lost for the Colonsay residents, local Scottish Water operative Les Robinson stepped in, trekking overland with his equipment to carry out a full repair single-handedly in the rain, restoring normal supply by lunchtime on Christmas Eve.

Ross Barclay from Scottish Water, who was on the boat that

Sine MacVicar awarded MBE in New Year honours



Fireworks explode over Oban to herald 2018 and, inset, Sine MacVicar who received an MBE. Pictures: Kevin McGlynn

THE former head teacher of Dunbeg Primary School, Sine MacVicar, has received an MBE in this year's New Year's honours.

Ms MacVicar, who devoted 44 years to the school, received the title Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to education and the community in Dunbeg.

A number of other Highlands and Islands residents have been named in the New Year's honours list. Also in Argyll, Robert McPhail, the secretary of Tarbert Castle Trust, was awarded an MBE for services to the community.

Perhaps best known in Lochaber is Aonghas Grant, of Caol, who receives the BEM for services to fiddling and music tradition in the Highlands. Famous as the 'left-handed fiddler of Lochaber', Mr Grant's musical career now spans more than six decades.

An MBE goes to Colin Skeath, who now lives in Strontian. Mr Skeath retired in January last year after 27 years as a police officer in West Yorkshire.

He finished his career as a neighbourhood inspector, and receives his MBE for services to policing and the community in Halifax.

There is also an MBE for Katherine MacKay, chairwoman of the Isle of Lewis Local Committee Cancer Research UK for services to charitable fundraising.

And there is another MBE for Professor Hugh Cheape, of Edinburgh, who lectures at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic language and culture on Skye, for his services to Scottish cultural education and traditional music.

had to return to the mainland, praised Les's effort to get water back to the islanders' homes. 'Les did an amazing job in very trying circumstances,' he said. 'This was a complicated

repair to carry out in a number of ways. We were determined to ensure we would do all we could to make sure those facing disruption on Colonsay had their water supply back to nor-

mal in time for Christmas Day. Our first problem in carrying out the repair was even getting to the area where the burst was located and we were initially looking at hiring a helicopter

to fly us there, but we arranged to hire a rigid inflatable boat to take us to the island to carry out the repair. 'The weather meant we had to turn the boat around and

come back to the mainland. Les Robinson then stepped in and managed to make the repair on his own and restore normal supply to the Colonsay customers.'

INSIDE YOUR
OBAN TIMES
THIS WEEK

Visa troubles

PARENTS at the Ross of Mull's new Gaelic school fear their children may not find a Gaelic teacher, if the Home Office refuses the only applicant's visa for a third time. Full story - page two.

Family Christmas

YVONNE MacHugh has thanked supporters for helping an unbelievable 'miracle' which saw her fiancé join her and their son William for Christmas at home. Full story - page three.

Water achievement

AN OBAN man who helped to protect the Firth of Lorn has had his video footage watched more than 1.6 million times. Full story - page four.

Cold comfort

WEST Highland Housing Association (WHHA) has been criticised for not reimbursing tenants when its main boiler breaks down. Full story - page five.

What's in a name

WILLIAM Menzies was one of Oban's greatest benefactors but it could be argued his work has not been given the acclaim it deserves. Full story - page seven.

Game on

FOLLOWING two postponements, Oban Saints and Greenock High School Former Pupils are scheduled to meet this Saturday at Glencruitten. Full story - page 24.



Screen Machine
Scotland's Mobile Cinema

Tarbert Loch Fyne Tue 9 - Wed 10 Jan
Lochgilthead Thu 11 - Sat 13 Jan

Paddington 2 (PG) 103 mins
"a pure delight, as sweet and sharp as, well, marmalade really" Empire *****
09/01 at 5.30pm, 11/01 at 5.30pm, 12/01 at 5.30pm

Star Wars: The Last Jedi (12A) 152 mins
"about as much fun as you could have at the movies" Deadline
09/01 at 8.30pm, 11/01 at 8.30pm

Murder on the Orient Express (12A) 114 mins
Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench and Michelle Pfeiffer join an all-star cast. "impeccable styling" Times
10/01 at 5.30pm, 12/01 at 8.30pm

Call Me By Your Name (15) 132 mins
"Call this movie by its name: Masterpiece"
New York Post 13/01 at 5.30pm

Rocket Post: A National Theatre of Scotland show (£6/£4) (PG) 60 mins
Filmed at a special performance on the Isle of Harris, a new collaboration with National Theatre of Scotland. An extraordinary show for families, packed with songs, charm and humour. "Rocket Post lifts off and flies... thoroughly engaging" Herald 13/01 at 2pm

The Death of Stalin (15) 104 mins
Black comedy from creator of *The Thick of It* & *Veep* "funniest film of the year runs riot through Russian history" Mirror
10/01 at 8.30pm, 13/01 at 5.30pm

Book at: www.screenmachine.co.uk. Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings. Cash only, no cards. £7.50 Adults. Concessions £5.50. (except Rocket Post - £6/£4)

Oban beach clean couple to wed

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AN OBAN couple are set to get married tomorrow (Friday January 5) after meeting on a volunteer beach clean-up last year.

Fiona Campbell-Smith and Thomas Ferris met while helping out at Hope Kitchen's monthly clean - and they will wed in the charity's premises.

Fiona, who is the owner of the renowned Parsley cat, explained how the couple got together: 'My daughter's wedding was coming up and I was going as the mother of the bride on my own.

'Even my 82-year-old mother had managed to get a plus one, so I felt that maybe I should find someone to chaperone me.'

Fiona plucked up the courage and asked Thomas if he wanted to go with her after they ended up on the same beach cleaning group. 'I would never have approached him if I had not had that reason,' she said. 'I felt like it was such a special thing and I could get away with being so forward.'

'I didn't know him at all, but I liked the look of him and I could see he was nice.'

After finding out the more intricate details, such as where the wedding was, who was get-

ting married and what Fiona's name was, Thomas deliberated for days.

'Six days later he said yes,' Fiona said. 'But for the previous five days he was going to say no.'

'But he changed his mind after we met at McCaig's Tower with the cats and had a good laugh.'

Fiona added: 'I never in a million years [would usually do something like that] but I am so glad that I did it that day.'

'I never slept for three nights after I asked him because a brass neck isn't comfortable to sleep on.'

After the wedding, the couple hit it off and three weeks later Thomas had moved in and he

proposed three months later. And Fiona will be wearing the same dress to her wedding as she did on their first date as 'Thomas took a step back when he first saw it.'

However, someone who won't be attending the wedding is Parsley.

Despite the cat's 6,800 Facebook fans and countless headlines, Fiona's Maine Coon isn't invited to the wedding.

'Parsley is barred,' she said. 'He is too much of a celebrity - he would upstage me. Also, he doesn't like loud music. I will maybe get my daughter to bring him to where I am getting ready for a photograph.'

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OT

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mull pupils' Africa Challenge

PUPILS at Lochdonhead and Ulva primary schools have taken part in the 90kg Challenge to help raise funds for young people in Africa.

The project sees children selling bags of fairly traded Kilombero rice to raise money to help young people in Malawi get an education. Just 90kg of the rice, at £3 per bag, is all it takes to send a child to secondary school for a year.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for education Councillor Yvonne McNeill said: 'The pupils at both these schools have to be commended for the hard work they have gone to for this very worthwhile cause.'

'Projects like these teach our children about compassion and global issues.'

Islay RNLi lifeboat helps cruiser

ISLAY'S RNLi volunteer lifeboat crew was called out at 2.08pm on Thursday December 21 to help two people on board a motor cruiser which had suffered engine failure north west of Eilean Mòr in the Sound of Jura.

The lifeboat, with seven of a crew, towed the cruiser in calm conditions to Crinan and returned to the station at 6.30pm.

Tobermory lights are huge success

TOBERMORY'S Christmas festivities were boosted by more than £1,500 of funding from Argyll and Bute Council's Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee.

The committee provided £1,525.40 to the organisers of the Tobermory Christmas Lights, which represents half the cost of the lights and staging the event which has lit up the town.

Councillor Elaine Robertson, chairwoman of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee, said: 'It is really pleasing the area committee was able to support the efforts made by the Tobermory community. This is an important time of the year and the lights bring added festive cheer and the opportunity for local businesses to showcase their goods.'

All change at Ullapool Harbour

A FULLY accessible toilet and changing room will be installed at Ullapool Harbour, thanks to funding from the Scottish Government.

The new Changing Places development is being part-funded from the third round of allocations from the Ferries Accessibility Fund and will be installed following the extensive renovation of a disused building.

The award of more than £43,000 is being made on a match-funding basis.

Minister for Transport and the Islands Humza Yousaf said: 'We want our ferry and harbour operators to provide the best passenger experience possible and improving accessibility is a key area in that regard.'

'This new facility will provide changing, shower and toilet facilities for people with physical or mental disabilities, as well as older people.'

'It will be available for everyone to use so hopefully it will benefit the wider community, not just ferry passengers.'

'Harbour Master Kevin Peach said: 'This is a fantastic Christmas present for the Ullapool community and I thank the Scottish Government for its continuing support.'

'This new facility will make a real difference for passengers with disabilities, as well as older travellers, and I look forward to the work getting under way.'

Possible Bunessan Gaelic teacher denied visa – twice

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PARENTS at the Ross of Mull's new Gaelic school fear their children may not find a Gaelic teacher, if the Home Office refuses the only applicant's visa for a third time.

Argyll and Bute Council plans to re-apply for the 'ideal' Gaelic speaker from Nova Scotia to teach on Mull, but will be forced to re-advertise if it is third time unlucky. Parents are worried no-one else will apply.

Bunessan Primary School, which educates 38 pupils, provides both English and Gaelic medium education, following a request by The Ross of Mull and Iona Comann nam Pàrant group in June 2016.

Three families enrolled three P1 pupils in the school's new Gaelic unit in August 2017, with another child due to start in summer 2018, representing its entire intake over two years.

Parents were told in May that a Gaelic teacher would be recruited, but the post was only advertised at the end of June. Canadian Sine Halfpenny from Nova Scotia, a 31-year-old Gaelic teacher who studied at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye, was the only applicant. She was interviewed in September and offered the job subject to her visa application.

'She is an ideal candidate,' said the parent group's chairman Andy Johnston. 'There is a shortage of Gaelic medium teachers. We were told there were five qualified in the whole of Scotland. They all know where they are going.'

'If we do get a teacher another school loses out. There are lots



Bunessan Primary School pupils Calum Paterson, Seren Johnston and Noraidh MacCallum are missing out on a Gaelic teacher after the Home Office denied Nova Scotian Sine Halfpenny a visa.

of Gaelic speakers in Canada and Nova Scotia. To get a teacher from a source no-one else considered was brilliant. We hoped Sine would be in place in January.'

But parents learned before Christmas the Home Office had rejected her visa for a second time.

A letter from the acting head of Argyll and Bute Council's education service, Anne Paterson, explained that Ms Halfpenny's first application was refused because 'she did not meet the salary requirements as stipulated by the UK Government'.

So the council had applied for a Tier 2 Sponsorship Licence, to permit it 'to sponsor Sine for up to five years or until her salary was sufficient for her to live and work here without becoming a

I'm hoping someone will say this is ridiculous"

Andy Johnston
Parent group chairman

burden on the state'. However, this was also rejected.

A Home Office spokesperson said: 'All visa applications are considered in line with immigration rules and on the evidence provided. Ms Half-

penny's visa was refused as she did not submit a Certificate of Sponsorship. Her sponsor's application, for a restricted Certificate of Sponsorship, was rejected as it failed to meet the required points.'

Mr Johnston said: 'This is madness. It feels like the process of getting a visa is against common sense. Sine is not a terrorist, she just wanted to do a job. This is the last hurdle. It is so frustrating, after everything we have gone through.'

'I am hoping someone will say this is ridiculous. We are just desperate to get this up and running. I did not realise it would take this Westminster/Holyrood angle. We just want to get the children a teacher. We hope Sine is not going to get fed-up by this.'

The council plans to re-apply imminently, but if this is unsuccessful the council will re-advertise the post, likely in the Easter break.

'How long do we go on re-advertising if there is no-one to apply?' Mr Johnston asked. 'How long before we say the pupils have to go into the mainstream?'

SNP MSP John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education, has written to the UK Home Secretary, Conservative MP Amber Rudd on the matter.

'The Scottish Government is a strong supporter of our indigenous languages and is committed to providing those wishing to learn the language the opportunity to do so,' Mr Swinney said. 'We have experienced great demand for Gaelic education and are looking at ways in which we can increase our teaching capacity.'

He expressed disappointment the Home Office was not progressing Ms Halfpenny's application any further because 'it had not accrued enough points' and urged the Home Secretary to look into the case urgently.

Highland and island fishermen urged to take up free training

SEAFISH is appealing to commercial fishermen in the Highlands to take advantage of its funding for free training to refresh and advance their safety knowledge and skills ahead of March 31 2018, when current funding is due to end.

The call comes as the industry reflects on a 10-year period that saw more than 3,300 accidents involving UK fishing vessels, with more than 500 fishermen suffering serious injury and almost 100 losing their lives.

Research conducted by Seafish found that 55 per cent of fishermen disagreed that accidents at sea are mostly down to events beyond their control. With this in mind, the organisation is urging all fishermen to take steps towards being safer at sea by applying for a funded place on a training course.

The funding, which is available to all commercial fishermen, can be used to attend a wide range of locally held safety courses, from basic



training and safety refreshers to more advanced courses such as navigation, engineering and stability awareness and a skipper qualification.

John, who recently completed one of the courses, said: 'It's so important for fishermen to undertake training to improve safety onboard.'

'Each course I attended gave me new knowledge and skills that I used onboard my fishing vessel and shared with my crew members.'

Simon Potten, head of safety and training at Seafish, said: 'Despite advances in the design and construction of safer fishing vessels, we are still seeing too many accidents every

year and far too many serious injuries and fatalities to crew. Many of these could have been avoided.'

'Safe working practices are taught on training courses, but the knowledge and skills gained still have to be put into practice by fishermen when back working onboard their vessels.'

'Seafish has managed to secure several million pounds in funding for fishermen's training over the last 20 years, but we can't be sure of future funding. It's incredibly important over this Christmas and New Year period, that commercial fishermen in the Highlands take time to consider the training options available to them and apply

for funding before it runs out at the end of March. Not only could it save a life or prevent a life-changing injury, but the certificates and qualifications gained can also open up other income-earning opportunities. Act now. Don't delay.'

Approved training provider the Fish Industry Training Association, which delivers courses throughout the Highlands, will be offering courses from now until March. A full list of these upcoming courses can be found on its website.

To find your local training provider, or to apply for funding, visit www.seafish.co.uk/training.

Funding for this programme is provided by the European Maritime Fisheries Fund and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Funding applications will be accepted up until March 31.

Full results can be found at seafish.org/training/sea-you-home-safe/statistics

FREE child ticket



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BELOW THE SURFACE at SAMS

Glad you stayed, Alison!

SHE HAS been described as a 'lynchpin' of the organisation, but Alison Dawson, who retired from SAMS duty in December, was only supposed to be here for three weeks.

Twelve years on and the Connel woman recalls fond memories of her time in the SAMS directorate office, working with three different directors.

Alison joined SAMS in 2005 as temporary sickness cover for the personal assistant and was only initially contracted for three weeks.

At a SAMS gathering to mark Alison's retirement, current director Professor Nicholas Owens described Alison as a 'lynchpin' who had a fantastic mind for local information.

Among Alison's leaving gifts was a tablet device and a life membership for SAMS.



Alison Dawson retired after 12 years with SAMS.

Robotic eyes in the Arctic

NEW YEAR celebrations will be short-lived for nine scientists and technicians from SAMS, who will be travelling to Tromsø, Norway, ahead of a scientific cruise in the Arctic.

The aim of the cruise will be to learn more about the region during the relatively

unexplored 'polar night', a term used to describe the Arctic winter when there is no sunlight.

On completion of the two-week cruise the team will deploy robotic gliders, torpedo-shaped autonomous underwater vehicles that can take measurements such as oxygen, salinity and temperature.

The gliders will be retrieved

when the team returns in April for the second of three cruises planned this year.

Following the third cruise in August, the scientists should have a clearer picture of changes in the Arctic throughout the seasons.

The SAMS team, led by Professor Finlo Cottier, will be joined by project partners from the University of Tromsø and representatives of the universities of Edinburgh, Strathclyde and Oxford.

Easdale scientist gets SAMS role

A YOUNG marine scientist from Easdale island has joined the SAMS staff as a physical oceanographer.

Former Oban High School pupil Neil Fraser, who is currently finishing off his PhD at SAMS, will start an 18-month post-doctoral position on January 8.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tesco customers gift festive cheer

THOUSANDS of meals were provided to people in need this Christmas thanks to Tesco customers.

Across the UK, enough food for three million meals was donated to charities thanks to the food collection that ran in Tesco stores until December 2. In Oban, a total of 3,286 meals were donated by generous customers.

This year's UK collection brings the overall total donated by Tesco shoppers since the collection scheme began in 2012 to more than 49 million meals.

Tony McElroy, Tesco's head of communications in Scotland, said: 'We know this annual collection makes a real difference in Scotland and we would like to thank everyone who has donated, volunteered or helped with the food collection in store.'

Dalmally CC meeting

THE NEXT Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council meeting will be on Wednesday January 10 in Dalmally Community Centre.

Please note the change of venue.

The meeting will start at 7.30pm and the guest speakers will be from SSEN who will update the meeting on the proposed North Argyll Overhead Powerline Project.

There will also be a consultation day in Dalmally on January 18 on this topic to allow members of the community to make their views known.

Also under discussion at the meeting will be the outcomes from the last meeting.

Members of the public, representatives of other community groups and schools are welcome.



Organiser Davy Paterson with a fellow singer.

Carol singers raise a song and cash for Dove Centre

A GOOD turnout of locals sang Christmas carols for two hours around Taynuilt and raised £220 for Oban Hospice Dove Centre.

Organiser Davy Paterson thanks Janice Harrison and Davie Thomson who

prepared mulled wine and mince pies for the choristers, the six youngsters who collected donations and helped count the money, the 16 carol singers and everyone who kindly gave towards this excellent cause.

Together for Christmas

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YVONNE MacHugh has thanked supporters for helping an unbelievable 'miracle' this Christmas, which released her fiancé Billy Irving from an Indian jail to join her and their son William for Christmas at home in Scotland.

Billy and five other British ex-servicemen, known as the Chennai Six, were working as armed guards protecting shipping from Somali pirates when they were arrested for firearms offences in 2013.

The men were sentenced to five years in jail in January 2016 but finally, after a four year fight, they were cleared of all charges in December and returned home to their families.

Yvonne wrote on Christmas Eve: 'We've been to Mass together, sprinkled reindeer food, made hot chocolate and mince pies for Santa and tomorrow we will spend our very first Christmas together and I can't quite believe it.'

'Miracles do happen, but you need to work hard to get them, in whatever way that may be. We would never have got our Christmas miracle without the help from so, so, so many people.'

'The past few weeks have been completely overwhelming. They have been hard but they have been a dream come true. We have received more cards and gifts filled with the most precious of messages and well wishes and have been heart-warming to read, over and over again. You all made this happen and I can't thank



Top: Yvonne, Billy and William wear matching jumpers for their family Christmas photograph and, above, father and son off to see Santa.

you enough. None of us can. I wish you all the happiness in the world and hope and pray that whatever troubles any of you may be facing over the festive period that you can take some

comfort in our family being reunited. Nightmares do come to an end and nothing lasts forever. 'Stay strong and surround yourself with those closest to you.'

Oban RNLI helps stricken vessel at Dorus Mor

THE VOLUNTEER crew of Oban's RNLI lifeboat *Mora Edith MacDonald* were called into action by the UK Coastguard to help a stranded motor vessel near the area of water known as Dorus Mor.

On Thursday December 21 at 9.17pm the lifeboat was called to help the motor vessel stranded near the Dorus Mor.

The vessel had suffered engine failure in this notoriously dangerous area of water.

Although the vessel was able to drop anchor, it was deemed necessary to tow it to a safer location for repairs.

The Oban lifeboat arrived on scene and established a tow by 10.27pm.

The vessel was taken Croabh Haven Marina where it was secured to a pontoon.

The lifeboat made her way back to her temporary berth at the North Pier pontoons in Oban where she was made ready for service again by 1.14am.

This was the 80th call out of what has been a very busy year for Oban lifeboat and her volunteer crew.



Volunteers during the rescue.

Unwrap the savings with Gordons Chemists!



It's January again, so you know what that means, SALES! And Gordons Chemists are back again with even bigger and better savings than ever before!

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Get him something he'll love for less, Nivea Urban Skin Range is half price! To make sure he's feeling fresh faced for the New Year, why not treat him to the Wilkinson Hydro 3 & 5 Razors at half price!



Are you feeling the effects of the Christmas celebrations? Why not start the New Year with Protein World Slender Blend Powder 400g at only £10.49, or the Slimfast Powder Strawberry 438g at only £5.79!

Take care of you skin in 2018. The L'Oréal Skin Perfection Micellar Water 200ml is only £1.99, saving £3.00! Keep your skin glowing through the winter months, with the Nivea Q10 Plus C range at half price!

Keep up to date on our weekly offers and more on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/gordonschemists.

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<p>£5.79 save £1.50 Slimfast Powder Strawberry 438g RRP £7.29</p>	<p>£10.49 save 25% Protein World Slender Blend Powder 400g RRP £13.99</p>	<p>£1.99 half price Pantene Pro-V Shampoo & Conditioner 400ml RRP £3.99</p>
<p>£1.99 half price Dettol Laundry Anti-Bacterial 1L RRP £3.99</p>	<p>£1.99 save £3.00 L'Oréal Skin Perfection Micellar Water 200ml RRP £4.99</p>	<p>£5.49 half price Nivea Q10 plus C Range RRP £10.99</p>
<p>£3.99 save £3.67 Elnett Catwalk Limited Edition 400ml RRP £7.66</p>	<p>£2.49 save £3.51 Huggies Baby Wipes Pure Quads 56's RRP £6.00</p>	<p>£2.99 save £1.50 Sensodyne Rapid Relief White 75ml RRP £4.49</p>
<p>from £3.49 half price Nivea Urban Skin Range</p>	<p>half* price Wilkinson Hydro 3 & 5 Razors *On selected 5 Razors</p>	

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OT

Ardfern hydro scheme in the pipeline

A £290,000 hydropower scheme has been approved in Ardfern, offering 'the best and only chance' of financial sustainability for a traditional hill farm.

The dam, 250m long storage reservoir, powerhouse, burn intake and buried pipeline, on land north east of Garraron Farm, was submitted by James Adam of Garraron and Melfort Farms.

The plant aims to generate 270MWh per year, the 'equivalent to a saving in carbon dioxide production from fossil fuels of 120 tonnes per year'.

The project is estimated to cost £290,000 to build, bringing an annual income of £32,450 to the farm if all energy were exported to the grid. It will be designed to have an operating life in excess of 100 years and 'visual impact will be minimal'.

The design statement explains: 'In common with most other hill

farms in the west of Scotland, the traditional sources of income from farming and sporting pursuits are tenuous at best and increasingly loss-making.

'The development of hydropower offers the best and perhaps the only chance of ensuring independent financial stability for the foreseeable future, as well as contributing significantly to national targets for renewable energy generation.'

Planning officers gave a green light to the plan, stating the 'development will support the aims of the LDP of supporting the local economy and encouraging sustainable growth of renewable energy developments within an appropriate location.'

The civil works are expected to begin in May 2018 and be finished within four months, while the turbine and electrical works will be installed when available.

Argyll MP praises grants given to local charities

ARGYLL and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara has praised grants given to Oban charities in 2017.

Each year the Corra Foundation distributes just under £1 million through its Henry Duncan Grants programme to grassroots charities working in their local communities.

The Corra Foundation awarded £47,522 to charities in Argyll and Bute throughout the year, many of which are in Oban.

Hope 2 Oban was awarded a grant of £4,000, Hope Kitchen received £5,000 and North Argyll Carers Centre Ltd were

given £5,598. The Ross of Mull and Iona Community Transport Scheme also received £3,000.

Brendan O'Hara MP said: 'I'm delighted to hear that local grassroots organisations within Argyll and Bute will benefit from these additional funds at a time when everyone is feeling austerity pinch. This will go towards enabling them to continue their great work in our constituency. Many of the Henry Duncan Grants go on staff and running costs like this, meaning they are a lifeline for local charities in this tough financial climate.'

Fiona celebrates record year with Peter Andre

A SLIMMING World manager from Oban was congratulated on helping slimmers to lose weight and change their lives by singer and TV presenter Peter Andre.

Fiona Manwell, who manages Slimming World groups in Oban, said: 'I couldn't be prouder of the members in Oban. Throughout 2017 they have lost fantastic amounts of weight, with many of them hitting their target weights, improving their health and boosting their confidence.'

'It's so rewarding to see people being able to do things that they didn't think were possible before losing weight, whether that's having more energy, feeling happier, wearing smaller clothes, taking up new hobbies, reducing medication or doing more with their family and friends.'

'Every week I feel extremely lucky to play even a small part in people's achievements and I felt very honoured to represent Oban at the Slimming World Awards.'

Oban man's video of Firth of Lorn changes goes viral

DAVID MCPHEE

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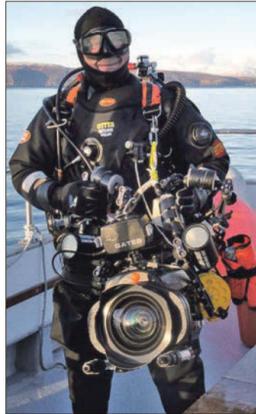
AN OBAN man who helped to protect the Firth of Lorn has had his video footage watched more than 1.6 million times.

Thanks to the help of David Ainsley, the body of water is now a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

David runs Sealife Adventures along the Firth of Lorn, which received SAC status in 2005 and he has documented the change over a number of years.

Speaking in the BBC Earth video, he said: 'It's a huge surprise to many people that our rocky reefs are so colourful and can be as amazing as coral reefs in the tropics.'

'I first started diving up here



35 years ago and in those days, we never saw the results of scallop dredging.



David Ainsley, and above left, the seabed before the area became a SAC, and above right, the recovery since it was protected.

'So the first time we came across ground looking like a ploughed field, we were horrified. We didn't know what it was and eventually, in frustration, we went and put a complaint in to Europe and to



everyone's surprise our complaint was accepted.

'Dredging had to stop here and that set a legal precedent, which allowed dredging to be stopped in other SACs.'

'As two, three, four years

went by it became very exciting. We were seeing all the changes - seeing the reefs and the scallop ground becoming more healthy.

'We started going back to the same places that we'd filmed while dredging was going on and identifying the recovery since dredging stopped.'

'It has been fantastic for scallop divers. It's also been great for wildlife tourism.'

'We're recording an increase in the number of common seals at a time when common seals are in decline everywhere else in Scotland and we're seeing dolphins more regularly.'

'The sea has a great capacity for recovery, as long as we don't damage it too long, and when we stop damaging things, they will recover.'



Bathers braved icy waters at Oban's annual New Year's Day dip - or 'loony dook' - by jumping into the freezing Firth of Lorn from Oban Sailing Club. Among them was Grant Addison, whose expression speaks volumes about the temperature of the water. Loony dooks are also held in the Firth of Forth at North Berwick, Kirkcaldy and South Queensferry, where the tradition was devised 30 years ago as a drastic hangover cure.

Man dies following quad bike accident

A 42-YEAR-OLD man died near Oban on New Year's day following a quad bike accident.

Police Scotland confirmed the news, with a spokesperson saying that there was a road crash at Lerags at 8.40pm and a report into the circumstances has been sent to the procurator fiscal.

Four people have also been injured in a 'serious' road crash near Cladich, by Dalmally.

The accident happened at around 2pm on Saturday December 30 when a 48-year-old man driving a Vauxhall Astra collided with another vehicle.

The driver of the Astra was taken by ambulance to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, where he is receiving treatment, but is said to be in a stable condition.

A 16-year-old passenger was taken by ambulance to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, where he is being treated. Hospital staff describe his condition as serious.

A 46-year-old female passenger and an 18-year-old female were also taken to hospital, but both are in a stable condition.

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At Random

Thank you to inspiring individuals

THIS time of year often presents what appear to be insurmountable problems, frequently because of adverse weather conditions.

Yet it is always inspiring to report on the actions of some people who go well beyond what might normally be expected in response.

So it has been this festive season in a number of ways.

First, there has been justified praise for Les Robinson on Colonsay, who carried out repairs single-handedly in the freezing rain on Christmas Eve to ensure the water supply was restored to 10 households who had lost theirs as a result of a burst main. Les conquered many difficulties, including the very remote and hard-to-access location of the burst to save the day.

Then there are the volunteers who man the lifeboats around our areas of coastline. They, too, venture out in all weathers and sometimes in extremely dangerous conditions to go to the aid of others.

The crew of the Oban RNLI lifeboat Mora Edith MacDonald have had a very busy year and were called into action yet again by the UK Coastguard just before Christmas to help a stranded motor vessel near the area of water known as Dorus Mor.

The lifeboat went to assist the vessel which had suffered engine failure in this noto-



A record number of people were treated to Christmas dinner at Hope Kitchen this year, including 'wee Richard'.

riously dangerous area of water. Although the boat was able to drop anchor, it was deemed necessary to tow it to a safer location for repairs.

Another charitable organisation that won deserved plaudits over the holiday period was the splendid Hope Kitchen, whose staff laid out fantastic Christmas dinners for the disadvantaged of the Oban area.

There can be no worse time of year for those who are lonely, homeless and distressed than Christmas, but manager Lorraine MacCormick and her team pulled out all the stops to provide a welcome festive meal for dozens of people.

And over the festive period

there have been superb efforts made by countless people in our area, including the Lions and Rotary clubs as well as other charities, to bring cheer to people in the town and its surrounding areas.

The Spotlight Musical Theatre Group deserves a pat on the back for producing another great panto - Rapunzel: A Tangled Tale - to delight the packed crowds in the Corran Halls. And there have been many other Christmas shows staged by too many people to name but they know who they are and all should be justifiably proud of themselves.

These people and many others are inspiring pillars of our communities and I salute them.

MARTIN LAING
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An initiative to be welcomed

THE INITIATIVE taking shape to increase Oban's profile as a university town should be widely welcomed.

When we published a report on the project recently, unfortunately there were some snide comments on social media from one individual who sniped about elitism and 'selling' places to wealthy students from overseas.

Personally, I cannot find a downside to these plans. Increasing the number of students - wherever they come from - can only be good for us all, socially, educationally and economically.

Economically, these students will bring additional spending power to businesses in the town, and that is to be welcomed. Educationally,

more university places in Oban and Dunstaffnage means greater choice for our own young people. Not everyone wants to move to the cities to continue their studies after leaving school. And, socially, increasing diversity in our communities is, for me, an exciting prospect. Bringing in bright young people from around the country and world to live among us will only benefit us all and I welcome that.

What do you think?

WRITE to me at milaing@obantimes.co.uk or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4 HB.

Housing association criticised for not reimbursing tenants

DAVID MCPHEE

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WEST Highland Housing Association (WHHA) has been criticised for not reimbursing tenants when its main boiler breaks down.

Last month *The Oban Times* reported that the association's Biomass Energy Centre at Glenshellach stopped working

for around 24 hours during one of the coldest weeks so far, leaving tenants without heating or hot water.

WHHA apologised for the difficulties and provided each household with a temporary electric heater while it tried to fix the problem.

However, this upset a number of tenants.

One, who wished to remain

anonymous, said she was upset due to the fact that people continued to be charged for their heating by WHHA during the period the heating was off, but householders also had the added cost of heating their homes with the temporary electric heaters.

The person said: 'For every day it breaks down, they could be giving people £20 to cover

costs because tenants are using other means to heat their property.'

'Personally, I think they should be giving them money per day and I think each household should be allocated four heaters.'

This view was backed up by other tenants after WHHA took to social media to explain the issues with the biomass

centre. One person said: 'How come we have no heating or hot water, yet we are still getting charged for it. I [spent] £25 in three days getting my heating up to temperature - also [it's] extra electricity to run a heater.'

Another said: 'I agree we have spent a fortune the last few days trying to heat this house.'

'We should be getting compensated for this. Who can

afford this? It's totally unfair.'

A spokesperson for West Highland Housing Association said they were disappointed the tenant was upset and they would welcome any tenant contacting the office to talk to them about the issues being faced.

They added: 'We haven't had an interrupted supply for 24 hours and would take it very seriously if we did.'

Superfast broadband 'for all' in 2021

THE HIGHLANDS and Islands will share £600m of Scottish Government funding to bring superfast broadband to every home and business 'by the end of 2021'.

The announcement, made as part of the Scottish Government's 2018-19 draft budget, marked the start of procurement for the Reaching 100 per cent (R100) programme aiming to deliver fast and reliable internet to Scotland's rural and island communities 'to provide a truly national fibre network', a spokesperson said.

The procurement will be made up of three regional lots (North, Central and South), with each containing a mix of the commercially attractive rural areas and harder-to-reach communities.

This model has been designed to ensure the best possible chance of maximising competition whilst driving value and innovation.

Highlands and Islands, Aberdeen, Dundee and Angus will share £384m of the £600m.

Connectivity Secretary Fergus Ewing said: 'This is the biggest public investment ever made in a UK broadband project...and a statement of our intent to make Scotland a world-class digital nation.'

'Fast and reliable internet connection is vital for the economic and social well-being of all communities. This ambitious investment will revitalise the prospects of rural areas right across Scotland.'

'We have taken the decision not to focus on urban city centre premises in this first phase, but to target investment where it is needed most - in rural and remote Scotland.'

World's biggest flame shell bed found on west coast

THE WORLD'S largest known colony of a brilliant but shy species of shellfish has been discovered in a west coast loch, writes Sandy Neil.

An eye-watering quarter of a billion flame shells have been found living in nests which have merged to form a huge 185 hectare bed at the bottom of Loch Carron, covering much of the tide-swept seafloor of the Strome Narrows, from Craig to Stromeferry.

It is two and a half times larger than a colony discovered in Loch Alsh in 2012, which was previously thought to be the biggest.

Flame shells are small bivalve molluscs with fiery orange tentacles. Flame shells spend most of their lives completely hidden away inside nests, built from old shells, stones and other materials around them and bound together with thin wiry threads.

Flame shell beds are extremely sensitive to physical disturbance, such as dredging. Substantial and persistent declines have been observed rais-

ing widespread concern about the conservation of this species and the habitat it creates.

Ministers will now seek to make the emergency measures put in place to protect the reef permanent. A Marine Protected Area (MPA) designated on an urgent basis lasts for a maximum of two years but the intention is to make Loch Carron a permanent MPA. A public consultation on making the site a permanent addition to the Scottish MPA network is anticipated in 2018.

In April, a scallop dredger dragged its gear through the reef twice causing damage from which it is likely to take decades to recover. Dredging involves towing gear across the seabed to scrape-up the scallops which live there. The dredger was operating legally because no protection measures existed at the time. Fishing in Loch Carron was immediately banned and divers have been assessing the size of the reef.

The discovery was made during a joint Scottish Natural

Heritage (SNH), Marine Scotland (MS) and Heriot-Watt University (HWU) survey to learn more about habitats in Loch Carron.

Mike Cantlay, SNH's chairman, said: 'Scotland's seas clearly still have many secrets left to tell. This is a remarkable discovery.'

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: 'This is a fantastic discovery which shows that the new Marine Protected Area is making an even more valuable contribution to safeguarding these waters than we first thought.'

Dr Dan Harries, of Heriot-Watt University's Institute of Life and Earth Sciences which led the diving fieldwork, said: 'This is another fantastic discovery. We really didn't think we'd find a bed that could top the 100,000,000 find in Loch Alsh. This is a great example of partnership working across government departments, SNH and academia to deliver a timely and scientifically robust response.'



The world's largest known colony of flame shells has been found on the west coast. Ministers will now seek to make Loch Carron a permanent MPA.

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Trust celebrates 10 years of lottery

THE SCOTTISH Wildlife Trust is celebrating 10 years of support from players of People's Postcode Lottery.

The charity lottery was first drawn on January 4, 2008, and the trust was one of the first charities to receive support from its players.

Linda Rosborough, chairwoman of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, said: 'Continued help from players of People's Postcode Lottery has allowed the trust to achieve some amazing things over the past 10 years, including protecting breeding ospreys and reintroducing beavers to Scotland.'

'Over the next decade, ongoing support from players will help us continue to champion the cause of wildlife through our campaigning work, demonstrate best practice through practical conservation and innovative partnerships, and inspire people to take positive action through its education and engagement activities.'

Circus wild animal ban

LEGISLATION to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses has been passed by the Scottish Parliament.

The bill will ban the use of any wild animal in a travelling circus in Scotland; the Act's provisions would extend to Scotland only; it will lead the way for the rest of the UK in tackling the important ethical issue of the use of wild animals in travelling circuses.

Speaking after the Stage 3 debate, Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: 'This is an important Act that will not only prevent travelling circuses ever showing wild animals in Scotland in the future but will demonstrate to the wider world that we are one of the growing number of countries that no longer condones the use of wild animals in this way.'

Climate change threatens birds

MANY of the rare breeding birds found in Scotland are at a high risk of extinction, based on projections of how climate will become less suitable for these species, according to a new report.

The State of the UK's Birds 2017 (SUKB) – the one-stop shop for all the latest results from bird surveys and monitoring studies – this year highlights how many of the UK's species across the four countries, are already being affected by climate change, responding to UK average summer temperatures having increased by nearly one degree centigrade since the 1980s.

The report highlights how species are moving northwards within the UK, shifting their distributions as temperatures rise and the habitats change. Many of the rarer breeding birds are at a high risk of extinction in the UK, based on projections of how climate will become less suitable for these species. For species such as the dotterel, whimbrel, common scoter and snow bunting, whose UK breeding populations are found almost entirely in Scotland, population declines have been considerable already.

Visit www.obantimes.co.uk for full details.

Keepers brand helicopter deer culls 'shameful'

SCOTLAND'S gamekeepers have urged SNH to consign helicopter-assisted deer culling to the past saying reviving the practice will be a shameful day for animal welfare.

The Scottish Gamekeepers Association, which represents professional deer managers, made the plea last month after learning the heritage group was considering deploying helicopters and hit squads.

Using helicopters to transport marksmen in groups to surround and kill deer first hit the headlines in controversial fashion at Glenfeshie Estate in 2004. Hundreds of deer were killed outside the legal season by marksmen flown in to the area to protect pine regeneration, under licence.

The adverse publicity led to a government inquiry, with claims that hyper-stressed deer were held in one area with no means of escape and shot at constantly by rifles for more than 90 minutes.

A report by The Royal School



SGA officials say the proposal by SNH goes against the government's own blueprint for Scotland. Photograph: Angus Blackburn

of Veterinary Studies at the time concluded helicopter assisted culls were amongst the worst for shooter accuracy, with flighty deer already on the move reacting to the noise of rotor blades.

Last week, SGA officials learned, during a talk by a senior SNH official at Holyrood, that the heritage body plans to

bring back helicopter-assisted culls. This has led the SGA to speak out saying the method is against the vision of modern deer management set out in the government's own blueprint for Scotland.

'No-one is denying the need for deer management. The question is the methods to be used in Scotland today,' said

SGA vice-chairman Peter Fraser, a retired deer stalker of 50 years' experience, who witnessed the Caenlochan cull.

'We have more qualified deer managers than ever yet we are seeing things like 86 culled stags being left to rot on a hillside by conservation bodies and found by walkers in Knoydart.'

'Now Scotland's own heritage body is looking at using helicopters to transport shooters and carcasses – a practice causing a significant percentage of animals, after being shot, to run or walk away without collapsing due to poor accuracy.'

'At the SGA, we are looking to our native deer to become a valued resource for Scotland's communities, to create employment and to grow the venison industry in a sustainable way.'

'How can this be done when the government's own advisers want to treat deer like this, rendering them worthless? It is a shameful practice and a welfare disaster.'

SGA member Niall Rowantree, a former forest ranger who organised helicopter culls in the Trossachs, says the method is a backwards move at the expense of the Scottish tax payer.

'It is not a part of sustainable deer management and flies in the face of the government's blueprint, *Wild Deer: A National Approach*. I know because I did it myself.'

'I think there would have to be justification about taxes expended on a very expensive method which hasn't worked, particularly when forest rangers' jobs are being cut.'

'The fact they are having to return to this, after only 17 years, proves it doesn't work.'

'We are also taking a national venison resource and reducing it to its lowest possible value which does nothing for sustainable communities.'

'If the idea is to protect woodland, we should be looking to use the army of non-paid stalkers only too happy to assist with deer management.'

John Muir Way walkers can now mark success

THE ACHIEVEMENT of completing all 134 miles of the John Muir Way is to be recognised with the on-line launch of John Muir Way certificates.

The John Muir Way – one of Scotland's Great Trails – stretches across Scotland's heartland running between Helensburgh in the west and Muir's birthplace in Dunbar on the east coast.

In addition to being available online at www.johnmuirway.org/shop those who complete the trail can also collect certificates – personalised with their name and completion date – in person from the newly launched Heroes Centre in Helensburgh as well as John Muir's Birthplace museum in Dunbar.

The John Muir Way takes

in castles, historic towns and villages, stunning coastal scenery as well as Scotland's first national park, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and has already attracted walkers and cyclists from as far afield as USA, Canada, India and New Zealand.

Keith Geddes, chairman of the Central Scotland Green Network Trust – which drives forward the delivery of the CSGN – said: 'The John Muir Way is an important part of honouring the work of John Muir as a renowned conservationist and we want to make sure that we mark the efforts of those who complete all 134 miles of the route, whether it is done in consecutive days or over several visits.'



Young hen harrier found dead on an estate on Cowal peninsula

POLICE Scotland and RSPB Scotland are issuing a joint appeal for information after a young hen harrier was discovered dead with unexplained injuries on an estate on the Cowal Peninsula near Dunoon.

Kathy, a female bird, was satellite tagged as a chick on the Cowal Peninsula in August this year (2017) as part of the RSPB's EU-funded Hen Harrier LIFE+ Project.

After fledging in late August, Kathy remained in the vicinity of the nest she hatched in for the next month. RSPB Scotland staff monitoring her tracking device became concerned when data suggested she had not moved on October 3.

A search was carried out on October 5 when Kathy's body

was discovered. The post-mortem results indicated that the bird had unexplained injuries which may be the result of criminality.

PC Donald Mackay from Police Scotland said: 'I appeal for anyone who knows what happened to Kathy to contact Police Scotland so that we can establish how she may have died. Although this would be an isolated incident in my area, it is concerning that a raptor may have been deliberately killed in Argyll.'

'Hen harriers are a particularly fragile bird of prey in terms of their numbers in the UK, and Police Scotland will work with its partners to thoroughly investigate this incident and robustly deal with any person who

may have been involved.' Will Hayward, investigations officer for RSPB Scotland, said: 'We are advised that this hen harrier has died from unexplained injuries that may be the result of criminality.'

'If criminal cause of death is confirmed, this incident will sadly be another statistic to add to a catalogue of hen harriers that meet their end in this way.'

'Only through the use of satellite technology are we finally getting an accurate picture of the true scale of a human persecution problem that has been denied by some parties for decades.'

'We look forward to hearing the results of the police investigation into this hen harrier death in due course.'

Hen harriers are one of the country's most threatened birds of prey, with the latest national survey recording only 460 breeding pairs in Scotland, a drop of 27 per cent since 2004.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Police Scotland on 101 and ask to speak to a Wildlife Crime Officer.

Commenting on the police appeal for information regarding a hen harrier found with unexplained injuries in Argyll and Bute, a spokesman for The Scottish Gamekeepers Association said: 'We support and reiterate the police's call for information regarding the death of this harrier.'

'If anyone should know anything at all, they should contact Police Scotland immediately.'

RSPBS welcomes energy strategy

RSPB Scotland has welcomed the publication of the new Scottish Energy Strategy by the Scottish Government.

The strategy sets a new 2030 'all-energy' target for the equivalent of 50 per cent of Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied from renewable sources, marking the beginning of a government approach to energy that seeks to better integrate the whole energy system as well as delivering much greater levels of energy efficiency as a strategic priority.

Alexa Morrison, senior policy officer at RSPB Scotland, said: 'We welcome the publication, in particular the new target for 50 per cent of energy to come from renewables by 2030, and call on Scottish Government and industry to work together to deliver these important targets while at the same time protecting the special places for wildlife we hold dear.'

THIS WEEK'S WALKS

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

THE WALK leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk. Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk.

Thursday January 4 Meall an Doire Dhuibh and Beinn Mheadhoin

The ridges of these modest hills enclose some fine corries. Views of Loch Linnhe, Mull and beyond to the Firth of Lorn. The route passes part of the rim of the Glensanda Quarry.

Start at a small CP on the Kingairloch Estate road, just past the Boathouse Restaurant at NM8417252814.

Follow the estate road and paths to South Corry, then climb a good stalkers' path which zig-zags up the nose of Meall an Doire Dhuibh.

Head SSW along the spur between two fine corries to the small summit of Lag a'Mhaim, overlooking Glensanda quarry. Turn WNW and traverse rising ground to Beul Choir nan Each, 702m.

Continue to a col, then bear N on steeper ground to reach the summit of Beinn Mheadhoin, 739m. Descend by its ENE ridge, which is steep and narrow at first, and return to Kingairloch.

If time and energy permit, descent can be made NW to Bealach a' Choir Bhain, then NE, curving E over Meall na Greine, 609m, and Sgurr Shalachain, 538m before descending on a forest track back to Kingairloch. An additional 3Km and 88m ascent.

Grade: 5
Distance: 13 Km
Height to climb: 917m
Map(s): LR49, EX383
Meet at: Corran Ferry slip NN021635 for 0915 sailing
Start of walk at 1000.
Leader: Toril Frantzen 07788 264007.

Saturday January 6 Creag Dhubh/ Roybridge

A small hill with extensive views of well-known hills from a different perspective.

Start from the CP for the church of Cille Choirill at NN 306812. Head NW up the hill to meet the junction of the paths on the first parallel road (261m) NN 303818. Follow the broad ridge E to the summit of Creag Dhubh.

Keeping outside the plantations, descend E to the broad col and up to the summit of Creag Chonochair.

Descend S then SE to the forest track at NN 348814. Follow this through the trees down to the A86, E of Burnside Cottage. Transport required.

Grade: M
Distance: 8 Km
Height to climb: 500m
Map(s): LR41, EX400
Meet at: Fort William WM NN112742 at 1000. Start of walk at 1030.
Leader: Trevor Jones 07831 437454.

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Glencripesdale House which once stood proudly on the Morvern peninsula. Photograph: Edward Towers

What's in a name?

William Menzies was one of Oban's greatest benefactors but it could be argued his work has not been given the acclaim it deserves

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNER
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THE NAME William Menzies was once known in every household in Argyll, especially in Oban where it was a byword for employment, honesty and public spiritedness.

Today his Christian name is to be found only on a small sign set high above the entrance to the short and insignificant back road which links Corran Esplanade with George Street.

He was one of Oban's greatest benefactors and had he lived anywhere else he would have merited a main-square statue or had a municipal building named after him for all his good works.

William Menzies was born in Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, in 1813, the son of William and Isabella Menzies.

Shortly after his marriage, he and his wife moved to Lochgilphead with their young family where he set up a building business in partnership with a Mr Campbell.

By 1850 they were in Oban where he established his own company. The Woodside Hotel in Tweeddale Street was his first major contract. His yard was situated on open land between Corran Esplanade and George Street but disappeared when that part of Oban was developed. Perhaps William donated the land, which would explain why his name was recorded in one of its new access roads.

William had seven children, several of whom went into the family business.

Although he was a prosperous and successful man, he also had considerable sorrow in his life. His wife Jane and five of his children pre-deceased him, with only two sons, William and David Ross, living after 1888. A third son, David Laird, died in 1858 aged 16, as the result of a shooting accident in Glen Orchy.

David Ross produced 10 children but died in 1891 when he was only 48. His wife, Flora, had died previously in childbirth, just 34.

William's eldest son, named after his father, appears to have continued the business from 1888 until he died in 1900, during which time their yard moved to Dunollie Road.

Due to the recession in building work around this time, William Menzies and Sons appear to have ceased trading and by the turn of the 20th century William senior's grandchildren were moving into other trades and professions with many migrating to Glasgow to work in shipping.

William Menzies was responsible for erecting dozens of fine buildings in Oban and through-



Some of the Oban hotels built by William Menzies – The Alexandra Hotel and The Great Western Hotel; The gravestone to William Menzies in Pennyfuir Cemetery; the very small sign at the entrance to William Street. Photographs: Iain Thorner.



out Argyll and its islands. Many of these are still to be seen and have been described as being 'illustrative of the soundness of construction by the builders: men of solidarity themselves, they believed in building similar edifices'.

The list is a long one and includes: St John's Episcopal church, George Street; the United Presbyterian church, Dunollie Road; St Columba's parish church, George Street; Great Western Hotel; Alexandra Hotel; Grand Hotel (became Craigard Hostel and then Craigard Flats); Imperial Hotel (either the old hotel in Albany Street, which was demolished, or the current Royal Hotel in Argyll Square); the Argyllshire Gathering Hall; Strathaven, and Burnbank Terraces; Burnbank House; Marquis Villa; Hawthorn Bank; Helenslee and Blantyre Cottage. The Western Isles Hotel, Tobermory; Glen Etive House, for Mr Greaves, MP for Warwick; residences at Inveraray for the sheriff and procurator fiscal; joiner work of Ardmaddy Castle; Java Lodge, Mull and various churches, schools and other public buildings between Oban and Lochaber.

One contract which William Menzies must have found challenging was the erection of a 50-roomed private mansion house and farm buildings at Glencripesdale on the Morvern peninsula. There was no road to the site which meant all the materials had to be shipped from Oban, 38 miles away, and just to add to the fun, there was no pier for the vessels to come alongside.

The clients were three brothers, two of whom were Church

of England vicars who amassed great wealth selling off large chunks of central Birmingham just as the city was expanding. It is thought they worked out the building plans themselves without the aid of an architect and for this they used, in part, the plans of a church.

However, as the result is reminiscent of several large villas in Lorn attributed to William Menzies, it is more than likely he had a major part in its design.

The brothers bought Glencripesdale estate in 1871 and must have engaged William right away as by 1873-4 it was ready for occupation.

There was a story told that the Rev Thomas Newton did not approve of alcohol. However, on the day the house was completed, he invited the contractor in for a dram. Producing a bottle of the best Scottish whisky, he poured out a smaller measure than William Menzies was accustomed to seeing.

After he had finished it Mr Newton asked, 'Now isn't that a fine whisky?'

'Well,' replied Mr Menzies, 'there was so little of it I cannot tell whether it is good or bad.'

The hint was taken and the glass refilled.

The story is most likely a joke between two friends as it is difficult to imagine William being so rude.

Glencripesdale House is of interest in the broader construction world because it was

one of the first non-industrial structures to be built in Scotland of 'no fines' concrete, meaning the aggregate used was not of sand, but coarse gravel which, in this instance, came from a nearby beach.

There is also some evidence it was put up using the revolutionary 'Drakes' iron shuttering apparatus, allowing the builder to raise the walls to the desired height by the quicker and more economic 'slip form' casting.

It was also unusual for its time in having hot and cold running water throughout, including the staff quarters.

Despite the remoteness of Argyll from the industrial centres of the UK, William Menzies was evidently using cutting edge technology.

In 1943, the interior of Glencripesdale House was wasted by the armed forces who used it as a training base. The lead and slates were subsequently removed by Mr H Epps, its new owner, and, finally, the military returned 20 years later to demolish it as an exercise.

William Menzies' construction was more solid than it looked as it took two attempts with high explosives to reduce it to an ugly heap of rubble which someone has only recently cleared away.

Besides being a busy and consciences contractor whose word was indeed his bond, William was trusted and respected all over the Highlands.

He was deeply religious and

universally liked in Oban, and in 1881 became its first provost - a position he held for five years. He was also a JP and chief magistrate for two terms. He helped to bring the railway to Oban and took a leading part in getting the funding for a new water supply for the town.

When he died in October 1888, an estimated 800 people attended his funeral. His coffin was carried shoulder high from the United Presbyterian Church to Pennyfuir cemetery where he was buried with his wife and family.

It might be argued that although William Menzies did as much, if not more, for Oban than the McCaig family, his work has not been given the acclaim it deserves.

No illuminated eye-catching, round tower for 'oor Wullie'. Unfortunately for future historians, few of his business records survive, not even a photograph of him is to be found locally. It would be a graceful act on the part of today's town councillors if they would think about commemorating him with a plaque in the foyer of their area offices or in some other public place.

I would be grateful if any reader could provide a photograph and further information of Provost William Menzies and his extraordinary building work.

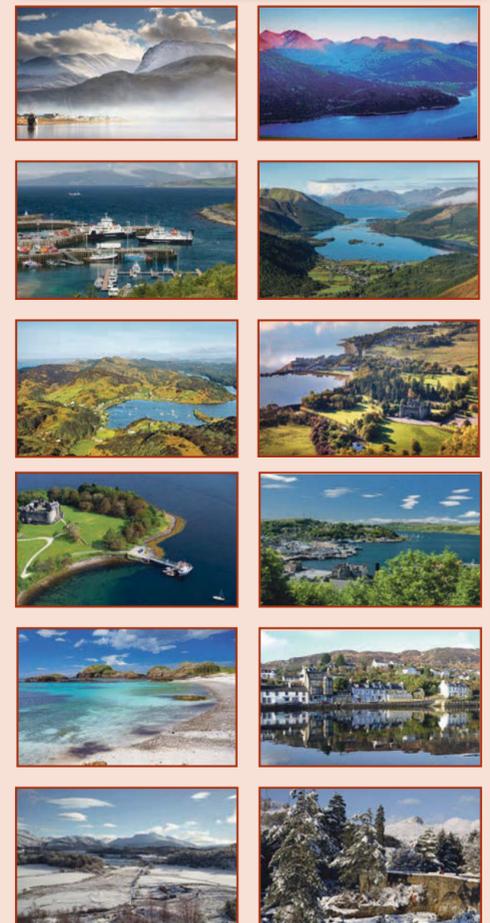
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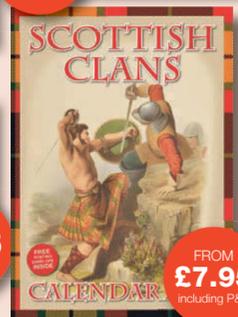
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Viewpoint



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

As we said goodbye to the old and welcomed in the new year, for many people it is a time for reflection – thinking about all the good times we've had with family and friends, colleagues and in our community in the last 12 months, but also remembering those we've lost, or the difficult or painful circumstances we faced during the year.

We have also looked back at 2017 – this week at the second half of the year. And what a snapshot it is, so many positives, including the release of Connel man Billy Irving, following a long campaign by his fiancée Yvonne McHugh, as well as other family members of

those imprisoned with Billy. Rockfield also secured almost £1million in lottery funding to take forward the community hub project and the new Oban pontoons officially opened for business, adding a welcome boost to the town's maritime tourism.

But among all the good news stories, there was also sadness at the tragic loss of eight-year-old Kayla MacDonald, who died following an incident near Benderloch.

Whatever your circumstances, The Oban Times wishes all its readers and advertisers a happy new year and may this year be one of hope, joy and positivity for you and yours.



Days gone by – 1997

The date is June 5, but what was the occasion that brought Billy Connolly to Argyll and who are the young dancers who shared the stage with the Big Yin?

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL
angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



Happy New Year to all readers!

IT'S BEEN a while since I've covered travel on land, sea or sky, so for the first instalment of 2018 a wee hop across to Poland for Christmas is the general subject of this piece with a few musical, food and festive strands to accompany the journey.

We flew off from Glasgow Airport on Christmas Eve, first heading to Amsterdam for a few hours at Schiphol Airport, then on to Warsaw where we would be till December 28.

My favourite way to begin a holiday is going straight into it after a busy period of work. There is an element relating to the contrast in activity that agrees with me and the effect of getting on a plane, train, car or ferry and going somewhere different after being under pressure in the days and weeks leading to it gives a strong feeling of relief and release. After

the hustle and bustle of most of December, the feeling of relief when the plane took off into the mid-winter sky was sublime.

We arrived in Warsaw just in time to make the Christmas Eve piscitarian feast. Christmas Eve is as big a part of the festive celebrations in Poland as the day itself. No meat is consumed in the meal and it is usually served late in the evening.

Twelve courses – representative of the 12 apostles – of fish and vegetarian dishes are enjoyed over the night and this is augmented by shots of vodka served from the freezer. A strong contributor to the menu is herring, served both salted and in various pickles.

The Polish and Tirisdeach dual traditions and appreciation for herring was a good topic of translated conversation.

The next day it was south to Radom for the Christmas meal with the other side of Ania's family. By the time I reached the town, about 70 miles to the south, I was getting the hang of driving on the 'wrong' side of the road.

A similar massive quantity of food was on offer here, this time with meat courses added in, and unlike the previous evening, Ania was driving the return leg so I was able to take part in the shots of the frozen vodka.

'Nastrovia' and 'Ślainté' were used alternately on each toast, which is always taken together round the table.

I had brought the box with me, so after the feasting we all joined together and sang songs. Christmas Carols and songs of both Scottish and Polish traditions were shared and they even sang along with a few Skipinnish numbers.

Most of Ania's family have no English and I have no Polish, but the amount of good crack and communication you can have with people without a common tongue is incredible.

The language of life goes much deeper than the spoken word. The language of music, food, drink, celebration, love, friendship and of warm welcome transcends words and that was the overarching feeling I had flying home full of festive cheer last Thursday.



Social media

Our breaking news about the A828 having to be closed after a lorry hit the bridge over the Falls of Lora at Connel received a lot of comments. Here are just a few:

Jacinta Maclean-Black: How does a lorry driver not know the height of their own vehicle

Jo Allen: Everyone who made the detour like me or was otherwise inconvenienced put a claim in against driver's insurance

Fran Kirkham: Any lorry driver worth their salt knows what height their lorry is

Liz McIntosh: Should have gone to specsavers. Really!

Susan Jones: Thought there were lines/poles across the road before the lights on both sides to stop this from happening?

Shona M Gillies: Not a great advertisement for a logistics company.....

Margaretanne Browne: Why did the driver think he could get through the

bridge. He should be charged with careless driving.

Kate McNab: That's height of stupidity and a hell of a detour for everyone stuck. What a clown.

Meanwhile there was a lot of good will for retired handyman Cammy Dempster who shone brightest to win The Oban Times' best decorated house competition, with Angela McDougall commenting: Fab...well done Cammy ..well deserved! x

Wild salmon are being sacrificed for profits

Sir,
As chairman of Nether Lochaber Community Council, I am very disappointed at the decision by the Highland Council Planning Committee (South) to grant permission for an expansion of a Marine Harvest Scotland Loch Leven fish farm, without stipulating a requirement that this be responsive to widespread local concerns over the decline in wild fish stocks.

This is the second expansion of a salmon farm in our area (Gorsten, Ardgour, being the first) granted permission in recent months, despite opposition from the Lochaber Fisheries Trust and Lochaber District Salmon Development Board, local Highland councillors, community councils at Nether Lochaber, Glencoe and Ballachulish and residents.

This is not only a Lochaber issue, but on the basis of evidence gathered by Marine Science Scotland, one that is affecting the entire west coast of Scotland, while being ignored by the Scottish Government.

There are two main strands to the negative environmental impacts of salmon farms on local biodiversity.

First, the chemical emectant benzoate, known by its product name Slice, and used to treat sea lice infestation on the farms, has been shown to toxify the seabed in inland waters, killing off native crustaceans. Secondly, the sea lice infestations on farms can increase the lice burden for both wild trout and salmon, particularly on young fish.

Other factors further exacerbate this situation.

Most salmon farms are in sheltered inland waters without strong tidal flows that would inhibit sea lice taking hold in pens. This is likely to be for both the safety and convenience of working in these locations and to avoid the additional cost to farm salmon producers of siting pens in faster flowing currents.

Also, in recent years sea lice numbers have been shown to spike in warmer average sea temperatures which have been recorded in inland waters such as Loch Leven (up by 1.5°C during 2015-16), reaching numbers that exceed the accepted lice burdens recommended by the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation.

In Scotland, the most lucrative wild fishing rivers are protected from the development of fish farms in their vicinity.

It is as if salmon farms are satellites floating in space, disconnected from local or regional eco-systems, with SEPA limited to regulating their operational standards, SNH commenting solely on their visual impacts in national scenic areas, and MSS not actually being required for planning consultation.

We have a situation where our common natural heritage, such as once abundant wild fisheries in rivers and lochs, is being sacrificed in the name of economics. A situation in which Scottish Government agencies

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
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BLIADHNA MHATH ÙR dhuibh uile, agus gach soirbheachadh leis gach rùn agus dòchas a th' agaibh air a son!

Ri linn 's mar a tha obair-deasachaidh a' phàipeir seo ga dhèanamh aig an àm seo den bhliadhna, tha mise a' sgrìobhadh seo seachdain ro dheireadh 2017, air an latha ron an Nollaig. Abair othail thall 's a-bhos! Tha àm ceannach thiodhlacan seachad agus spàirn a-nise gam pagadh gu brèagha le aithne gum tèid na parsailen grunn sin a' reubadh o chèile ann am beagan uairean a thide! Ach nach math an cothrom a bhith againn leithid sin a dhèanamh, agus comas coibhneas agus fialaidheachd a nochdadh dha càch a chèile. Agus tha othail cuideachd a' deasachadh biadh Nollaig agus bidh milleanan a' dèanamh toileachas ri ròic eireachdail agus tha mi 'n dòchas gur ann mar sin a bhios cuisean dhuibhse cuideachd. Ach mar a tha fios againn uile tha feadhainn a bhios fuar, acrach, aonranach, agus 's e suidheachadh duilich a th' ann gum bheil

have basically institutionalised degradation of our wild environment. For jobs, apparently.

And if you examine that idea of job creation making this justifiable, consider the number of prawn creel boats that have gone out of business, the complete ban on traditional wild fish netting at river mouths on the West Coast and whether there are as many opportunities to be a ghillie or water bailiff as there once were.

This is a complex situation, but it needs to be examined honestly and reacted to with joined-up thinking by the agencies, producers, planners and communities involved, or we will end up in a future without any wild salmonids in areas like Lochaber.

It is, after all, the job of public agencies such as SEPA, SNH, HC, MSS to know what we have and to protect it, not sacrifice it.

Iain Jenner,
Chairman, Nether Lochaber Community Council.

Misconception over Brexit is common

Sir,
I feel obliged to address a common misconception apparently shared by Iain M MacDonald of Lewis in the Lochaber/Oban Times of December 14 concerning Brexit.

The slogan on the 'Brexit bus' said, quite distinctly: 'We send the EU £350 million a week: let's fund our NHS instead.'

Nowhere did it say anything about all, or even part, of that sum going directly to the NHS (although I and many others wish it would). It was simply an example of how much we were giving to the EU and how much better we could spend that sum within the UK.

Davie Kerr,
Onich.

Generous gifts of donated Gaelic books

Sir,
The Gaelic Books Council warmly thanks Acair, Wee Mackay Press and everyone who contributed to our Christmas charity campaign, the Gaelic Book-Gifting Tree.

Support from the publishers and customers has allowed the Gaelic Books Council to provide 120 pupils in Gaelic-medium education (GME) who are living in difficult circumstances with Gaelic books for Christmas.

All GME schools were approached in November through Education Scotland's newsletter asking if they were aware of any families who were particularly struggling at this time of year and who would not otherwise be able to buy a book for their children.

The schools sent the Gaelic Books Council requests for books, which were all added to the gifting tree online and in the Gaelic bookshop. A total of 120 books were added to the tree, for pupils ranging from P1 to P7.

Following a social media and email campaign, £323 worth of books were bought online and in our shop.

The Gaelic Books Council held a coffee morning during Book Week

Scotland, which raised a further £108 to buy more books. We are hugely grateful to the publishers who supported this campaign, particularly Acair, which has had a successful year celebrating its 40th anniversary.

All books were delivered to the schools before the Christmas holidays to allow them to be distributed to families.

The kindness of those who supported the campaign will allow more young Gaelic readers to enjoy a book on Christmas Day.

The Gaelic Books Council wishes you all a very happy New Year.

Shelagh Chaimbeul,
Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council).

Accolade for bus shelter not deserved

Sir,
I was congratulated recently for helping to get a bus shelter at Ellenabeich. I had to refuse the accolade as it had nothing to do with me.

In the late 1990s, I was contracted to build five drystone 'moles' in the square to be used as planters, three greenheart benches and to arrange placement of cast steel bollards around the crane which had been brought up from the pier head.

At that time, the plans showed a site for a bus shelter on the wider stretch of pavement between C John Taylor's and the square. The community council (CC) wanted a stone structure. Argyll and Bute Council refused as in the past these structures had been used as toilets and much else. They offered a standard shelter.

This was refused as, despite the fact it was see-through, it would spoil the view. I offered to hold an auction of people's bric-a-brac, antiques and collectables to raise the money. I had absolutely no response from the CC.

None the less, I girded up my rain-soaked loins and bought several fair-condition umbrellas and placed them in the telephone box with a note. I also put a notice where the, by now, mythical shelter would never be, saying that people should return them after boarding the bus. They disappeared within a fortnight.

I took to sheltering in the telephone kiosk and I put in a small wooden stool so I could wait in comfort. I did think of opening a pizza parlour but there would be no bus shelter for the customers to eat their pizzas.

Sadly, all the rain-soaked waits took their toll and I found it more and more difficult because of a chest infection to make it to the square, so I gave up. Fortunately, many people, being kind beyond the extreme, are willing to take me from door to door, so to speak.

So, to the lady who offered the congratulations for getting a shelter in Ellenabeich: 'It wisnae me' – I was too busy taking the antibiotics. Sorry about my attitude: 17 years is a long time to wait for a bus in a shelter which is now in the wrong place so that the tourists' eyes are not offended.

George Doyle,
Ellenabeich.

Ailean Caimbeul

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MAY 2018 bring harmony to the world and to all of you success, contentment and the opportunity to help those in need of support.

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

Lochaber Foodbank sees numbers in need soaring

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

BY NEW Year, Lochaber Foodbank was expected to have fed in excess of 300 more people struggling to cope than it did the previous year.

In the week alone leading up to Christmas, the foodbank based in Fort William helped 113 people in crisis who faced having no Christmas, including 47 children, who also received gifts.

Lochaber Foodbank has been operating for four years and in that time has given out more than 35,000 meals to help individuals and families facing hardship. It opens for two hours, three days a week.

It is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks supported by the Trussel Trust and operates on a referrals basis, with vouchers exchanged for meals for a set number of days.

But as the numbers needing help soared towards 1,000 by the end of 2017, foodbank manager Alex McConachie praised what he called the 'wonderful generosity' of local residents and businesses that have kept pace with the growing demand by donating even more items and cash.

Mr McConachie told the *Lochaber Times*: 'This last year has been the busiest of the four since we started. In 2016, we fed 681 people and I expect by the end of 2017 we will have helped 1,000.

'Why is the number increasing? It's due to a lot of factors. A few of those we help are classed as homeless, but the majority are people struggling to cope on low incomes, while others have problems with delayed wages or

benefit changes. And the introduction of Universal Credit has made the situation worse.

'There's also the general cost of living and the festive season usually sees people facing higher bills for things like electricity.

'But on the brighter side, the people of Lochaber have been absolutely fantastic. Since we first opened, they have kept putting their hands into their pockets and digging deep.

'I remember when we first opened, our then chairman was so worried we wouldn't have enough food to give out, he was on the verge of ringing the foodbank in Inverness to ask for supplies.

'But I knew we wouldn't need to. I said "don't worry, once we put the word out it will be fine" and it was, because the response was amazing.'

As well as individuals donating food and money, Mr McConachie says companies such as Tesco have been helpful.

Tesco in Fort William has a permanent collection point for the foodbank and adds an extra 20 per cent on top of what is collected.

Mr McConachie added: 'And I have to also mention Morrisons, Robertson's and the Co-op, as well as local schools and St Andrew's Church, who have been very supportive.'

Morrisons provided all the trimmings required for Christmas lunches to go with the turkeys given by the foodbank to eight families in need.

Sadly, Mr McConachie, who prior to helping launch the local foodbank also volunteered for many years with the local branch of the Salvation Army, says he sees no end to the need for food-

Glenfinnan 'dook' brings in the New Year



The brave 'dookers' plunged into the chilly waters of Loch Shiel on New Year's Day. IF F01 Glenfinnan Dip 01: Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

WITH the waters of Loch Shiel a balmy 8°C, 48 hardy souls braved the conditions to take part in the annual Glenfinnan 'dook' on New Year's Day.

The event was organised as usual by Duncan and Manja Gibson of Glenfinnan

House Hotel, which kindly supplied champagne afterwards for those who had taken part in the festive swim.

The 'dook' has grown in popularity over the years and is now an established event on the Glenfinnan calendar.

This year's group of intrepid bathers had an international flavour with a number of overseas visitors joining local residents for what everyone agreed was a bracing start to 2018.

More photographs on the back page.

banks any time soon.

'People shouldn't have to go to foodbanks to feed themselves and their children in the 21st century,' he said.

'But you would be very surprised about the sort of people who we have helped and that

includes professionals like nurses.'

Asked if he ever felt overwhelmed by the never-ending plight of people struggling to cope, Mr McConachie, who is assisted by 12 volunteers to

man the foodbank, admitted

there are days when he feels disheartened. But he says he always remembers something his mother told him when he was growing up on the south side of Glasgow in the 1950s.

'Back then you always used to see people without arms and

legs and my mother used to give me a ha'penny to give to them because she said there were always people worse off than yourself.

'So I've always taken the view that we need to look out for each other and do what we can.'



Aonghas Grant.

Aonghas honoured

A NUMBER of Highland and Islands residents have been named in the New Year's Honours List.

Perhaps best well-known locally is Aonghas Grant, of Caol, who receives the BEM for services to fiddling and music tradition in the Highlands.

Famous as the Left-Handed Fiddler of Lochaber, Mr Grant's musical career spans more than six decades. A performer, teacher and composer of note, he has been on the faculty of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

Donald Cameron of Lochiel is made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in his role as Lord Lieutenant of Inverness-shire.

An MBE goes to Colin Skeath, who now lives in Strontian. Mr Skeath retired in January last year after 27 years as a police officer in West Yorkshire. He finished his career as a neighbourhood inspector and receives his MBE for services to policing and the community in Halifax.

There is also an MBE for Katherine MacKay, chairwoman of the Isle of Lewis Local Committee Cancer Research UK for services to fundraising.

And there is an MBE for Professor Hugh Cheape, of Glenfinnan, who lectures at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye, for his services to Scottish cultural education and traditional music.



Lochaber's senior councillor looks to the year ahead

Andrew Baxter, Independent councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, looks back over 2017 and forward into 2018 from his perspective as chairman of Lochaber Area Committee

'HOPEFULLY, politics and particularly local politics, was the last thing on our minds as we enjoyed the Christmas and New Year festivities.

'However, as we start the new year even someone with only a passing interest in current affairs might raise an eyebrow at what an extraordinary year we experienced in 2017.

'From President Trump's tweets to an unexpected General Election, it was a year of momentous events and political change at national and international level.

'Closer to home, events have been calmer but seen no less important changes. We've seen a change at Highland Council headquarters as a new independent-led coalition took responsibility for running the council.

'Here in Lochaber we said goodbye to four long-serving councillors. Bill Clark, Bren Gormley, Thomas MacLennan and Brian Murphy all retired at the May election.

'Collectively they provided decades of service to our local communities and, despite our sometimes strong political differences, I would like to thank them for the contribution they all made over many years.

'It's fantastic to see the significant changes in and around Fort William, with the long-awaited retail park on North Road top of the list. The new Marks and

Spencer Food Hall is proving extremely popular and now an envious Oban wants to follow suit.

'When all the units are occupied it will be a real asset for the town and Lochaber. The long derelict Fort William Secondary School is almost transformed into new offices.

'Although the new additions are not to my architectural taste, the whole site is a more welcoming entrance to the town.

'Already we've seen vital new homes created in the redundant Tweeddale Buildings in the town centre. As the council moves out of other long-term and expensive office leases, the new offices will also save taxpayers' money.

'Savings like this are all important as the council grapples with the continuing financial challenges that will last for many more years.

'And with the change of ownership at the Lochaber Smelter, there is real optimism that new investment will bring new jobs and renewed infrastructure to the area.

'Councillors will soon get the chance to consider the plans for the new alloy wheel factory. As this is a significant development that will have a long-lasting impact on the area, including our road network, housing demand and wider infrastructure, it's only right it receives full and detailed scrutiny before approval.

It's also why the transport appraisal, looking at the requirement for a realignment of the A82, is so important.

'Now that both Scottish ministers and Transport Scotland are listening to local views, councillors will continue to lobby for funding.

'We need to do the same for a long-term solution to crossing the Corran Narrows; councillors are looking forward to the results of the options study to be conducted by HITRANS, our regional transport partnership.

'Likewise, we all want to see significant progress this year from NHS Highland on plans for our new hospital at Blar Mhor.

'Councillors collectively also want more decision-making devolved from Inverness so that they are made here in Lochaber.

'There are real opportunities to do that this year, with councillors also demanding budgets come with those new powers.

'The key will be how we can make those decisions not in isolation in a council chamber in Fort William, but in partnership with individual communities.

'Residents from Kilchoan to Kinlochleven to Kilmallie need to have every opportunity to influence the decisions that affect their areas.

'As we look forward to 2018, may I, on behalf of the team of Lochaber councillors, wish you a very happy New Year.'



Independent councillor Andrew Baxter.

Lochaber Foodbank gets present from TSB

TSB Fort William is giving Lochaber Foodbank £200 to support families over the festive period who are experiencing financial hardship.

The donation is part of a nationwide Christmas donation programme by TSB, which is giving every one of its branches money to gift to a local cause, as a little extra support at this time of year.

TSB has given more than £17 million to local causes across Britain since its local charity partnerships launched in 2015.

This year a record 27,000 nominations were received from local charities across the country to join the programme which sees TSB Partners from 550 branches and eight office sites volunteer and raise money on behalf of the chosen charities.

Brian Foster, bank manager at TSB Fort William, told the *Lochaber Times*: 'We're delighted to be able to help Lochaber Foodbank with this donation. We chose to give this money to Lochaber Foodbank because of the brilliant work the team does in supporting local families who are experiencing severe financial hardship, particularly over the festive period. It's fantastic to know that the £200 we are giving them will really make a difference to people in our local community.'

Alex McConachie, manager, Lochaber Foodbank, added: 'Thanks to TSB Fort William we can provide assistance to more families.'



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Arena

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

WHAT'S ON IN OBAN

In partnership with Oban Town Diary
bid4oban.co.uk



- Saturday**
6th January
Cearcall Còmhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group)
Furan Gaelic Centre, 12pm-1.30pm
- Sunday**
7th January
Hill Walk Auch Glen
Bridge Of Orchy All Day
- Sunday Roast**
Regent Hotel All Day
- WHAT'S ON IN OBAN**
- Tuesday**
9th January
Badminton Come & Try
Atlantis Lesiure 8pm-10pm
- Irish Dancing Classes**
St Columba's Cathedral Hall 4.15pm-5.45pm
- U3A Monthly Meeting**
Corran Halls, £20 Annual Membership Fee 10.30am - 11.30am
- Wednesday**
10th January
Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club
Inveraray Inn 8.00pm

Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details.

To list your event, please call 01631 568000

The Oban Times supports local charities and not-for-profit event organisers.

Let us know about your forthcoming event to appear for free in our listings, in association with Oban Town Diary.

We have reduced our community noticeboard box adverts to just £10 plus VAT (where VAT is applicable)

Put your event in front of 25,000 readers and also see what we can offer you by promoting your event online - we have over 11,000 followers on Facebook and 36'000 monthly visitors to www.obantimes.co.uk

It pay to advertise with The Oban Times - first for community news, business news and events throughout Oban, Lochaber and the West Highlands.

Contact Nadine or Rhona on 01631 568000



BURNS SUPPER

on Friday 26th January

Tickets for Burns Club Of Oban Annual Supper will be on sale in Regent Hotel on Tues 9th, Wed 10th and Mon 15th Jan between 6pm till 7.30pm.

Alternatively contact John MacLean on 01631 565519

New Members Welcome



Gaelic film boom

THE GAELIC short film competition FilmG has hailed the 'exceptional quality' of this year's competition entries.

This comes after a record-breaking number of films were submitted before the December deadline.

FilmG's judging panel will meet in Glasgow this week to review the short films and determine shortlists across a range of categories.

Shortlists are expected to be announced on January 8.

Now in its tenth year, the national Gaelic film competition offers cash prizes as well as opportunities for work placement with production companies, including a week-long placement with BBC THE SOCIAL for the winner of the Best Mobile Short.

The 2018 FilmG awards ceremony will be broadcast on BBC ALBA for the first time.

And to coincide with the broadcast, BBC ALBA has announced that four of the best short films will be shown on the channel in the run up to the awards programme, which is scheduled for Sunday February 11.

The chosen films will be revealed in January. FilmG project manager Floraidh Forrest reflected on the value of the competition and its long-lasting impact on the Gaelic media sector. She said: 'We're delighted to see more film entries, once again, this year. More importantly, we're reflecting on the quality of submissions.'

'This is reflected in the increasingly important role of Gaelic high school education in encouraging young people to get involved. 'We've also seen a steady progression over the years in terms of the number of film-makers making films without the help of their teachers or a FilmG schools workshop.'

'Overall this year there were 63 films entered in the youth category - 21 of which were from young independent filmmakers. 'Most pleasing, however, is the quality of the films. We're seeing submissions from previous entrants and what is apparent is that they've developed their story-telling and technical skills.'

'They're showing a real passion to learn and improve and that's resulting in some films with exceptional quality. We hope that for many of our young filmmakers this can help them on the road to building a career in the media.'



Lochaber High School's entry sees pupils desperate to avoid hanging around with the new girl at school.



Advanced Higher Gàidhlig pupils Sophie and Gillian feature as nosy neighbours in the Nicolson Institute's 'Mèirleach nam Meeehs' (The Sheep Rustler)



Galson Estate Trust volunteer and advisor Roddy John MacDonald takes us on a tour through the moors in community film Ceum a' Bhealach.

Glasgow Letter

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



2018 - a milestone for Celtic Connections

Happy New Year, everyone! I never made it to the first Celtic Connections festival because I was a little bit too young - only a month old!

This year, the festival celebrates the remarkable achievement of reaching its 25th anniversary.

In 1994, thousands of folk music revellers descended on Glasgow for the festival, none of whom could possibly have foreseen either its longevity or its prominence a quarter of a century later.

That festival pre-dated the massive boom in

festival popularity that Scotland is seeing at the moment, so Celtic Connections was very much ahead of its time.

It has been described as a 'magnet for musicians the world over' and, in turn, has had an extremely positive effect on the richness of Scottish music and the development of young, Scottish musicians.

I remember the first gig I did at Celtic Connections - in the Strathclyde Suite of the Royal Concert Hall with Skipinnish, in my first January spent living in Glasgow. What an honour it felt to play at the festival. I also recall, some years later, we played in the same building to a sold out of the main auditorium which was an unforgettable experience.

This year, I am equal-

ly excited to play a sold out gig in St Luke's on Saturday February 3 with Tide Lines - the band's first gig at the festival.

There are a couple of other events at which I am delighted to be performing including Orain nan Gàidheal (Songs of the Gael featuring the BBC SSO and special guests) on January 26 in the Royal Concert Hall and Mary Ann Kennedy's performance of her latest album, An Dàn, in the Old Fruitmarket on January 31.

At the former, Julie Fowlis, Kathleen MacInnes, Karen Matheson, Arthur Cormack, Isobel Ann Martin, Kim Carnie, and Mischa Macpherson will all take to the stage backed by orchestral arrangements. As

usual, there are also a number of events that I am greatly looking forward to attending as an audience member.

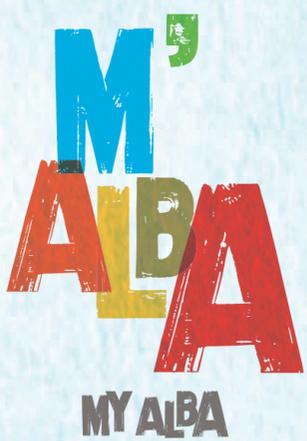
I could not possibly hope to include the whole programme in this column (such is the scale of the event) but each week I will endeavour to include a few concerts in the What's On section that I feel might be particularly interesting.

What's On
Thursday January 18: Celtic Connections 25th Anniversary Concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.
Friday January 19: Iain MacFarlane Trio and Kim Carnie in St Andrew's in the Square at 7.30pm.
Saturday January 20: Skerryvore and Wee

Banjo 3 in the Barrowland Ballroom at 7.30pm.
Wednesday January 24: Dougie MacLean and Yvonne Lyon in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.
Thursday January 25: Binneas nam Bàn in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 8pm.
Friday January 26: Orain nan Gàidheal: Songs of the Gael featuring the BBC SSO and special guests.
Friday January 26: Peatbog Faeries with special guests in the Old Fruitmarket at 8pm.
Friday February 2: Skipinnish and Cruinn in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.
Saturday February 3: Fergie MacDonald: The Ceilidh King in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.



Mary Ann Kennedy will perform her latest album live in one of many great Celtic Connections shows coming up this month.



- DIARDAIN 04 FOILTEACH**
THURSDAY 04 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Scalpay
19.30 Druthag na Hearadh - the first year at the Harris Distillery (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.15 Ceòl bho Perthshire Amber - Dougie MacLean (rpt)
20.30 Balaich a' Bhiobaill - students in training for ministry in the Free Church of Scotland (rpt)
21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Cànán (rpt)
22.00 Sùlaisgeir: an t-Sealg - the last guga hunt for one of Ness' men (rpt)
23.00 ÙR | NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world
23.45 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
23.50 Dhan Uisge - River Douchary (rpt)
- DIHAOINE 05 FOILTEACH**
FRIDAY 05 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

- 18.35 Machair (rpt)
19.00 An Là - News
19.25 ÙR | NEW: Pro 14 Live Rugby - Edinburgh v Southern Kings
21.30 Kerry is Kirsty: A' Chomraich (rpt)
22.00 Nathan Carter (rpt)
23.25 Skipinnish agus Caraidèan (rpt)
- DISATHAIRNE 06 FOILTEACH**
SATURDAY 06 JANUARY
15.25 ÙR | NEW: Pro 14 Live Rugby - Zebre v Glasgow
17.20 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.30 Machair (rpt)
19.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
20.00 Aibisidh - Quiz Show (rpt)
20.30 Druthag na Hearadh - the first year at the Harris Distillery (rpt)
21.00 Ceòl Country (rpt)
22.00 Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world (rpt)
22.45 Dhan Uisge - River Garry (rpt)
22.55 Tàtù Rìoghail Dhùn Eideann 2017 - best moments from the Edinburgh Military Tattoo (rpt)

- 24.30 Slàinte Mhath! - songs about whisky (rpt)
- DIDOMHNAICH 07 FOILTEACH**
SUNDAY 07 JANUARY
16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.30 A' Bhliadhna 2017 - a look back at news stories featured on An Là in 2017
19.30 ÙR | NEW: Alleluia
20.00 Balaich a' Bhiobaill - students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)
20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)
21.00 Farpaisean Chon-Chaoarach (rpt)
22.00 Ceòl Country (rpt)
23.00 Aghaidh ri Aghaidh: Jobs v Gates - the duel who wrote the future of computers (rpt)
23.50 Dhan Uisge - River Douchary (rpt)
- DILUAIN 08 FOILTEACH**
MONDAY 08 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 An Lot (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News

- 20.30 ÙR | NEW: Kerry is Kirsty: Stafainn
21.00 ÙR | NEW: Sùlaisgeir: an Sealgair
22.00 ÙR | NEW: Port
22.30 A' Suathadh Ri Iomadh
Rubha - remarkable achievement of the Campbell family of Ness, Isle of Lewis (rpt)
23.30 Tìree Music Festival - Trail West (rpt)
- DIMÀIRT 09 FOILTEACH**
TUESDAY 09 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Scalpay (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 ÙR | NEW: Leugh Mi
21.00 ÙR | NEW: Farpaisean Chon-Chaoarach
22.00 Sùlaisgeir: na Sealgairèan (rpt)
23.00 Togaidh Sinn Fonn (rpt)
23.25 Binneas - Na Trads - Kathleen MacInnes & Sineag MacIntyre (rpt)
23.30 Alleluia (rpt)

- DICIADAIN 10 FOILTEACH**
WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 An Lot (rpt)
19.35 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 Turas a' Bhradaìn - Neen Mackay explores the world of salmon and fly fishing in Scotland (rpt)
21.00 ÙR | NEW: Air Toir Manachainn Dheir - where the Book of Deer was written
22.00 Air an Rathad (rpt)
22.30 Port (rpt)
23.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
23.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Cànán (rpt)

- DIARDAIN 11 FOILTEACH**
THURSDAY 11 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Isle of Rum (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 Balaich a' Bhiobaill - students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)
21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Ceòl (rpt)
22.00 Tìree Music Festival - Trail West (rpt)
22.30 ÙR | NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world
23.15 Belladrum 2016: Gruff Rhys (rpt)
23.25 Air an Rathad (rpt)



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Co-bhanntachd eadar MG ALBA agus am BBC | A partnership between BBC and MG ALBA

WIN £200 WORTH OF SHOPPING TROLLEY DASH

COURTESY OF TESCO OBAN

We all spend far too much money over Christmas and New Year, so how great would it be able to fill your shopping trolley **COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE** in January? Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will win the chance to fill their trolley with up to £200 worth of goods (see Ts&Cs for exclusions). All you have to do is collect four tokens

over four weeks starting today (Thursday December 21), get them to us by 10am Tuesday January 16 and you will be entered into a prize draw to win this fantastic trolley dash PLUS get clubcard points while you shop.

What are you waiting for? Banish those post-Christmas blues and start collecting your tokens!

All four tokens must be sent in a single envelope to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB. One token from each week is required, multiple entries are allowed, but must be submitted in separate envelopes. Photocopied tokens will not be accepted. Winners must agree to take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their

immediate families are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final.



Terms & conditions: Winner must be at Tesco, Lochside, Oban PA34 4HP for 9.30am 22nd January. Excludes tobacco, lottery, baby food, non food items, and alcohol. Quantity limited to two per item. The winner will be given a hand-held scanner to monitor spend to the value of £200.

Old Argyll crime: The Benderloch psycho killer

AN ABRIDGED extract from Now Prisoner Within, murder, riot and crime in old Argyll by Lindsay Campbell, published November 28.

The man came from the north of the county, a little place called Ferlochan, a peaceful site, hidden from what is now the main road and above a twisting, tumbling burn. There must have been a thriving wee community here in 1741 and amongst them was Archibald MacCallum and his wife Euphemia.

One night in March, Archibald is recorded as having an axe indoors; he may have brought it

in to cut the morning's firewood, drying overnight by the fire. Fair enough. But he also brought the axe into the tiny chamber next to the main room, and set it at the side of the bed he shared with his wife before they both settled down for sleep. Come the morning, what the neighbours heard must have chilled them to the bone.

The wee farmstead of Ferlochan was suddenly shattered by blood-curdling screams and thudding noises. The neighbours rushed in to see Effy MacCallum lying on the floor, covered in

her own blood and gore. She may have still been conscious, as the records relate how someone described her husband calmly rising out of bed, before raising the axe to her. Effy had tried to flee, but couldn't escape a rain of hits to her head, back and shoulder.

When the neighbours went into the adjoining bedroom, Archibald MacCallum was sitting on the couple's bed, calmly putting on his day clothes, the bloody axe at his side. One can't imagine that some of the menfolk didn't fetter him there and then and bundle him off to the

byre, just yards away. Poor Effy died in her own bed a few hours later, undoubtedly from tremendous blood loss and shock, and the floor of the cottage may have borne the stain for years.

The following day, Archibald MacCallum was in the Inveraray court confessing the whole thing, doubtless taken by boat the same day as the murder and perhaps with the assistance of his laird, Campbell of Loch Nell.

Studies in modern times indicate that around 27 per cent of convicted murderers are psychopaths. In early

18th century Argyll, 25 per cent of the murderers in the justice records show psychopathic traits, and one of these was Archibald MacCallum in Ferlochan. His calm, fearless attitude immediately after such a cruel murder and his forward planning with the axe, go strikingly against almost all other murderers in this era, fitting disturbingly the actions of a classic psychopath. He'd probably been making poor Effy's life hell for years and wouldn't have made life comfortable for his fellow inmates at Inveraray gaol.

The jury in court

that day (there can rarely have been a more powerful one serving at Inveraray) subsequently gave in a 'proven' verdict on Archibald MacCallum and he was sentenced to hang.

On the afternoon of Wednesday June 16 1742, the prisoner was brought out of the gaol. His fate, however, wasn't straightforward. Waiting for him at the foot of the gibbet was an axe (one can't help wondering if it was the murder weapon itself) and there, his right hand was taken off before he became the last criminal to be hung on the spot in the

history of Inveraray and one of the last to be 'now prisoner within' the old tolbooth.

People convicted of capital crimes would still be hanged at Inveraray in future decades, for although the last remnants of the feudal system in Argyll died with the end of the Justice Courts in 1748, the Sheriff courts took over the work.

Hangings, however, took place at the other end of town, beyond the burgh limits at Cromalt, and no gibbet would spoil the Duke's loch-side vista from his new castle.

Oban's Corran Halls set for legendary country show



THE HUGELY popular hit Legends of American Country show is set to make its Oban debut On Friday January 19 at the Corran Halls and what a night of toe tapping country music it's going to be. The show is enjoying huge success this year with more than 100 sold out shows at prestigious theatres across the UK

and features four fantastic singers, Joe Moore, James McGarrity, Rod and Tracey McAuley, who perform the hit songs of icons including Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers, Patsy Cline and Don Williams to name a few in this two-hour country extravaganza that will take you to Nashville and back in one night. A

full live band of top musicians coupled with an authentic stage set and state of the art sound and lighting equipment deservedly makes this the top show of its kind in Europe. Tickets are available now at the Corran halls Box office on 01631 567333. So keep Friday January 19 free as all country roads are leading to Oban.

Your local radio listings

OBAN FM Community Radio - your local radio station
Tune in to 103.3 or listen live at www.obanfm.com

For requests, competitions or questions please email: studio@obanfm.org.uk or call us on 01631 570057

MONDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 9.00 Monday Morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds on Monday, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland Fling with Rosie Macoll, 20.00 John McLuckie's Show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Station close down

TUESDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday Morning, 13.00 Macky on FM, 17.00 Drivetime Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest Praise - Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Archie Darlings's Mix, 22.00 Clyde 2

WEDNESDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 09.00 Sound Scottish Repeat, 10.00 Comfort Zone, Doug Carmichael, 11.00 Comfort Zone, 12.00 Comfort Zone, 15.00 The Wednesday Jukebox with Michelle 17.00 Drivetime with Campbell, 19.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll - Len + Ken, 20.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll, 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre

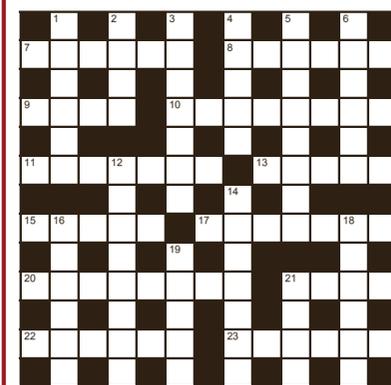
THURSDAY: 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13.00 Molly's Mix, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen, 17.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 18.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christines Collection, 20.00 Christine's CD Collection, 21.00 Ann's Cellidh, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight, 11.00 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny, 17.00 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 17.30 Drive Show, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 20.00 Lewis Bingham, 21.00 Peter Rainnie

SATURDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Stephen 10.00 Sat Morning Live, 11.00 Saturday Morning, 12.00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowsher, 12.03 Sat Morning Live, 12.05 Saturday Morning Live, 13.30 Clyde, 18.00 Sports View - Dream Team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight

SUNDAY: 09.00 Sunday Morning With Breege, 10.00 Sunday Morning, 11.00 Sunday Brunch With Archie, 12.00 Sunday Brunch, 16.30 Archie Darling, 18.00 Ken's Friends - Ken Hunter, 19.00 New Country Show - David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Station Close Down

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

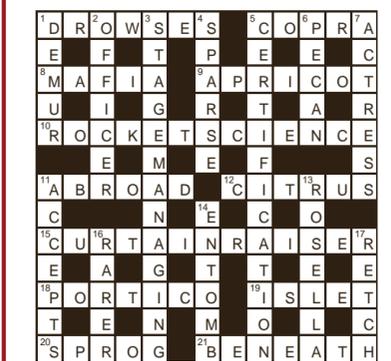


Across

- 7 Can be led this way (6)
- 8 Irish accent (6)
- 9 Embellish (4)
- 10 Aardvark (8)
- 11 Complicate (7)
- 13 Spacious (5)
- 15 Religious leader (5)
- 17 Mounted soldiers (7)
- 20 Toy on rails (5,3)
- 21 Battering wind (4)
- 22 First in Trinity (6)
- 23 Collide with (6)

Down

- 1 Used in making pen points (6)
- 2 Bone-dry (4)
- 3 Tomb (7)
- 4 Decrease (5)
- 5 Fizzy drink (4,4)
- 6 Building to show the ancient and interesting (6)
- 12 Trashy (8)
- 14 About the stomach (7)
- 16 Flyer (6)
- 18 Survivor (6)
- 19 Loan shark (5)
- 21 Split open (4)



What's on at The Nevis Centre

Superbowl
open everyday from 12 noon until 10pm

SPECTRUM

Spectrum soft play area
Suitable for children of all ages. Baby area 0-2 years, toddler area 2-5 years and older children can be let loose in all the other areas.

The Nevis Centre An Aird, Fort William
Tel: 01397 700707 www.neviscentre.co.uk

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club
Wednesday 10th January
Inveraray Inn At 8.00pm
Guest Artists Robert Nairn Trio
Supporting players most welcome

Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Hot Supper Dance with Charlie Kirkpatrick's Scottish Dance Band
Friday 12th January 2018
7.30pm - late
The Royal Hotel
Tickets: £15
Includes 2 course supper
For Tickets Contact 01631562077 or 07979520792

Argyll and Bute Council

Christmas and New Year Refuse and Recycling Arrangements (Domestic and Commercial Premises)

Oban and Lorn

Refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be collected as follows:

- Collections due in week commencing 25th December will be collected a day later than published calendar i.e. due on 25th will be collected on 26th, due on 26th will be collected on 27th, due on 27th will be collected on 28th, due on 28th will be collected on 29th, due on 29th will be collected on 30th December.

- Collections due in week commencing 1st January will be collected a day later than published calendar i.e. due on 1st will be collected on 2nd, due on 2nd will be collected on 3rd, due on 3rd will be collected on 4th, due on 4th will be collected on 5th, due on 5th will be collected on 6th January.

Moleigh recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

Mull and Iona

Refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be collected as follows:

- Collections due in week commencing 25th December will be collected a day later than published calendar i.e. due on 25th will be collected on 26th, due on 26th will be collected on 27th, due on 27th will be collected on 28th, due on 28th will be collected on 29th December.

- Collections due in week commencing 1st January will be collected 2 days later than published calendar i.e. due on 1st will be collected on 3rd, due on 2nd will be collected on 4th, due on 3rd will be collected on 5th, due on 4th will be collected on 6th January.

Glengorm recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25/26th December and 1st/2nd January

Tiree

Refuse collections due on 1st January will instead be collected on 3rd January

Refuse collections due on 2nd January will instead be collected on 4th January

Gott Bay recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January

Information is also available from the Council website and from your local office.
To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Comhairle Earra - Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



DIRECT FROM IRELAND THE HIT SHOW

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY TRIBUTE SHOW

ALAN JACKSON, DON WILLIAMS, GEORGE JONES, JOHNNY CASH, MERLE HAGGARD, DOLLY PARTON, KENNY ROGERS, PATSY CLINE

FRIDAY 19TH JAN 2018
THE CORAN HALLS, OBAN
DOORS 7.00PM | SHOW STARTS AT 7.30PM
TICKETS £19.50
BOX OFFICE 01631 567333

Review of the year

July

Tributes paid to 'precious' Kayla

THERE was an outpouring of grief following the tragic death of eight-year-old Kayla MacDonald who died following an incident near Benderloch.

People who knew Kayla spoke out about her beauty, her kindness and the joy it was to be in her company both as a pupil at school and as a childhood friend.

Gaelic singer and songwriter Claire Jordan, who was Kayla's teacher at Rockfield Gaelic-medium unit in Oban, wrote a poetic tribute to Kayla, entitled *Sleep Tight, Little Angel*.

*Beautiful little fair-haired girl
Full of life, joy and fun,
Personality as big as the mountain,*

*You were so generous and kind.
Eyes bright as the stars,
Hair locks like the golden sun
Great, joyful smiles;
Sleep peacefully, quiet now, loved one.*

*We are sad without you,
Your passing has wounded us,
Fly so high now, loved one,
As high as the birds.*

*You are now a star
High up in the sky,*



Kayla MacDonald was pictured at the Tíre Show with her dad Alastair 'Ettie' and her brother Ruairidh.

*Heaven has gained another angel.
It is hard for us to believe it.
There are no words at all*

*That we can say,
But you shall be in our thoughts,
Eternally – good night.
Sleep tight, little angel.*



Lord Lieutenant Patrick Stewart, left, opened the new premises, along with Hope Kitchen trustee Ken Oxland, Stuart Chalmers, chairman, and manager Lorraine MacCormick.

Hope Kitchen moves into new premises

AN OBAN charity that helps to feed up to 45 people each day will be able to do even more from its new premises on 2 Soroba Road.

Hope Kitchen, which was nominated for Scottish charity of the year, upgraded because of a need for more space.

The refurbished building, titled New Hope, was officially opened last week by the Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute, Patrick Stewart, who said: 'We have read a lot about the project and how it blossomed.'

'Unfortunately, that means there is a need to be met. It is clear from the number of people here today that this is a great success in Oban.'

Jamie Livingstone, a local poet who runs writing classes in Hope, performed at the opening event, as did fan-favourites K9 Kev, Rory O'B and Ruairidh Galbraith.

Hope Kitchen's manager, Lorraine MacCormick, said: 'It's been amazing. It's been a journey, but we are finally here.'

'We are so grateful to everyone who has helped us because so many people have come in.'

'Some of the service users have been in helping and our volunteers have been excellent. Local tradesmen have given us work free – people have been so good.'

Stuart Chalmers, chairman of Hope, said: 'I would like to men-

tion the way that the community has helped us achieve this. This was a lot of work to do and we had a lot of tradesmen giving up their work freely to do this. It's great the community comes together in a time of need.'

Catriona Petit, who has helped with the transformation, added: 'It's a massive transformation to the building. We have had hundreds of volunteer hours to get to this point.'

'We want this to be somewhere where people feel valued. I find it a real privilege to be part of this experience.'

Oban High School pupils Alik Aleynik and Silke Burrows received a special thanks at the opening ceremony.

Sheriff says Oban 'perfect town to live in'

THERE was a new sheriff in town in July.

Patrick Hughes, 40, was officially inducted into his new role on Wednesday July 5, taking over from Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC who retired.

Dozens of people made their way to the Oban court for the ceremony – Sheriff principal Duncan Murray, procurator fiscal Laura Mundell, and Karen MacAllister of Oban Faculty of Solicitors attended the event and were full of praise for Sheriff Hughes' appointment.

Mr Hughes, who grew up in Irvine, is a graduate of the University of Strathclyde and became a procurator fiscal deputy in 2004, when he qualified as a solicitor. He worked in this role for four years before being promoted in 2008 to senior procurator fiscal deputy.

Sheriff Hughes, who has also been a part-time tutor at the University of Strathclyde, spent



From left to right: Sheriff Principal Duncan Murray, Sheriff Patrick Hughes and Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute Patrick Stewart.

some time as the acting head of the wildlife and environmental crime unit in 2014.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* about his new role, he said: 'I think it is a great honour. It's a privilege and I will do everything I can to ensure I am worthy of it.'

Sheriff Hughes' first impression of his new home was also a positive one. He said: 'I am extremely taken with Oban. It is the perfect town to live in. It's compact, full of natural beauty and I am impressed with what a busy main street it has.'

August

Oban High School Pipe Band are best in country



The hard work and determination of Oban High School Pipe Band paid off when they won twice at the Scottish Championships. Led by Pipe Major Angus MacColl, who helped form the band in 2005, they won the Novice Juvenile A and B grades. The youngsters didn't let the accolades go to their heads as they were back out performing for tourists in Station Square a week later.

Rockfield lands £1M windfall

OBAN Communities Trust has been awarded £946,000 by the Big Lottery Fund to help develop Oban's former Rockfield School as a community and cultural hub known as the Rockfield Centre.

Once completed, the centre will feature performance, exhibition and workshop spaces for arts and heritage projects, an enterprise centre including a bakery, training canteen, and hot-desking and co-working facilities.

Chairman Gordon McNab hailed the grant as a 'huge vote of confidence' and 'a big step forward' to achieving their £2.6 million target 'to open the doors of the main building and turn the Rockfield Centre vision into reality' by 2020.

Talking about the aims of the project, Mr McNab said: 'The Rockfield Centre will be a place where people belong and will be welcome. This will bring hope. This is why it started.'

On behalf of the board, Mr McNab thanked everyone for having faith in the project, and seeing its benefit for Oban and Argyll.

In particular, he thanked project facilitator Eleanor MacKinnon. 'Without her, we would not be getting this money,' he said. 'We cannot thank her enough.'

Ms MacKinnon said: 'This is a complete endorsement of all the hard work the community has put in. This is a third of the funding for the capital works, but it means we can get up and running.'



Celebrating the windfall are Rhona Dougall, Solveig Craig, Gordon McNab and Mhairi Ross, with Jamie Yates and Eleanor MacKinnon.

September

Oban bay pontoons officially open for business

THE OBAN bay pontoons were officially opened and it is estimated that they will generate a £25 million boost for the area, according to Argyll and Bute Council's provost.

In the opening ceremony, which was kicked off by provost Len Scoullar, he said it would generate £25 million over the next 20 years.

'Today is about focusing on what the facility will achieve for Oban and the surrounding area,' he told the crowd.

'Conservative estimates indicate a £25 million boost to the local economy over the next 20 years. I am no banker, but I would say that more than justifies the £1.5 million that has been spent.'

'This new step-ashore facility is an easy access marine gateway into one of Argyll and Bute's most exciting and vibrant towns.'

Oban High School Pipe Band were also on hand to entertain the crowd.

Two band members, Marley



Marley Squire, Cathy MacGregor, Mairi Malloy and Innes Munro all helped to cut the ribbon as the pontoons are officially opened.

17_t36pontoons01

Squire and Innes Munro, joined Cathy MacGregor and Mairi Malloy as they cut the ribbon to officially open the

pontoons. Elaine Robertson, councillor for Oban and Lorn, said: 'This fabulous new pontoon development is something we have

been looking forward to for many, many years. Depending on who you speak to it ranges between 10 and 40.'

Happy couple 'hitch' a lift on their own boat



There was drama aboard Oban lifeboat this month ... but not involving a rescue at sea. Saturday September 9 was a historic day for the volunteer crew as it was the first time two of the crew were married – to each other. A blue yacht departed the North Pier pontoons and was escorted across the bay to Dungallan Park by Oban lifeboat Mora Edith MacDonald. The yacht was carrying Oban RNLI crew member and press officer Leonie Woolf to her wedding. Upon arrival at the pontoons, an RNLI guard of honour was waiting to line the path to her marriage to fellow RNLI crew member and deputy mechanic Andrew Mead.

Review of the year

October

Tobermory's Janet wins Mòd award

A FORMER maths teacher from Tobermory was named this year's winner of the prestigious Gaelic Ambassador of the Year award at the Lochaber Mòd.

Janet MacDonald of Tobermory was presented with her award by Deputy First Minister John Swinney at a reception in Fort William on October 13.

The award is in honour of her dedication to Gaelic language and culture.

Janet told *The Oban Times* she was very surprised when she was told she had won the award: 'I was speechless; really I'm not kidding. I'm very grateful to receive this award. It's fantastic to be in such great company and to be recognised for something which is a true passion of mine is amazing.'

John Morrison, chief executive of An Comunn Gàidhealach, said: 'Janet MacDonald has dedicated her life to the Gaelic cause and we are delighted to



President of An Comunn Gàidhealach Allan Campbell, with Janet MacDonald and Deputy First Minister John Swinney. JP_MOD42jp1

see her awarded the prestigious Gaelic Ambassador of the Year award by the Scottish Government.

'Her contribution to the Gaelic cause through education,

performance and in helping the organisation of local and national Mòds has made her a real influence for Scottish Gaels of all ages. Her impact has been profound.'

Aspiring Oban DJ has the crowd on their feet

AN OBAN DJ with Down's Syndrome has been booked by a local promoter after playing his first gig on Sunday.

Christopher Knowles, 39, who goes by the stage name DJ Wolf, played his first live performance in the Lorne in Oban on Sunday night.

The event was organised as part of a BBC television programme called *The Country Council*.

The three-part series follows the work of council staff in Argyll and Bute as they help vulnerable people in the community.

And because of Christopher's performance, a local promoter has booked him on October 28 for the Regent Hotel's Hallowe'en special, kicking off at 9pm.

Tony Howlett, who organises the Relentless events, said: 'I am going to get him a gig. He is that good. I thought he was



From left to right, Stephen Kirkwood, Christopher Knowles, Steven Gallonie and Jack Dyer. 17_141DJWolf02

amazing. His fixing is unbelievable. It's good for him and good for the town.'

Skapade Studios, based in Dumbarton, were on hand to help Christopher on the night.

Skapade run community-based projects and they trained the Oban man as he

prepared for his big night.

Steven Gallonie of Skapade said: 'I thought it went brilliantly. Jack Dyer assisted him a little, but he was pretty much mixing it on his own. His track selection was out of this world - it's a mixture of house, trance and some techno.'

'For a short space of time, he has done really well. He has had the opportunity to play alongside Stephen Kirkwood, who has travelled around Europe playing.'

Stephen, who pioneered Skapade, was playing with the German Grammy Award-winning DJ Paul Van Dyke a couple of weeks ago - and he wanted to give Christopher a flavour of that. 'I'd like to give an extended thanks to Jack Dyer,' Stephen added.

A series producer at Firecracker Films, which is overseeing the BBC Scotland series, said: '[Christopher] has previously been a professional dancer, but ill health meant giving it up.'

'[A] specialist occupational therapist from the adult learning disability team has been working with Christopher to give him a new direction and realise his dreams.'

November



Taynuilt mum Laura earns degree of success

TAYNUILT mum-of-four Laura Cumming was among 664 students who had their degrees conferred at the Open University (OU) degree ceremony at Edinburgh's Usher Hall on Saturday October 28.

Laura, 29, received her Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in psychology while raising four children and struggling with anxiety and depression.

Two of her pregnancies were during her degree. She chose the OU so she wouldn't have to leave home.

A psychologist working with her stepson inspired her to study the subject and she was spurred on by her family. Proud children Orrin and Orla also attended the

ceremony with their mum. Laura said: 'I wanted my children to understand that right now I can't go to work, but I wanted them to see mum was doing something, getting somewhere. It shows my children that no matter what life throws at you, you are always able to better yourself and the OU has really done that for me.'

Susan Stewart, director of the OU in Scotland, said: 'Our students come from all kinds of backgrounds and they study for lots of different reasons, but what they all have in common is a fierce desire to fit learning into their busy lives.'

'Laura is a fantastic example of that commitment and dedication and I'm extremely proud of her.'

Volunteers delight as Dove Centre opens



Volunteers and centre users enjoy a cup of tea at the new facility on Stevenson Street, Oban, which is open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

FRIENDS of Oban Hospice were delighted to open the new Dove Centre on Stevenson Street on Wednesday following many years of fundraising.

The new venture is based on the work of the Maggie's Centres, which provide support for people with life-limiting conditions such as cancer.

The Dove Centre coordinator, Peter Darling, said they had been inundated with people wanting to help decorate the building.

He added: 'There is so much goodwill. Volunteers have been giving up a lot of their spare time,' he said. 'So many people have been coming forward.'

Local companies, including electricians, fitters, plumbers and painters, had donated staff

time to renovate the interior of the building, formerly the offices of Argyll Training before it closed last year.

One director, Anne May, said: 'It has a great warm feeling of welcome.'

Chairman David Entwistle added: 'Oban Hospice wants to extend a big thank you to all the local people, individuals, tradespeople and businesses who have supported Oban Hospice Ltd and the Friends of Oban Hospice in the past and who continue to support us.'

'The number of tradespeople who have given their time and sometimes their materials free of charge to completely refurbish the Dove Centre has been overwhelming.'

'The list is too long to name

them all here, but Oban Hospice and the Dove Centre are deeply grateful to them.'

The centre will offer practical and emotional support and information. It will also provide access to community services, advocacy and benefits advice. Complementary therapies, specialist massage for people with cancer and group activities will be on offer, too.

Added to this, family and bereavement support will be available.

People can also drop in for a cup of tea and a bletcher at any time, and the Dove Centre will be open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday from today (Thursday November 16).

Contact the centre on 01631 561315.

Tesco staff raise £5,600 on behalf of tot Harris

STAFF at Tesco Oban have raised £5,600 so far for a charity that helps children suffering from cancer.

The money was raised for CLIC Sargent on behalf of two-year-old Harris McGougan, from Dunbeg.

Karen Kelso and Maureen Ford helped to organise the fundraiser after Harris was diagnosed with leukemia.

While he is being treated in Glasgow, he and his family have been staying in a house run by CLIC Sargent, so the fundraiser was a way to give something back. The money was generated over the weekend with a race night being held on Friday at Glencairn Golf Club, which raised around £2,000.

Saturday saw musicians,

beauticians and Disney characters entertain shoppers, raising the remainder

of the money. The all-day event featured leg waxing, music, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, as well as glitter make-up and Queen Elsa.

The organisers were 'overwhelmed' by the support.

Karen said: 'It was really great. We do lots of fundraisers, but it's different when it's local.'

Maureen said: 'It's good, but it's exhausting right enough. You are worried that people won't turn up. But they came and it was a great day.'



December

Connel man Billy delighted to be home with family



'FORGET Harry and Meghan, we will have the wedding of the year,' said Yvonne MacHugh, fiancée of Billy Irving.

She was speaking after Connel man Billy touched down in Glasgow Airport following his release from prison in India.

And Billy this week singled out for praise the countless people in Argyll and Kintyre who supported the campaign to win his freedom.

He said: 'There are far too many people to thank or list individually but I would like to thank everyone in Campbeltown and Oban for the fundraisers and continuous support from day one.'

Billy also fired a broadside at the British Government, saying: 'I served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland, putting my life on the line. I don't ever regret it and was proud to do so. But

I feel disgusted and betrayed that my government doesn't fight for its citizens in the face of injustice and breaches of basic human rights.'

'The British people have been fantastic, sending us letters of support and food parcels. But the government let us down badly - I can never forgive them.'

The 37-year-old said this week: 'I have had the most wonderful few days at home spending quality time with William and Yvonne and seeing what an incredible funny and bright wee man I have.'

'I believe I wouldn't be home today if it wasn't for all the incredible support and help you have all given me and I can't put into words how much I want to thank you all.'

'Hopefully, now I can rebuild my life, make up for all the lost time with Yvonne and William, and I'll see you all at our wedding very soon.'

Tree-mendous fun at festival



So many Christmas trees! One-year-old Mhàiri Johnston of Cladich was spellbound by all the colour and lights when she was taken along to the Christmas tree festival at St Conan's Kirk, Lochawe, on Saturday by her mum Holly Ford and auntie Cara Johnston.

For more pictures and a full report, turn to page three.

Photograph: Joanne Simms.



Is it time to choose an Independent school?

An experience that will last a lifetime

INDEPENDENT education is one of the most important decisions you will make for your family.

Where and what kind of home you buy and choosing your career path are the only family decisions you will make which will be bigger than whether to take your child out of main stream public education and into the fee-paying independent sector.

There are as many reasons for independent education as there are children; perhaps it is a family tradition. It could be that you know your career is going to lead to relocation after relocation and boarding is the best way to provide the stability needed during vital times in your children's education.

No matter how excellent a state school might be, it will always have a 'one-size-fits-all' approach towards some aspects of school life. This is fine for most of the time but if, for some reason, your son or daughter

is the one who is finding it hard to make that fit you cannot help but wonder if they would be better off in the independent sector.

Is your child just not thriving? Are there areas where they need extra help or is it that they are not being stretched enough to realise their full potential.

Would they benefit from the smaller class sizes that the independents offer? This can often be a key point for children from remote or rural areas like the West Highlands who have attended state primary schools with small class sizes who find themselves overwhelmed by the size of secondary schools.

With state school budgets being ever tightened do the extra-curricular activities and enhanced pastoral care of the independent sector look like money well spent in proving for you child's future?

The last 50 years have seen an unprecedented rise in consumer culture with families near brain-washed into believing that buying bigger, better, faster, newer is best. We are moving away from this mindset and a realisation is dawning that experience, not possessions, is what binds us and creates stronger, happier families. Would your children benefit from experiencing independent education?



Independent education IS affordable

PERHAPS one of the biggest mistakes people make about private education is that they cannot afford it and never even consider the idea. They couldn't be more wrong.

The golden rule is that it is never too early to start planning.

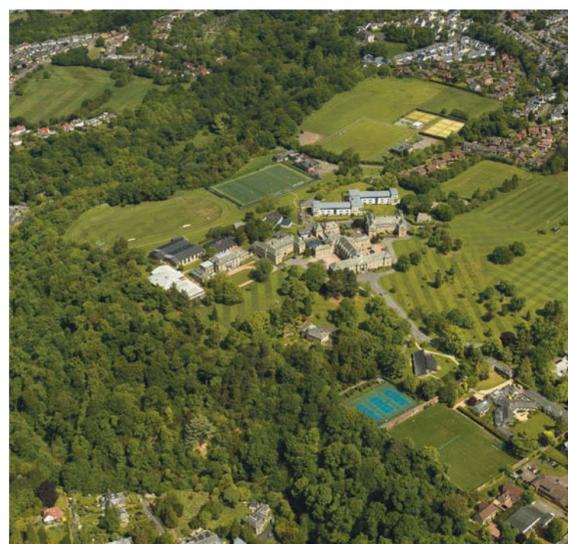
Good financial advice, prudence, plus parents and grandparents

working together over savings and any inheritance all make independent education achievable.

At least £349 million is given annually in fee assistance in the independent education sector in Scotland; with just under 27 per cent of all pupils receiving some form of assistance. To date, Scotland has

treated private schools as charities in terms of business rates, and the schools return this in the form of pro bono work through bursaries and scholarships for pupils and allowing local communities to use their facilities.

This year's Scottish budget is debating this issue.



Merchiston Edinburgh

Merchiston is the only boys' independent boarding school in Scotland, offers the English curriculum, and has a global, outward-looking dimension. The School takes pride in specialising in the education of boys and preparing them for the world, developing aspirational, and sensitive, yet gentle-men! Think about a wonderfully caring and nurturing family environment, where boys learn to like learning more.

With an ethos based on traditional values, Merchiston encourages self-reliance and independence, as well as respect for and tolerance of others. The main objective is to motivate pupils to try their hardest and to strive to achieve the highest levels possible in all areas – firstly academic, then cultural, sporting, leadership, and simply living together as part of a community.

Another aspect of the boys-only philosophy is that time is regularly set aside to meet girls from our sister schools. This allows the boys to focus on study in school time, but also to have plenty of opportunities to socialize and make friends through curricular, co-curricular, and social links.

Outstanding off the field...*

- 47% of pupils achieved A*/A grades at A Level
- 82% of pupils gained places at their first or second choice university
- 64% of pupils went to UK Russell Group Universities, Bath, St Andrews and leading international institutions
- 92% A*/A/B pass rate in Further Mathematics at A Level
- SAT support clinics for applicants for American Universities held weekly. Students have gained admission to Ivy League Universities, such as Cornell and Brown
- 62% of pupils achieved A*/A grades at GCSE
- 18 pupils achieved nine or more A*/A GCSE grades
- Best Head of Public School (runner-up), Tatler School Guide 2015 and 2018
- Gradual progression to secondary teaching from Primary six
- Full boarding with a varied weekend activity programme specifically suited to age and stage

* Academic Results 2016/17

And on the field...

- No.1 UK Junior Ranking Golf School (ISGA, 2014/15, 2015/16 & 2016/17)
- No.2 UK Senior Golf School (ISGA, as of November 2017)
- No.2 World Tennis School (ISF, 2017)
- No.2 UK Tennis School (LTA, 2017)
- Representation in all of the 2017/18 Scottish National Rugby Teams
- In 2016/17, 89% of all pupils, from 7-18, represented the School in sport.
- In 2016/17, there were 73 different teams, of all abilities, playing competitive fixtures across 16 sports: a total of 539 fixtures.
- Wide range of sports available, such as athletics, cricket and hockey, suitable for boys of all abilities

Personal tours and tasters available all year.

A range of scholarships are available at 10+. Mean-tested financial assistance may be available subject to application.



MERCHISTON STORY

EVERY BOY IS AN INDIVIDUAL. EVERY BOY HAS A STORY. LET US SHAPE HIS FUTURE STORY.

Open Day - Saturday 3 February Open Evening - Thursday 8 March

MERCHISTON EDINBURGH | Boys first



A BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS AGED 7-18

MERCHISTON.CO.UK admissions@merchiston.co.uk 0131 312 2201

Recognised by the Inland Revenue as a Charity, number SC016580

Did you know?

- There are just fewer than 30,000 pupils in 73 independent schools in Scotland. That is 4.1 per cent of pupils nationwide
- Scotland has 19 mainstream boarding schools with 3,072 pupils and nearly half, 46.5 per cent, are from overseas. That is the equivalent to the Scottish economy of more than £30million in exports
- The Scottish Council of Independent Schools has 73 members; 52 are main stream, 21 offer additional support. Boarding schools account for 19 of them
- Within the senior independent schools 93 per cent of pupils who sat Highers passed.

Find out more

THE schools and services featured here are waiting to hear from you and provide you with all the information you need to make this important choice. The website of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools is a good place to start. Visit www.scis.org.uk.



• Statistics quoted in this advertising feature come from the Scottish Council of Independent Schools annual survey, 2016.

Strathallan School



Where learning comes to life

Welcome to our world

Our aim at Strathallan is to expand our pupils' horizons and broaden their experiences, nurturing their skills and talents in a positive, supportive environment that welcomes young people, boarders and day alike, from the UK and all over the world.

GENERAL INFORMATION MORNING
10th March 2018

Welcoming boys and girls aged 9 to 18 years

Scholarship Dates
Junior 27th January
Third Form 26th February - 1st March

Bursaries also available

Call 01738 815003 to register or visit strathallan.co.uk



STRATHALLAN SCHOOL

Opportunities for all to excel

Welcome to our world

Set in 153 acres of magnificent rural Perthshire, yet easily accessible from elsewhere in Scotland, Strathallan School is an outstanding place to learn with some of the finest facilities of any school in Scotland.

The School has a great blend of local, national and international pupils and celebrates the different interests and cultures our international pupils bring.

Where learning comes to life

As well as achieving exceptional academic standards, we foster a lifelong enjoyment of learning. Our highly committed teachers are also involved in sports coaching and other activities and the bonds built outside the classroom have profound educational benefits. It's no surprise that many of our pupils move

on to top universities like Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh.

Where everyone's involved in the life of the school

More than 60% of our pupils are boarders so there's always a lot going on. That's a big advantage for day pupils who stay well into the evening and are fully involved in the myriad of activities available.

Where talent turns to achievement

Champions - Strathallan's 1st XV made history winning the U18 Scottish Rugby Schools' Cup for the first time. The nurturing environment and comprehensive development programme created by our Director of Rugby and the coaches has put Strathallan firmly on the map as one of the top development schools for rugby in Scotland.

All pupils regularly take part in a variety of sports. We also run a comprehensive programme for elite athletes.

In the Expressive Arts, there are many opportunities to develop creative talents in a variety of musical ensembles, in our theatre and in our state-of-the-art dance and drama studio.

Where belonging is forever

Strathallan provides an exceptional educational experience for boys and girls aged 9 to 18. It's a school where effort is rewarded and where pupils are given the time and encouragement to grow into capable, confident young men and women who are ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

Interested in being part of our world?

Why not come along and meet the pupils, staff and parents at our next Information Morning, register now at strathallan.co.uk



Inspiring Potential

Lomond School
Helensburgh

Lomond School invites applications for August 2018 entry from P1 to S6.

If you would like to visit the school and see what Lomond has to offer or find out more about the application process, please contact the Admissions Office.

Application deadline: 12th January 2018

10 Stafford Street, Helensburgh G84 9JX | Phone: +44 (0)1436 672476
e-mail: admissions@lomondschool.com | lomondschool.com

Lomond School – A Great Place to Live and Learn

'At all stages of the school, children and young people are highly motivated and actively involved in their learning. They are respectful, hard-working and respond very well to the overall high-quality learning experiences'. Education Scotland

Located in the picturesque coastal town of Helensburgh with its safe community environment and excellent transport links, Lomond School has a long tradition of boarders from the West Highlands and Islands.

Lomond offers a wide-ranging curriculum including eight National Fives as S3/S4 and the traditional five Highers in S5. Extracurricular activities include hockey, rugby, sailing, skiing and canoeing. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is another significant feature and Lomond has enjoyed great success carrying out expeditions both locally and abroad.

Boarders at Lomond benefit from excellent facilities with the new Burnbrae boarding house, built in 2003, offering comfortable lounges, a gym and mostly twin en-suite study bedrooms. Lomond also allows male and female siblings the opportunity to live together in the same boarding house and families are also offered the flexibility of weekly boarding.

Lomond School Principal, Johanna Urquhart said: 'Here at Lomond we pride ourselves on taking an individual approach to the education and care of each and every pupil. Boarding provides a particularly rewarding experience thanks to our family ethos, excellent facilities and professional, dedicated staff.'

Families interested in finding out more about the admissions process, booking a tour or arranging a taster session can contact our admissions office: admissions@lomondschool.com



Kilgraston is a leading Catholic boarding and day school for girls aged 5-18.

Offering day and boarding education, Kilgraston has something to inspire every young woman. We are a school with traditional values but with a modern and forward-looking perspective on education. Education is not just about exam success; developing interest and talents, nurturing an understanding of different cultures, and emphasising our personal responsibility as global citizens are vital. As such, a Kilgraston girl benefits from a wealth of opportunities to extend and enrich her educational experience. We offer over 50 extra-curricular activities and enjoy modern, state of the art facilities including a Science Centre, Sixth Form Study Centre, excellent boarding accommodation, 25m swimming pool, all-weather astro-turf pitches and Scotland's only school equestrian centre.

Having been named 'top performing independent school for Advanced Highers' by best-schools.co.uk in 2015, Kilgraston girls routinely achieve outstanding sets of results. At Advanced Higher, 90.5% of grades were A-B against a national average of 59.3%. In 2018, 64% of girls are applying to study a STEM undergraduate course and in 2017, 100% of girls were accepted into their choice of university. Kilgraston has an exceptional reputation for girls gaining entry into top Scottish universities.

When Kilgraston girls leave us to go on to further studies, we are certain that they will continue to channel their talents and become leaders for tomorrow. Our girls leave Kilgraston with an embedded sense of individualism, confidence, humility and a desire to achieve the very best she can, in her own chosen field. Our girls don't compromise on success, they inspire it.

You are invited to join us at our Open Day on Saturday February 3, 2018 from 11am-2pm. The staff and pupils would be delighted to meet you and show you our outstanding facilities. Please do let us know you are coming so that we can have your personalised welcome pack ready for your arrival.

For further information or to book a visit, please contact Mrs Amanda Johnstone: admissions@kilgraston.com | 01738 815523



KILGRASTON
JUNIOR YEARS · SENIOR · SIXTH FORM

A leading independent boarding and day school for girls aged 5 - 18



Open Day
3rd February 2018
11am - 2pm

admissions@kilgraston.com
Kilgraston School, Bridge of Eam, Perth, PH2 9BQ
01738 812 257

More than good grades.



Co-educational day, weekly and full boarding; 5 to 18 years

Arrange a visit or find out more:
T: 01259 742511 | E: registrar@dollaracademy.org.uk

Entrance assessments: Sat 27 Jan 2018
Means-tested bursaries available
Dollar FK14 7DU www.dollaracademy.org.uk



The Governors of Dollar Academy Trust is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC009888

Dollar Academy

As Dollar prepares to launch its bicentenary year in June 2018, it remains one of Scotland's best performing independent schools, highly regarded by parents.

Dollar was recently named *The Sunday Times* Scottish Independent Secondary School of the Year, having moved up the academic league tables* to third in Scotland. Pupils study the Scottish curriculum and benefit from the widest choice of Highers anywhere in the country. In 2017, pupils set a new school record with a 98% pass rate at Higher level and almost a third of the year group achieved five or more A-grades. Results at National 5 level were just as excellent, with an A-grade pass rate of 72.5%.

The 70-plus activities cater for all interests and abilities – from sport and the arts to academic clubs, volunteering, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Combined Cadet Force and world championship-winning pipe band. And high-level sports coaching has seen many pupils go on to compete at national and international levels.

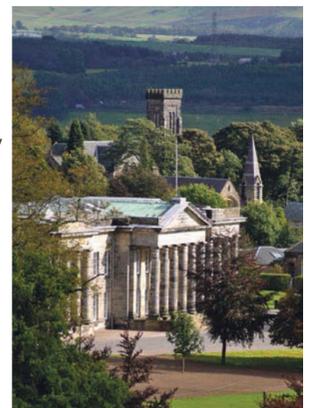
The Care Inspectorate describes the school as having a 'sector-leading' standard of care for its boarders. The focus is on creating a home-from-home environment with small family-style boarding houses. Tutors help with homework and boarders enjoy excellent campus facilities and a wide choice of activities in the evenings and at weekends. And with several hundred day pupils living locally, they have a wide circle of friends both in and out of the boarding house.

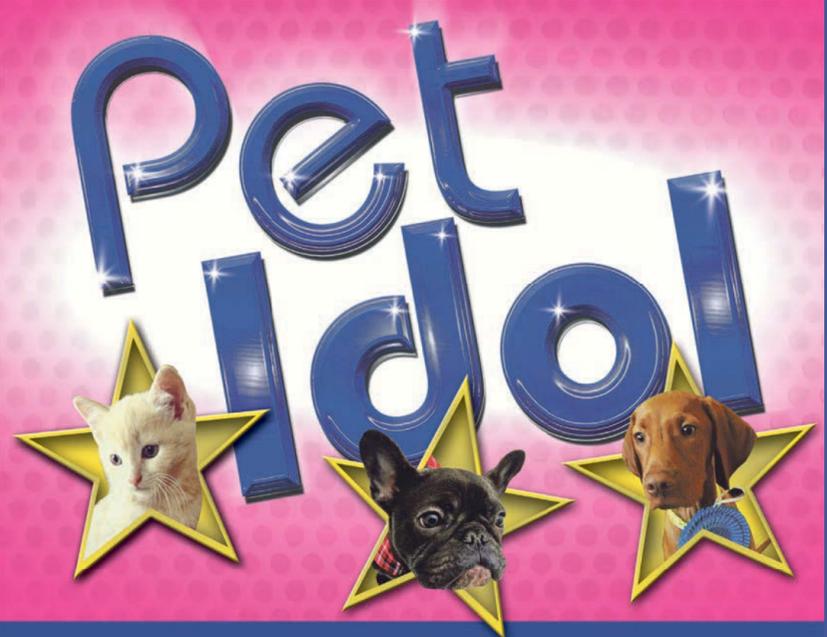
Dollar is in a uniquely stunning location and the strong sense of community amongst pupils is one of the great strengths of the school.

*The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2018

To arrange a visit or for more information:

E: registrar@dollaracademy.org.uk
T: 01259 742511





Last chance to vote for your FINALISTS!

014



Angus Cat
Dunstaffnage, Oban

029



Marni Jack Russell Terrier
Caol, Fort William

037



Max Cat
Lochgilphead

038



Scooby-Doo Dog
Inveraray

068



Mr Bigglez Staffordshire Bull Terrier
Bowmore, Isle of Islay

072



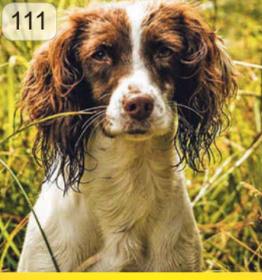
Daniel Goldfish
Lochgilphead

073



Ozzy Dog
Oban

111



Meg Dog
Kilmichael Glassary, Lochgilphead

125



Cooper Cavachon
Oban

127



Bracken Boxer
Fort William

207



Max Cheviot tup lamb
Oban

220



Archie Lhasa Apso
Oban

270



Grayson Siberian kitten
Lochgilphead

277



Bear Dog
North Connel

280



Hamish Cockapoo
Tarbert

282



Keira Boxer/Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross
Oban

328



Isla Dog
Oban

329



Daisy Jack Russell/Bichon Frise cross
Campbeltown

332



Blue Dog
Oban

348



Finn Cockapoo
Campbeltown

Time to vote for your TOP TEN!

The votes just keep pouring in... We have been completely overwhelmed by the sheer volume of votes since we launched Pet Idol. Our readers truly love their pets.

We have now reached the top 20 and voting is now open for our final ten. Because of the Christmas festivities and the pressure on the postal service we will allow votes to be cast into the new year.

The closing date for entries is 10am on Monday 8th January and a voting coupon will appear in every issue between now and then.

VOTING COUPON

Round 4

I would like to vote for:

Pet number*:

Pet's name:

Please post to Wyvex Media, Pet Idol VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or votes can also be handed in to our offices in Oban, Fort William, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

*Pet number must be supplied. This can be found at the top left of each pet photograph. Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted and will not count as one vote. You may send in multiple voting coupons in one envelope. Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 8th January.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times argyllshire advertiser campbeltown courier

Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 8th January.

You can vote for as many pets as many times as you like. Only one pet can be voted for on each voting form. Just make sure you use the number quoted on the pet's photograph when voting. Photocopied coupons will not be accepted. One coupon counts as one vote. We will also accept multiple vote coupons in one envelope. Good luck to the 20 hopefuls.

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Scots farmers on way to Oxford

TWO YOUNG farmers have won an NFU Scotland letter-writing competition and are on their way to the prestigious Oxford Farming Conference, currently under way (January 3 to 5) at Oxford University.

Chaired this year by Angus agri-businesswoman Caroline Millar, Oxford is an event that has grown in stature with a progressive programme of debates and events that captures the innovation and challenges faced by the sector.

The theme this year is 'Embracing Change' - a topic that chimes with NFU Scotland's own series of documents on Brexit, entitled 'CHANGE'.

The winners, in return for their conference ticket, travel expenses and accommodation, wrote a 300-word letter outlining what the opportunity to attend Oxford would mean to them for the Union's membership magazine *Scottish Farming Leader* and committed



to speaking at four NFUS regional events in the coming year.

From a bulging postbag, the winners were Jen Craig from Lanarkshire and Ben McClymont from Dumfriesshire.

Jen is chairwoman of NFU Scotland's Clydesdale branch, a member of Forth and Clyde regional board and an invitee to the union's less favoured areas committee.

Ben and Jen won the opportunity to attend the Oxford conference.

Jen also sits on the union's new generation group.

Ben was brought up on the SRUC dairy research unit at Crichton Royal near Dumfries, is completing his BSc (Hons) in Agriculture and is very active in the Scottish Young Farmers movement.

Jen Craig said: 'I got involved with NFU Scotland about three years ago and it's been a fantastic experience as well as a massive learning opportunity.'

'The number of incredibly passionate and knowledgeable people I have met has been brilliant.'

'To be able to attend the Oxford Farming Conference with NFUS is a fantastic opportunity to gain more knowledge and meet more people as a young farmer.'

'During these very uncertain, yet potentially exciting times for our industry, attending Oxford will widen my knowledge and allow me to bring that back home - not just to my business but to my roles within the organisation.'

Gary Mitchell, NFU Scotland Vice President who will attend the Oxford Farming Conference with Ben and Jen, said: 'The two winners are hugely enthusiastic about the future of farming. They know that we all need to change and adapt to circumstances.'

'The future for our industry is bright. If we are to be the masters of our own destiny, it is up to us to change how the supply chain operates and to show the public the benefits that they receive from farming in our country.'

'The Oxford Farming Conference is a great opportunity to hear what others are doing, share ideas and to help shape the future.'

SCF back Uist call for goose management

THE SCOTTISH Crofting Federation (SCF) Board and Council endorsed support for Uist crofters in their campaign for the Scottish Government to fund reduction of wild geese which are devastating naturally sensitive machair.

'At a recent meeting of the SCF's board of directors and our advisory council of representatives, it was unanimously agreed that SCF is 100 per cent behind the Uist crofters in their struggle to get meaningful support from the Scottish Government to reduce the wild geese that plague them,' said SCF chairman Russell Smith.

'It is clear from crofters' comments that not only is 'the joy gone from crofting' due to goose damage, but that if nothing is done to control goose numbers, crofting that is particular to the Uists will end within five years, with the consequent irrecoverable loss to the acclaimed machair ecology.'

David Muir, secretary of the SCF Uist and Barra branch, added: 'We have been told that the £10,000 'challenge fund' could be increased, but we have yet to see the promised action plan and a realistic figure to fund the reduction of goose numbers.'

'£10,000 split between all the islands involved in the scheme, or for Uist alone, simply is nowhere near enough to halt the explosion in goose numbers and the resulting devastation.'

NFUS to build on 2017 positives for women in farming

FOLLOWING a successful year of increased engagement with women in agriculture (WIA), NFU Scotland is looking to build with the aim of further regional groups, more women at general meetings and improved regional contacts for women.

This last year has seen two highly successful regional WIA events, in Argyll and the Islands and Dumfries and Galloway.

These universally well received events have been an excellent start in getting more

women in agriculture involved with the union and its aim is to start more regional groups in 2018.

NFU Scotland President Andrew McCornick, who sits on the Scottish Government's Women in Agriculture taskforce, said: 'Groups and events which encourage women in our industry, many of whom would not usually attend our meetings, are vital to the proper representation of all our members.'

'We need to encourage as many women to come forward

and be as active as possible to address the under-representation in the union at the moment.'

'I believe that the best way to improve representation is to start at a local and regional level and build from there.'

'We are starting to see women come forward to get involved with NFUS and we are going to work with them in 2018 and beyond.'

'Ultimately, I want to see more women progress through the union and onto our committees and our board.'

Union disappointed as European Arla next to drop milk prices

NFU SCOTLAND'S fears the huge milk price cut from dairy giant Muller would see others follow suit have been realised, with Arla to cut its price this month.

The net 1.3p per litre cut for Arla suppliers would have been more had it not been for a beneficial movement in the exchange rate and benefits from Arla's own bonus scheme for producers.

Farmer-owned First Milk is holding its price for January, NFU Scotland vice president

Gary Mitchell, a dairy farmer in Stranraer, said: 'Yesterday's announcement from Arla was disappointing and the milk price benefits that both currency exchange and the new ArlaGaarden farm assurance initiative should have been eradicating in one fell swoop.'

'Disappointed' 'Like our colleagues at NFU, we are deeply disappointed at the clamour from some commentators to talk down the dairy market, encouraging price

volatility at a time when stability and balance must be sought. It is crucial that we make our UK dairy industry sustainable for the long term especially as we get nearer Brexit.'

'There is a real need for a transparent supply chain that can accommodate a margin for producer, processor and retailer and we need clear signals from our processors and co-ops that all efforts are being made to ensure milk prices reflect true markets rather than those of fantasy 'futures' markets.'

Around the markets

Stirling, United Auctions (Thursday December 28, 2017) sold 4,661 prime sheep comprising 3,288 lambs averaging 190.5ppk and 1,373 ewes and rams. Lambs (3288) Errol Enterprises (Tex) £114; Doune Farms (BTex) £110; Drummie (X) £100; Southfield (Suff) £98; Sharry (X) £97; Westwood (Chev) £95; Eastmill (BF) £92. Lambs (3288) Berrydyke (BTex) 229p; West Lethams (Tex) 228p; East Bracklenn (X) 213p; Merryhill (Suff) 203p; Ardachearnmor (Chev) 201p; Easter Craigduckie (Char) 192p; Eastmill (BF) 188p. Ewes (1373)- Hill of Errol & West Carse (Tex) £140; West Carse (Suff) £114; Hill of Errol (Chev/Mule) £104.50; Ardcho & Threepland (HB) £100; West Lundie (BTex) £97; Stacks (BFL) £91; Broadsham (Char) £90; Easter Greenhill (X) £87; Fleas (Mule) £85; Longcarse (BF) £50. Rams: Wester Coldrain (Tex) £90; Wester Coldrain (X) £80.50; Loanhead of Duchally (Chev) £80; Netherurd (Suff) £77.

Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd, (Wednesday December 27, 2017) sold 27 prime cattle. Prime bullocks (2) sold to 209.0p (-24.0p) and £1,312.50 gross for a 625kg Simmental cross from Bridgend Farm, Dingwall, to Messrs John M Munro Ltd, Dingwall. Prime heifers (25) averaged 212.9p (-6.3p) and sold to 226p per kg for a 560kg Limousin cross from Coach House, Dingwall to Messrs Fraser Brothers Butchers, Dingwall and £1,411.20 gross for a 630kg Limousin cross from Bridgend Farm to Messrs John M Munro Ltd. Other leading prices per kg: Bullocks: Bridgend Farm, (CharX), 208.0p. Heifers: Bridgend Farm, (LimX), 224.0p, Easter Hardmuir, Nairn, (LimX), 223.0p, Coach House, (LimX), 219.0p. Other leading prices per head: Bullocks: Bridgend Farm, (CharX), £1,289.60. Heifers: Bridgend Farm, (LimX), £1,409.70; Easter Strath, Killen (CharX), £1,354.50; Newton of Darnaway, Forbes, (CharX), £1,288.65. Also sold were 178 prime sheep. New season lambs (178) averaged 164.9p (-0.6p) and sold to 183.0p per kg and £86.00 gross for a pen of 47kg Beltex crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge to Messrs Fraser Brothers Butchers, Dingwall. SQQ 36.5kg to 45.5kg (104) averaged 168.8p (+1.8p) per kg. Other leading prices per head and per kg: New season lambs: SuffX - Torgorm, £79, 159.6p; CharX - Fairview, Nethybridge, £76, 170.8p; TexX - Kinchyle Farm, Scanport & Inshes Farm, Inverness, £76, Clume Farm, Aldourie, 172.0p; Cross - Fairview, £75.50, 164.1p; BeltX - Inshes Farm, £75, 8 English-onmuir, Burchrow, 173.3p; BF - Inshes Farm, £73.50, Tulloch Farm, Dingwall, 166.3p; Chev - 18 Ruisaerie, Beauly, £71.50, 168.2p.

Stirling, United Auctions (Wednesday December 20, 2017) sold 61 store cattle and 112 cast cows and forward cattle, also sold 984 store and feeding sheep. Bullocks (19) - averaged 189.63p to 247.30ppk for a 372kg LimX from Lurgan and to £990 for 554kg CHX from Longfaugh. B&W Bullocks (18) - averaged 131.16p to 134.70ppk for a 501kg HFX from Nether Pratis, and to £675 for a 501kg HFX from Nether Pratis. Heifers (24) - averaged 190.86p to 232.80ppk for a 232kg SimX from Towhead, and to £940 for a 492kg SimX from Lochlands. Cast Cows (90) - averaged 125.36p to 183.90ppk for a LimX from Scrogton and to £1530 for a CHX from Lesliepark. Dairy Cows (22) - averaged 85.36p and to 103.30ppk for a HFX from Carniel, and to £835 for a HFX from Carniel. Bullocks: 250-300kgs- Townhead £595, Townhead 214.00p; 301-350kgs- Lochelbank £620, 183.40p; 351-400kgs- Lurgan £920, 247.30p; 401-450kgs- Mid Wellwood £980, Lurgan 219.20p; 451-500kgs- Longfaugh £990, 200.00p; 501-550kgs- Longfaugh, 167.30p; 551-600kgs - Longfaugh £990, 178.70p. Heifers: Up to 250kgs- Townhead £540, 230.80p; 301-350kgs- Townhead £660, 208.90p; 351-400kgs- Townhead £770, Lurgan 209.90p; 401-450kgs- Lurgan £870, 201.40p; 451-500kgs- Lochlands £940, 191.10p; 501-550kgs- Balnabroich £900, 172.40p. OTM Cows: £ per head - Lesliepark (CH) £1530; Upper Auchenlay (Cont) £1390; Easter Clunie (Sim) £1210; Macmerry (AA) £1210; Hillend (Lim) £1190; Balnabroich (BS) £1030. PPK- Scrogton (Lim) 183.90p; Lesliepark (CH) 173.79p; Graystale (AA) 151.00p; Upper Auchenlay (Cont) 150.80p; Braendam (Sim) 145.60p; Braendam (BS) 134.30p. OTM Bulls: £ per head- Barns of Airdie (Lim) £1390; Hillhead (CH) £1130; Burnside of Balhaldie (AA) £1170. PPK- Hillhead (CH) 196.90p; Burns of Airdie (Lim) 110.10p; Burnside of Balhaldie (AA) 99.00p. United Auctions also sold 984 store lambs and feeding sheep. Leading Prices Millhouse (Tex) £69.00; Skelmorie (TexX) £60.00; Linnwater (BF) £60.00. Stirling, Caledonian Marts (Wednesday December 20, 2017) sold 102 Store Cattle & Suckled Calves, 37 Breeding Cattle, 250 Store Lambs & Feeding Ewes, and 58 Cast Cows & Bulls. Bullocks averaged 202p per kg, selling to 252p for Limousins from I O Warren, Coull, Islay and to £1040 from East Kerse, Lochwinnoch. Heifers averaged 188p per kg selling to 197p again for Limousins from East Kerse and to £960 from the same beast. Bullocks per head- £990 Ardgate £960 Ardgate £950 Cameron Farm £940 Coull (Islay) Bullocks per kilo- 244p & 242p Coull (Islay) 240p Coull (Islay) Heifers per head- £950 & £940 East Kerse £900 & £880 East Kerse Heifers per kilo- 192p Lowe Dalkeith 190p & 188p East Kerse Also forward were 37 Breeding Cattle comprising of In-Calf Cows and In-Calf Heifers. Topping the sale at £1,220 was a Shorthorn X Heifer In-Calf from Auchyle, Port of Menteith. Other Leading Prices: £1020 & £1000 Auchyle £980 Auchyle £900 Crawltree Farming £880 Lowe Dalkeith Included in todays sale were 58 Cast Cows & Bulls. With a smaller show forward and a very large demand due to the Christmas trade, all cows would be dearer on the week.

Nether Pratis. Heifers (24) - averaged 190.86p to 232.80ppk for a 232kg SimX from Towhead, and to £940 for a 492kg SimX from Lochlands. Cast Cows (90) - averaged 125.36p to 183.90ppk for a LimX from Scrogton and to £1530 for a CHX from Lesliepark. Dairy Cows (22) - averaged 85.36p and to 103.30ppk for a HFX from Carniel, and to £835 for a HFX from Carniel. Bullocks: 250-300kgs- Townhead £595, Townhead 214.00p; 301-350kgs- Lochelbank £620, 183.40p; 351-400kgs- Lurgan £920, 247.30p; 401-450kgs- Mid Wellwood £980, Lurgan 219.20p; 451-500kgs- Longfaugh £990, 200.00p; 501-550kgs- Longfaugh, 167.30p; 551-600kgs - Longfaugh £990, 178.70p. Heifers: Up to 250kgs- Townhead £540, 230.80p; 301-350kgs- Townhead £660, 208.90p; 351-400kgs- Townhead £770, Lurgan 209.90p; 401-450kgs- Lurgan £870, 201.40p; 451-500kgs- Lochlands £940, 191.10p; 501-550kgs- Balnabroich £900, 172.40p. OTM Cows: £ per head - Lesliepark (CH) £1530; Upper Auchenlay (Cont) £1390; Easter Clunie (Sim) £1210; Macmerry (AA) £1210; Hillend (Lim) £1190; Balnabroich (BS) £1030. PPK- Scrogton (Lim) 183.90p; Lesliepark (CH) 173.79p; Graystale (AA) 151.00p; Upper Auchenlay (Cont) 150.80p; Braendam (Sim) 145.60p; Braendam (BS) 134.30p. OTM Bulls: £ per head- Barns of Airdie (Lim) £1390; Hillhead (CH) £1130; Burnside of Balhaldie (AA) £1170. PPK- Hillhead (CH) 196.90p; Burns of Airdie (Lim) 110.10p; Burnside of Balhaldie (AA) 99.00p. United Auctions also sold 984 store lambs and feeding sheep. Leading Prices Millhouse (Tex) £69.00; Skelmorie (TexX) £60.00; Linnwater (BF) £60.00. Stirling, Caledonian Marts (Wednesday December 20, 2017) sold 102 Store Cattle & Suckled Calves, 37 Breeding Cattle, 250 Store Lambs & Feeding Ewes, and 58 Cast Cows & Bulls. Bullocks averaged 202p per kg, selling to 252p for Limousins from I O Warren, Coull, Islay and to £1040 from East Kerse, Lochwinnoch. Heifers averaged 188p per kg selling to 197p again for Limousins from East Kerse and to £960 from the same beast. Bullocks per head- £990 Ardgate £960 Ardgate £950 Cameron Farm £940 Coull (Islay) Bullocks per kilo- 244p & 242p Coull (Islay) 240p Coull (Islay) Heifers per head- £950 & £940 East Kerse £900 & £880 East Kerse Heifers per kilo- 192p Lowe Dalkeith 190p & 188p East Kerse Also forward were 37 Breeding Cattle comprising of In-Calf Cows and In-Calf Heifers. Topping the sale at £1,220 was a Shorthorn X Heifer In-Calf from Auchyle, Port of Menteith. Other Leading Prices: £1020 & £1000 Auchyle £980 Auchyle £900 Crawltree Farming £880 Lowe Dalkeith Included in todays sale were 58 Cast Cows & Bulls. With a smaller show forward and a very large demand due to the Christmas trade, all cows would be dearer on the week.

Stirling, United Auctions (Thursday December 21, 2017) sold 5,344 prime sheep comprising 4159 lambs selling to an average of 175.1ppk and 1185 ewes and rams. Lambs (4159) Coilavoulin (BTex) £108; Errol Enterprises (Tex) £98; Claysyke (Suff) £91.50; South Flanders (Char) £90; Kynachan (X) £86; Little Raith (Mule) £82.50; Killearn Home (Chev) £81. Lambs (4159) Coilavoulin (BTex) 245p; Luckenburn (Tex) 214p; Craggan (X) 190p; Craggan (Chev) 195p; Ancaster (Suff) 194p; Pitkevy (Mule) 190p; Balmrye (Char) 190p. Ewes (1185)- Humeston (Tex) £122; West Lundie (BTex) £116; Shannoche (Chev) £113; Shannoche (Suff) £97; Meadowbank (Mule) £84; West Lethams (X) £73; Glenhead (BF) £57. Rams- South Ballaird (Cont) £95; Murieston (Chev) £70.

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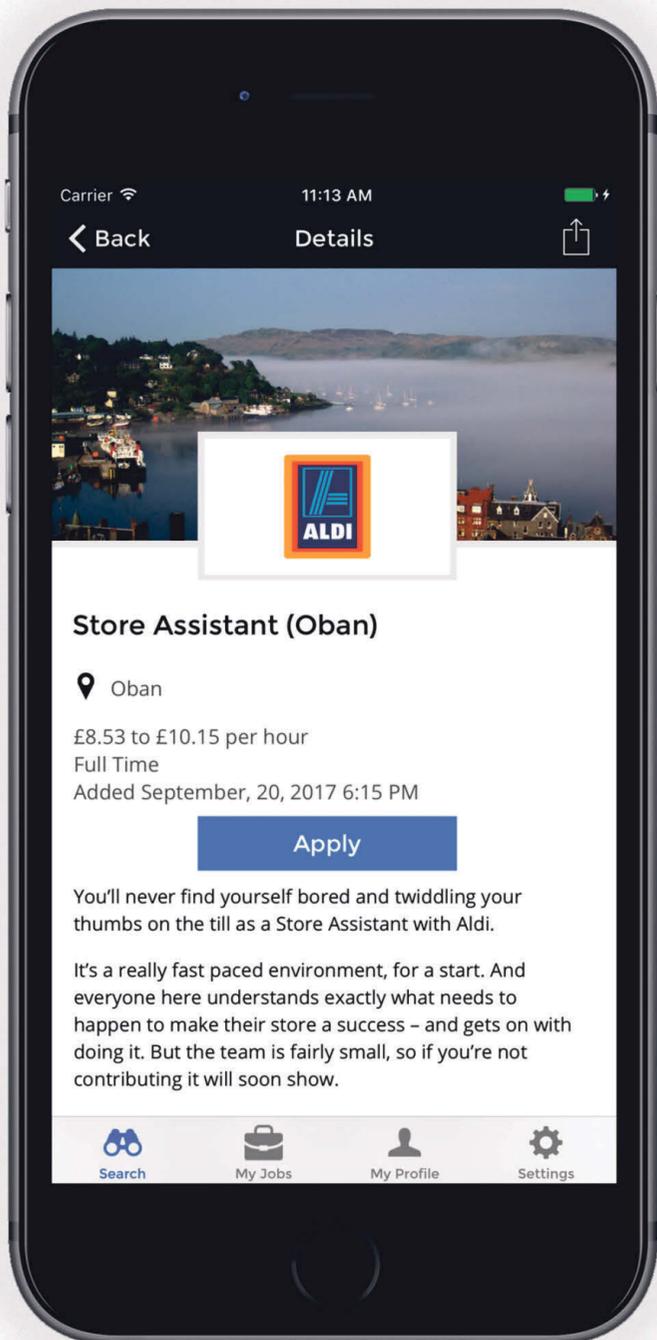


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FORBES BOAT CARE LTD (Company Number SC440943)
Notice is hereby given that on 19 December 2017 a Petition was presented to the Sheriff of North Strathclyde at Oban by Michael Forbes for inter alia an Order under the Insolvency Act 1986 to wind up Forbes Boat Care Limited (Company No: SC440943) having its Registered Office at 1 Campbell Street, Oban PA34 4BQ and to appoint Joint Interim Liquidators, in which Petition the Sheriff by Interlocutor dated 19 December 2017 appointed Notice of the Import of the Petition and of the deliverance, and of the particulars specified in the Act of Sederunt to be advertised once in the Edinburgh Gazette and once in the Oban Times newspaper; ordained the said Company and any other persons interested, if they intend to show cause why the prayer of the Petition should not be granted, to lodge Answers thereto in the hands of the Sheriff Clerk at Oban within 8 days after such intimation, service or advertisement, under certification.
Dated: 22 December 2017
Alan Turner Munro, Solicitor,
140 West George Street, Glasgow G2 2HG,
Agent for Petitioner

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Argyll and Bute Council

Councillor Roddy McCuish (E.W.4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor McCuish will be holding a surgery on Friday 5th January 2018 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 1.30pm - 4.00pm. He can be contacted by email Roderick.McCuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 567854

Councillor Jim Lynch (E.W.4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor Lynch will be holding a surgery on Friday 12th January 2018 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.00pm - 4.00pm. He can be contacted by email Jim.Lynch@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 567893

Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor (E.W.4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor Sir McGrigor will be holding a surgery on Friday 26th January 2018 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.00pm - 4.00pm. He can be contacted by email Jamie.McGrigor@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 567853

Councillor Kieron Green (E.W.5 Oban North and Lorn)
Councillor Green will be holding a surgery on Friday 19th January 2018 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.00pm - 4.00pm. He can be contacted by email Kieron.Green@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 562 444

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Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll & Bute Council

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REGISTRATION OF INFANT BEGINNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

SESSION 2018/2019

Children who attain the age of five years between 1 March 2018 and 28 February 2019 should be registered for education during the week commencing 15 January 2018. Parents concerned should take their children to the appropriate local primary school on one of the school days during the above week between the hours of 10.00am and 3.00pm.

Gaelic Medium Education
Gaelic Medium Education is available in the following schools:- Bowmore Primary School, Islay; Tiree Primary School, Tiree; Salen Primary School, Mull; Bunessan Primary School, Mull; Rockfield Primary School, Oban; Strath of Appin Primary School, by Oban and Sandbank Primary School, Dunoon. Further information on Gaelic Medium Education can be obtained from Catriona Garvin, Education Support Officer: Gaelic, catriona.garvin2@argyll-bute.gov.uk

A leaflet providing information for parents on enrolment of children in school and giving details of placing request procedures (including under age placing requests) may be obtained from any school or from Community Services, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 704000).

ANN MARIE KNOWLES
Acting Executive Director: Community Services

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- EPC Rating - D

OIEO £230,000

The Sheiling is a well presented detached four-bedroom bungalow set within its own private garden. The property would make the ideal family home boasting a large kitchen with a central island and plentiful storage in the floor and wall units. The dining area within the kitchen easily accommodates a dining table perfect for entertaining and family meals. Leading from the kitchen is a large family living room with an efficient multi-fuel stove and patio doors leading out to the garden.

GRIANAN, DUNOLLIE ROAD, OBAN

- Delightful detached bungalow
- 3 bedrooms/ 1 bathroom
- Convenient location
- Garden to front and rear
- Excellent Family Home
- EPC rating - D (G1)

OIEO £185,000

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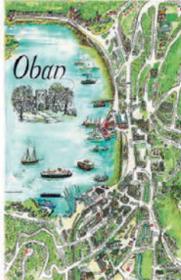
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DEATHS

ANDERSON - Peacefully at Forth Valley Royal Hospital on December 24, 2017, Peter Anderson, aged 76, of Glenshellach Road, Oban. Partner of Patricia, father of Aidan, Gavin and Vicki and proud grandad of seven. He will be sadly missed. Service will be held on January 8, 2018 at 1.45pm at Falkirk Crematorium. Family flowers only.

CAMPBELL - Peacefully but suddenly at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh on December 25, 2017 in his 61st year. Neil Campbell, beloved son of the late Duncan Campbell and Mary-Kate Campbell. Much loved father of, Ann-Marie, Kathleen, Christopher and David, a dear brother of, Neilina, Mary, John, Raebelle, Pene, Iagan, Andrew and Calum. Forever in our hearts. Funeral to take place from St Columba's Cathedral, Oban on January 11, 2018 at 10.00am, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery.

FERGUSON - Peacefully at Wishaw General Hospital on Sunday December 24, 2017, Flora Ferguson (née MacAskill) of Seymour Green, East Kilbride and formerly Stepps Cottage, Banavie, Fort William. Dearly loved mother of Marion and Kenneth and grandmother to Ken, Dora, Ruth, Georga and Lisa. Funeral service at Kilmallie Free Church, Caol, at 11.30am on Friday January 5, 2018, thereafter to Kilmallie Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations to British Heart Foundation. All friends respectfully invited.

HENDERSON - William Arthur. Suddenly at home on December 19, 2017, Arthur, much loved husband to the late Jeanette, (née McKechnie). Sadly missed by all family and friends. Former employee of Motherwell Bridge. Funeral service will take place at Holytown Crematorium Motherwell on Thursday January 4, 2018 at 1pm to which all are cordially invited to attend. Family flowers only please.

MACCOLL - Peacefully at Eader Glinn, Oban, Ann MacNaughton MacColl, in her 91st year, beloved daughter of Nancy and Duncan MacColl, dear cousin of the late Grace MacCallum. Funeral service will be held tomorrow (Friday) January 5, 2018 at 1pm in Appin Parish Church. All friends are respectfully invited.

MACDOUGALL - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands hospital, Oban on December 22, 2017, Allan, aged 85 yrs (Cal-Mac Piermaster Rtd), beloved husband of Irene, loving dad of Allan (Winky) and Heather and father-in-law of Tracy and Duncan. Dear papa to Daniel, Drew, Owen, Craig, Scott, Jenna and Lorn. Doting papa to his great-grand children Ryan, Mya, Cece and Leah. Funeral service will take place at Oban Parish Church, Glencruitten Road, Oban on Tuesday January 9, 2018 at 1pm, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetry. Family flowers only.

MACNAUGHTON - At Belford Hospital, Fort William on December 22 in his 78th year, Allan MacNaughton late of Acharacle. Funeral service will be held on Friday January 5, 2018, 1pm, at Acharacle Parish Church, all friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please but donations, if desired, may be given in lieu at the church in aid of, Pines Medical Practice, Acharacle and Belford Hospital.

MCLAUCHLAN - Grace. Peacefully in Forth Valley Royal Hospital on December 26, 2017 Grace née Barr, beloved wife of RJ McLauchlan, much loved mum of Alasdair and Janet and the late Gregor. Nan of Scott, Gavin, Sophie and Jack, mother-in-law of Ian and Katie. Funeral Service will be held on Tuesday January 9, 2018 in Callander Kirk at 11.15am thereafter to Falkirk Crematorium to which all Family and friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only.

YOUNG - Suddenly at the RAH Paisley on December 18, 2017 aged 80 years, Raysyde Young (Dodo), Bunnassan, Isle of Mull. Loving husband of the late Christina, Sadly missed. Funeral service to be held at Bunnassan Church on Friday January 5, 2018 at 11.30am thereafter to Suidhe Cemetery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
MACINTYRE - Maureen and family would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for kind expressions of sympathy received following our loss of Andrew. Grateful thanks to Macmillan nurses and ECC care team, thanks to the Rev Angus Morrison, Rev Archie MacPhail and Derek Morrison for a comforting service. Thanks to D&A Munn for their efficient and caring personal service. Thanks to Iain and Sandra, Kenny MacInnes, Angie Kilpatrick for all their kindness to Andrew. Thank you all. £652.00 was collected for Macmillan Day Unit.

MACLEOD - (Islay) Donald and family would like to offer most heartfelt thanks to relatives, friends and neighbours for your kindness following the passing of Katie. We were truly overwhelmed by the support shown by all, especially our own local community. Thank you to the staff who cared for Katie so

well at the Queen Elizabeth and Islay hospitals and at the Rhinns Medical Centre. Sincere thanks to Reverend Valerie Watson for such an uplifting celebration, showing that Katie's life was one well lived. Thank you to Jean and Craig MacAffer for such caring and professional handling of all funeral arrangements. Our gratitude to Niall Kirkpartick for his beautiful accordion playing; to Fiona Doyle for stunning floral tributes, to James MacEachern for lovely piping and to Laura and the team for the fine purvey. To everyone who came to say goodbye, and those who weren't able to, we thank you. The sum of £750 was raised in aid of the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow in recognition of Katie's happy days at Yorkhill. Moran Taing a'chairdean.

MORRISON - Mary Ann. The family give thanks to all those who sent expressions of sympathy on the passing of mum and granny. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation to staff at Ward 1 Belford Hospital for their excellent care and attention. Gratitude to doctors and nurses at Mallaig Medical Centre and also paramedics and crew of lifeboat. Finally grateful thanks to Scott and Billy undertakers for arranging journey home to Harris.
- Sons, daughters and grandchildren.

MEMORIALS

CARMICHAEL - In loving memory of our dear father, father-in-law and grandfather Neil Carmichael who died January 4, 1993. Always in our hearts, forever in our thoughts

- Inserted by Irene, Donald, Nigel and families, Islay and Glasgow.

CHILDS - Cherished memories of our wonderful mum Margaret Anne Childs, who passed away on January 4, 2015. We love and miss you mum

We wish you were here today Just to say these words to you We love you in every way.
- Catherine, John, Lawrence and all the family. xxx

DRENNAN - In loving memory of Alex, who died January 7, 1998. Always in our thoughts.
- Jessie and the family.

FERGUSON - In loving memory of my dear mother Jessie, who passed away on January 2, 2011. Memories are like threads of gold They never tarnish or grow old Remembering loved ones gone before and since then
- Daughter Anne.

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

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

MACLELLAN - Short but precious memories of our darling infant son Christopher, called to Heaven on January 1, 1991. Our brightest star in the sky Loved forever
- Mum, Dad, Craig and Calum.

MACLELLAN - Remembering with love Christopher Allan, taken from us January 1, 1991. Always in our thoughts
- MacLellan family, Eriskay and Oban.

MACLEOD - In loving memory of my father Alasdair, who passed away suddenly on January 5, 1998, aged 54. Loved and remembered always.
- Duncan and family.

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 both of you That never goes away
- Love mum, 29 Glenpane Street xx.

To us you were so special What more is there to say We only wish with all our hearts That you were here today.
- Ian, Rory, Donald, Daniel, Christine and Marina xx.

MORRISON - In ever loving memory of Johnny who passed away on January 3, 2008.
- Sadly missed by Catherine, John, Karen, Alan and families. Forever in my thoughts
- Mum.

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.

ROBERTSON - In loving memory of my dear husband George and our dearest daughter, who passed away on January 6, 2011. Though absent, you are near Still missed and loved
- Margaret, sons George and Lorne and daughter-in-law Helen.

WOOD - George (Podger). 35th anniversary. Died January 3, 1983, age 55. When the high tides of September Reflect the evening sun On every wave we feel your smile as we go from day to day. Love always.
- Freda and Jim.

Obituary: Donnie MacKenzie Senior



Lochaber Camanachd 1977. Photograph courtesy of The Camanachd Association.

THE shinty community in Lochaber and beyond, as well as the wider world of cattle breeding and agricultural shows, are mourning the loss of one of their most knowledgeable and committed friends and kenspeckle figures with the passing of Donnie MacKenzie Senior of Altour Road, Spean Bridge.

He had been in failing health for several months and died in the Belford Hospital in Fort William on Saturday December 16, aged 85 (born October 13, 1932).

A man who lived and breathed the Lochaber air all his life, Donnie was an accomplished stock-man and breeder of Charolais cattle, working from the Inverloch Castle Farm on the outskirts of Fort William, and for a time at the Long John Distillery at Lochy Bridge in the shadow of Ben Nevis before it was bought by Whitbreads.

The farm house, to which they had moved from nearby Ben View Crescent (which is no more) was to be a regular dropping-in point for shinty players and fans on their way to and from shinty committee meetings and games for many years, with Donnie and his late wife Dympna the most hospitable of hosts.

Born in Fort Augustus and the son of a shepherd, the family eventually moved to Spean Bridge.

It is no surprise that Donnie was steeped in the traditions of Lochaber. He worked

for nearly all his adult life (38 years) at the sharp end of the ground-breaking (literally) and innovative agricultural changes introduced to the Great Glen Cattle Ranch by Inverloch Castle owner Joseph Hobbs.

He started as a tractor-man, but Donnie eventually became as well-known and as comfortable at the Perth bull sales as he was at shinty venues throughout the north of Scotland.

His skill as a cattle breeder earned him the historic title of having sold the most expensive bull ever to come from Lochaber, a magnificent Charolais specimen which gleaned 5,000 guineas. He also held the record for a steer at the Ben Nevis auction mart, nearly £2,000. He was also a long-term participant in the Lochaber Agricultural Show.

Donnie eventually took over the lease of the farm where he had been the stockman and divided his time between that onerous responsibility and a singular contribution to shinty in the north over many years. He shared his time between his three great loves: agriculture, shinty and his family.

He served on shinty committees and groups too numerous to list, but most notably undertook roles as on disciplinary committee, and as secretary, chairman and president of his home team Lochaber Camanachd.

Most notably, he was the second president

of the Camanachd Referees' Association from 1981-86, succeeding his great friend Douglas MacKintosh of Newtonmore. The silver-mounted caman he was presented with for his contribution to the fledgling referees' body will be placed on his coffin next week.

Donnie had been a shinty player himself, most often as a goalkeeper with Spean Bridge, but photographic evidence has emerged (to most people's surprise) of him playing in the colours of nearby and great rivals, Fort William.

It is worth noting also that Donnie was one of the leading figures who fundraised to build the Lochaber Camanachd changing rooms and kitchen at the playing field, which put Lochaber ahead of most clubs at the time in terms of facilities for players, officials and spectators. Before this, players had changed in an old caravan with no toilets or showers.

Donnie was the second youngest of a family of eight – Margaret, the only other surviving family member, brothers Neil (Torlundy), Murdo (Cannich), John and Harry, as well as Annie and Katy.

He is survived by his son Donnie, himself a former shinty player and the last secretary of the Camanachd Association (1982-86) before it appointed a full-time official.

Hugh Dan MacLennan

Thought for the week

The new year has started. May it be a good and blessed year for you and for those around you.

A new year often gives me the sense of something new and fresh. How is it for you? The festivities and activities of Christmas are over, we've celebrated Hogmanay and now we're (almost) back into the normal routine.

A new year. A blank page, a clean slate. During Christmas I was thinking of the reason why God sent his son Jesus to us. What did God have in mind to come up with this rescue plan?

Of course, God knew that Jesus would be killed in the end – but that's exactly what He wanted.

God the Father wanted to restore the relationship with us through his Son Jesus. It is the very reason he came. That speaks of love, sacrificial love.



My personal thought for this first week is that the same Jesus whose arrival to Earth we've just celebrated, is also present today, this week, this new year. Jesus didn't stay a baby. No, his story continues into our time, all according to God's rescue plan for all people. When you read in the Bible in Matthew 28, he promises that he'll be with us (vs 20): 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' His everlasting presence is comforting to know. My wish for you this year is that every new page of this year's story will have Jesus's watermark in it. That you may experience God's love and his everlasting presence on every step of the way.

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Marine Harvest Media Award winners 2016

Shinty review of the season - part two

IT'S THE business end of the shinty season as *The Oban Times* looks back on the second half of 2017.

July 2017

Keith Loades is president-elect

The Camanachd Association confirmed Keith Loades was successful in his application to take on the position of president-elect for the Camanachd Association.

Keith will continue in this position until the Camanachd Association annual general meeting. Having played shinty throughout his life and managed Kinlochshiel on three separate occasions, Keith joined the Camanachd Association board three years ago, serving latterly as vice president.

Scotland ladies win in Dublin

Scotland Ladies returned from Dublin with the win they wanted, beating the Dublin County Ladies Select 19-10 in their latest shinty/camogie clash to tie the series at a win apiece.

Skye's Lorna MacRae scored 12 points.

Young shinty stars shine

Seventy-one of the country's brightest young shinty prospects descended upon Strathallan School in Forgan-denny, Perthshire, for the 2017 National Player Development Camp.

A number of awards were presented at the end of Thursday's session: Player of the Camp: Roddy Young, Kingussie; Most Improved Player: William Boag, Bute; Outstanding Performance: Ruairidh Graham, Inveraray.

Young Scots star on Irish tour

Scotland's U17s completed another successful Irish tour, recording wins against Waterford U17 and Dublin U17 on their annual four-day visit to the Emerald Isle.

After an inspiring trip to Croke Park, the Scotland squad travelled south to play Waterford U17 at Walsh Park, a county ground. Scotland dominated the game from the start, eventually running out convincing (12-7) 43-13 (1-10) winners. Scotland won the annual meeting with Dublin U17 (9-3) 30-11 (1-8).

Taynuilt primaries win MacKay Cup

Taynuilt Primaries won the 2017 MacKay Cup, shinty's top primary school-age event, beating Alvie Primary School 2-1. Joe MacVicar and Mathew Sloss got the goals, with Calum Douglas pulling a goal back.

Spectacular day at North Shinty World Cup

The 2017 North Shinty World Cup was a huge success as 330 players made up 43 teams to play on seven pitches at The Bught Park, Inverness. A total of 120 games were played and following the action:

•Dunvegan Primary School won the P7 emerging league, beating Crown Primary School in the final.

•Balnain Primary School won the P5 competition, beating Newtonmore Primary School in the final.

•Alvie Primary School won the P7 final, beating Inverlochty in the final.

Shinty photos exhibition

Acclaimed shinty photographer Neil G Paterson hosted a month-long exhibition at Eden Court, displaying prints of images taken during his nine seasons covering the sport.

On the field round-up

Marine Harvest Premiership: It remained very tight at the top of the division. Kinlochshiel held a two-point advantage, although they had played a game more than Kyles who would rue losing a two-goal lead when the sides drew 2-2 at Tighnabruaich at the end of the month.

Marine Harvest National Division: Caberfeidh stayed a point ahead of Skye in the National although the islanders had a game in hand.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: The Newtonmore seconds had a three point cushion at the top of the league.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Lochside Rovers were in a good position, two points behind Aberdour but with three games in hand.

Marine Harvest North Division 2: Despite suffering their first league defeat – against Caberfeidh reserves – Glengarry stayed comfortably ahead at the top of the table.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: The Inveraray seconds held a two point advantage over Strachur.

Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup: Lovat, Newtonmore, Oban Camanachd and Skye Camanachd reached the last four of shinty's premier competition.

Artemis Macaulay Cup: Newtonmore beat Lovat and Kyles Athletic defeated Oban Camanachd to set up next month's Macaulay final.

Baliemore Cup: Fort William won the Baliemore Cup, edging out Caberfeidh on penalties after a 4-4 draw at Blairbeg.

Aberdein Considine Sutherland Cup: Lochside Rovers and the Kingussie seconds won through to the Sutherland Cup Final.

Strathdearn Cup: The Newtonmore and Kingussie seconds set up an all-Badenoch Strathdearn Cup Final with Glengarry and Skye reserves losing out in the semi-final stage.

Bullough Cup: The Inveraray seconds were surprise winners against Lochside Rovers to reach the Bullough Final, where they will face Strachur who beat the Kyles Athletic second team.

August 2017

Macaulay Cup eligibility

The Camanachd Association asked the Macaulay Association to review its eligibility criteria for the Artemis Macaulay Cup competition.

The Camanachd Association suggested the Macaulay Association considered some way of incorporating the teams that are promoted to the Premiership should there have been eight North or South sides in the previous year's top flight.

Inverness Sixes

Twenty seven teams took part in the annual Inverness Sixes at The Bught Park, Inverness.

Caberfeidh won the Jubilee Shield for the third year in a row,

Strathspey lifted the Rosedean Shield, Skye Camanachd Ladies retained the Alistair Gow Shield and Lochaber U14 took the Ken Ross Trophy.

On the field round-up

Marine Harvest Premiership: The title race changed hands once more as Kyles Athletic finished the month ahead of Kinlochshiel on goal difference.

Marine Harvest National Division: Wins over Oban Celtic, Inverness and Fort William meant Skye went three points clear at the top.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: The Newtonmore colts and Aberdeen University continued to battle it out for the championship and Newtonmore ended the month with a slender one point advantage.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Four wins in August confirmed Lochside Rovers' status as title favourites.

Marine Harvest North Division 2: Glengarry's only league action this month was a win over Lochcarron but they remained out in front.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: The Inveraray second team were now homing in on the league title.

Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup: Lovat and Newtonmore were semi-final winners and started their preparations for next month's show-piece final.

Strathdearn Cup: Roddy Young scored twice as the Kingussie colts beat the Newtonmore colts 4-2 in this derby final.

Bullough Cup: The Inveraray second team won the Bullough Cup, beating Strachur 3-0 in the final at Strachurmore. David Robertson, Euan McMurdo and Russell McKinlay scored.

September 2017

Lachie Wood to referee Scottish Cup final

The Camanachd Association confirmed that Lachie Wood from Lochgilphead will referee the 2017 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Final between Lovat and Newtonmore at The Bught Park, Inverness.

Lachie Wood took charge of the Bullough Cup Final in 2013, the Baliemore and Valerie Fraser Cup Finals in 2014 and the 2015 Macaulay Cup Final. He also refereed the Glasgow Celtic Society Cup Final in 2014 and 2017.

On the field round-up

Marine Harvest Premiership: Kinlochshiel were within touching distance of a first top flight title after they beat challengers Kyles Athletic 4-0 at Kirkton.

Marine Harvest National Division: Skye Camanachd secured the National Division title and an immediate return to shinty's top flight.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: The Newtonmore second team retained the North Division 1 title and were presented with the trophy following their final match of the season, a 3-2 defeat to the Fort William seconds at An Aird.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Lochside Rovers were just a point away from the South 1 championship after beating nearest challengers Aberdour 4-1.

Marine Harvest North Division 2: The Lochaber seconds stayed on Glengarry's tail as the title race moved into

the final weeks of the season. Glengarry held a two-point advantage with both sides still having two games to go.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: The top two sides – Inveraray seconds and Strachur – didn't play a league match during September.

Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup: Newtonmore saw off a late Lovat fight-back to win 3-2 and lift the Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup.

Neil Stewart and Jamie Robinson had Newtonmore 2-0 ahead at the break.

Substitute Marc MacLachlan started the Lovat revival and Lorne MacKay restored parity shortly after.

The game's defining moment came with 14 minutes remaining. David MacLean and Glen MacKintosh set up Evan Menzies, who had lost his marker, and Menzies struck the ball low into the net from just inside the penalty spot to win the trophy.

Drew MacDonald was awarded the coveted Albert Smith man of the match medal.

Artemis Macaulay Cup: There were goals galore as Kyles Athletic defeated Newtonmore 7-4 to lift the Artemis Macaulay Cup. Roddy MacDonald scored four times for the Tighnabruaich men.

Skye take Valerie Fraser Cup

Skye Camanachd won the WCA Marine Harvest Valerie Fraser Cup for the first time with a 6-1 win over Lochaber in the final at An Aird.

Player of the match Lorna MacRae scored five times, whilst Jenna Beaton scored the other Skye goal.

Alison MacVicar was on target for Lochaber.

Glengarry win Challenge Cup

Glengarry were WCA Marine Harvest Challenge Cup winners. Leona Falconer grabbed a hat-trick as they beat Ardnarmurchan 7-1 in the final at An Aird.

Glengarry's Joanne Gillanders was named player of the match.

Oban Camanachd's MacQuiston Cup success

Ewen Logan, Lennon Campbell and Blair MacFarlane got the goals as Oban Camanachd U17 beat Col Glen U17 3-0 to lift the MacQuiston Cup at The Winterton.

Portree win Great Glen schools sixes

Portree High School won the 2017 Shinty Shop Great Glen Schools Sixes at Blairbeg.

Nine teams took part in the U16 tournament, with Portree beating Glenurquhart on penalties in the final.

Donnie MacLean sixes

The annual Donnie MacLean Sixes took place at Spean Bridge. After a great day's shinty, Kingussie U14 ran out winners, beating Lochaber U14 in the final.

Inverness U14 win Ferguson Transport and Shipping Shield

Inverness U14 won the Ferguson Transport & Shipping Shield at Spean Bridge.

Four squads took part in the north round of fixtures and Inverness beat Lochaber, Badenoch and Skye & Wester Ross to win the day.

Inverness captain Finlay Ogilvie was presented with the winner's shield by Stuart Callison from Ferguson Transport & Shipping.

WCA North double

The North seniors beat the South seniors 5-0.

Hazel Hunter and Sarah Corrigall scored twice with Laura Gallacher also finding the back of the net.

The North also came out on top in the U21 encounter against their South counterparts.

The North led 4-0 at the break before eventually running out convincing 10-0 winners.

Megan Ralph scored twice, Zoe Reid grabbed a hat-trick and Alison MacVicar bagged a double whilst Leona Falconer, Mairi Stewart and Mairi Duncan got the others.

Youngsters retain National Development title

Ballachulish U14 successfully defended their Marine Harvest National Development trophy, beating Oban Lorn 6-2 at Mossfield.

Lewis Moran scored four times for Ballachulish, whilst David Wilson netted twice.

Coll MacKay and Duncan MacEwan were on target for Oban Lorn.

Kingussie U14s win MacMaster Cup

Kingussie U14 had to fight all the way to win the Kenneth MacMaster Cup, beating Lochaber U14 6-4 in a high scoring final.

A Ewan Baker hat-trick, a Michael Slimon double and Ally Douglas for Kingussie cancelled out a Max Campbell brace and goals from Dillon Brockie and Robbie Rydings.

Kingussie captain Cameron Leiper was presented with the MacMaster Cup by David MacMaster.

North take the honours

Strikes from Dylan Borthwick, Martin Pringle and Victor Smith gave North U17 a 3-1 victory over South U17 at An Aird.

Lewis Buchanan pulled a late goal back for the South.

Earlier in the day, North U14 were convincing 11-2 winners over South U14 in their noon throw up at An Aird.

The North scorers were Max Campbell and Euan Maccormick and doubles from Taylor Matheson, Declan Brannan, Michael Slimon and Ross MacKinnon.

Ross Campbell and Gregor MacDonald scored for the South.

October 2017

Ronald Ross names Scotland squad

Scotland head coach Ronald Ross named his squad for the forthcoming Marine Harvest shinty/hurling international against Ireland.

There were first caps for Lovat pair Craig Mainland and Daniel Grieve as well as Badenoch duo Michael Russell from Newtonmore and Ryan Borthwick from Kingussie.

Meantime, Scotland U21 head coach Alan MacRae also named his pool for the meeting with their Irish counter-parts.

The new caps were Glenurquhart's Lachlan Smith, Robert Mabon from Kingussie, Skye's Ally 'Cleodi' MacLeod, Newtonmore duo Iain Richardson and Craig Ritchie and Fort William pair Alexander MacMillan and Calum Shepherd.

Boost for shinty

The Camanachd Association announced Marine Harvest had agreed to a new, six-figure, three-year sponsorship deal – the largest single sponsorship investment in the sport to date.

The new agreement extends the partnership between Marine Harvest and the Camanachd Association to 33 years, running until the end of the 2020 season, and represents one of Scotland's longest running sport sponsorships.

Scots win

Scotland retained the Marine Harvest Quaich, beating Ireland (2-12) 18-15 (0-15) in their shinty/hurling international at The Bught Park, Inverness.

Kevin Bartlett was again top scorer with 12 points whilst a late, stunning Stuart MacDonald save kept the Scots in front.

Steve Bracken from sponsors Marine Harvest presented the Marine Harvest Quaich to Scotland captain Finlay MacRae.

A storming second half display gave Ireland U21 a 19-15 victory over Scotland U21 in their Marine Harvest shinty/hurling International.

Annual Marine Harvest shinty awards

The 2017 Annual Marine Harvest Shinty Award winners were announced at a ceremony and dinner hosted by sponsors Marine Harvest at the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness.

James Perlich from Kyles Athletic was named Marine Harvest Coach of the Year, whilst his player Andrew King was Marine Harvest Player of the Year.

Kinlochshiel were Marine Harvest Club of the Year.

Lochside Rovers were to the fore as manager Gareth Evans was the recipient of the Marine Harvest South Division 1 Coach of the Year whilst keeper Cameron Sutherland collected the Marine Harvest South Division 1 Player of the Year Award.

On the field round up

Marine Harvest Premiership: Kinlochshiel clinched an historic first Premiership title when they beat Oban Camanachd at Mossfield. Kilmallie and Glasgow Mid Argyll finished in the relegation places.

Marine Harvest National Division: Caberfeidh and Fort William were battling it out for the division's second promotion spot. Newly-promoted Oban Celtic finished their season in a respectable sixth place.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Lochside Rovers were crowned South Division 1 champions after they defeated the Kyles Athletic second team 8-0 at Ganavan. Gareth Evans' side had looked favourites to win the league for some weeks and they showed remarkable consistency, only dropping four points all season, scoring 74 goals and only conceding 12.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: The Inveraray seconds sealed the title and promotion to South 1.

November 2017

On the field

round-up

Marine Harvest National Division: Caberfeidh clinched the second promotion place to the Premiership.

Kingussie snatch London Shield

Kingussie U17 won the London Shield, eventually edging out Oban Camanachd U17 on penalties following their 4-4 draw in a thrilling final at The Dell.

Ross Campbell and Lewis Buchanan gave the Oban side an early 2-0 lead but Roddy Young and Ruairidh Anderson drew Kingussie level.

Goals from Young again and Lennon Campbell made it 3-3 and took the final into extra-time.

Ruairidh Anderson put Kingussie back in front but Lewis Buchanan got his second from the penalty spot to make it 4-4.

With no further scoring, a penalty shoot-out ensued and Kieran MacPherson was the only scorer to add the London Shield to the Wade Cup which was won by Kingussie High School earlier in the week.

Skye ladies are just champion

Skye Camanachd were confirmed as WCA Marine Harvest National Division 1 winners for the second successive season when nearest challengers Lochaber were unable to raise a team for their title decider at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree.

Oban Camanachd end of season sixes

The inaugural Oban Camanachd end of season sixes took place at Mossfield.

This was a fun day for all associated with the club and eight teams of mainly eight players signed up to the event.

After an entertaining afternoon's shinty, Lorne Dickie's Jura side and Gavin Stobbart's Colonsay squad won through to the final.

The sides could not be separated and a sudden death penalty shoot-out decided the outcome with Jura keeper Brian MacCallum scoring the winner.

December 2017

2018 Artemis Macaulay Cup Draw

The 2018 Artemis Macaulay Cup draw was made live on Oban FM's Sports Show.

The pick of the ties is the North meeting between Kinlochshiel and Newtonmore on the west coast.

The winners will meet whoever triumphs in the tie between Kingussie and Skye Camanachd at the Dell so there is the possibility of west coast or Badenoch derbies in the quarter-finals.

John Collie Cup

Oban Camanachd will mark the New Year by hosting The John Collie Cup at Mossfield on Saturday January 13.

This will again be a mixed match with players from the club's U17 side, Lochside Rovers, Oban Camanachd all taking part.

Throw up is at 1pm.

July Exciting week of tennis in Oban



The players who took part in the 46th West Highland Tennis Week competition.

THE 46th West Highland Tennis Championships took place in July, with more than 60 players signing up for the championship event.

The tournament starts with local events and the Ar-

gyll day kicked everything off. The winner of the local gents' singles was Gregor Brydon, who returned last September from a year at the John Newcombe ranch in Texas.

August Tower 10s triumph for Oban Lorne



Oban Lorne lifted the Tower 10s trophy.

OBAN Lorne RFC hosted their inaugural Tower 10s rugby tournament at the weekend with six visiting teams and the home club putting out two sides for the competition.

The cup final was a clash between two West Regional Division 1 sides – Oban Lorne and Helensburgh – with the Oban side winning by 28-5.

September Lochside Rovers win Sutherland Cup



Lochside Rovers with the 2017 Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup.

LOCHSIDE Rovers won the Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup thanks to a 3-1 win over Kingussie's second team at An Aird.

This was Lochside Rovers' first national success for 20 years having last won the Aberdeen Considine Sutherland

Cup in 1997. Remarkably, Stephen Sloss, now playing alongside his son Daniel Sloss, was also a member of that side.

Stephen returned to the ranks this season after a nine-year absence.

October Robert MacIntyre wins first pro event



Robert MacIntyre receives his Sahara Kuwait Golf Championship trophy.

OBAN golfer Robert MacIntyre won his first tournament in only his second start since turning professional just a few weeks previously.

The Glencruitten Golf Club star triumphed in the Sahara Kuwait Golf Championship, which is part of the third-tier

MENA Tour. His success marks a stellar beginning to his life as a professional.

It follows his third-place finish – and a course record score of 64 – in his first outing at the Jordan Ayla Golf Championship two weeks ago.

November Lorne rugby ladies still to lose a point



Oban Lorne Ladies are yet to concede a single point.

ONCE again Oban Lorne Ladies failed to concede a point, beating Kelso Ladies 53-0.

The ladies have maintained their record of zero points conceded in the whole season of league matches.

December Oban BJJ picks up medals in Scotia Cup



Oban BJJ members picked up medals in the Scotia Cup.

OBAN BJJ took a group of 10 students to the winter leg of the BJJ Scotia Cup at Meadowbank Stadium, Edinburgh.

On the day, a handful of students picked up silverware, with the rest of the class gaining valuable experience.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3250

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

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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



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Name

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Saints prepare for cup replay

Saints Bibs 3
Saints Non Bibs 3
Practise match

A FRUSTRATING failure to secure opposition for a friendly match forced Oban Saints manager Alex Craik into a hastily arranged practise match last Saturday morning in an attempt to keep his players ticking over ahead of next Saturday's crunch Scottish Amateur Cup fourth round replay against Greenock High School Former Pupils.

The match kicked off at 9.45am to allow the players to take in the distinctly less friendly sight of the Old Firm derby on TV which a number of the players had already travelled to view at closer quarters.

In addition, and in fairly typical fashion, injuries, work and family commitments further restricted the gaffer's selection options, thus requiring a heavy reliance on the club's promising crop of youth players who all showed up extremely well in more experienced company.

The pitch at Glencruitten, which has been out of action for the past three weeks, was passed fit for play, however, had the match been of a more serious nature it is doubtful whether the extremely wet but still frozen in places surface would have been given the nod.

Either through a desire not to subject the pitch to too much punishment or, more likely, to ensure he got to Aulay's Bar in time for the Old Firm kick off, referee Peter MacCallum decided on two 35-minute halves which, given the miserable weather conditions, everybody was happy to agree to.

After an even opening 15 minutes the bibs, lead by the gaffer, were first to threaten when Lewis Campbell scored on a slip by Willie Gemmell 10 yards outside the railway end penalty box.

The youngster, a regular at the senior squad's training sessions, attempted to lob Graham 'Sugar' Douglas who was well positioned to make the catch.

At the other end the gaffer showed all his experience to cut out a promising opening for Daniel McCuish, who would be a major threat for the non bibs

throughout the match. Two of the other older heads in the bibs ranks combined to open the scoring in the 22nd minute. Keith Millar picked out Ross Maitland cutting into the box on the right. Taking one touch to control the cross the evergreen Ross tucked the ball past Graham Douglas and into the bottom corner to give the bibs the advantage.

The lead was to last only three minutes when Daniel McCuish took full advantage of an unfortunate ricochet in the bibs penalty area. Lochgilphead Red Star keeper Ben Pollock's clearance hit Alex Craik on the back and landed at the feet of young McCuish who calmly walked the ball over the goal-line to restore parity.

A welcome sight for the Saints



Kerr Newbigging will be a big asset on his return to the squad.

management team was the return of Kerr Newbigging making his first appearance since the D & K Lafferty Cup Tournament in July. Work commitments have kept the midfielder out of action so far this season but he gave a glimpse of what to expect in the new year with a powerful run and shot in the 27th minute which cannoned off Sugar's crossbar.

Referee MacCallum controversially ruled out a 31st minute Ross Maitland strike for offside, a decision which he would later balance up.

On the stroke of half-time a swift counter-attack from a successfully-defended Ross Maitland corner saw Daniel



Both sets of players line up after what proved to be an entertaining practise match at Glencruitten. Match report and photos: Derek Black

McCuish race away on the left wing and place a lob on top of the bibs' crossbar with Myles McAuley managing only to send the rebound wide of target from the corner of the six-yard box.

The heavy rain, the prelude to storm Dylan, continued to fall throughout the second half which started well for the bibs. Rhuaridh Horne, part of the Saints squad which lifted the Argyll and Bute Cup in Lochgilphead in August, made a terrific run on the right and fed Lewis Campbell on the edge of the box. The youngster was again denied by Graham Douglas who dived high to his right to palm away the shot. Inexplicably what looked like a routine clearance for David Smith somehow managed to end up in the back of the net to put the bibs back in front.

David Smith made amends for his earlier abhorration with an excellent sliding block to stop yet another goal bound effort from Lewis Campbell. Young Lewis refused to let his head drop and drew another fine save from Graham Douglas in the 45th minute with the Saints number one diving full length to his left to tip the youngster's effort around the post. From Ross Maitland's corner kick on the right Matthew Kelly's spectacular overhead kick flew well over Sugar's crossbar.

On another day Lewis Campbell might have bagged a hat-trick but it just wasn't to be for the youngster when, after dumping Jamie Graham on his backside with an excellent turn

on the corner of the 18-yard box, Graham Douglas once again got his angles spot on to deny him from close range.

Myles McAuley saw the non bibs first effort of the second half saved by Ben Pollock in the 49th minute before Graham Douglas yet again saved from Lewis Campbell.

Having withstood a period of sustained pressure the non bibs levelled the scores in the 51st minute with another of the youngsters who featured in the Argyll and Bute Cup win providing the assist. Gavin Forgive, who also made his debut for the Scottish Youth Football Association Under 16s in a 4-0 win over Scottish Youth Cup holders Spartans in Edinburgh last week, threaded a perfectly weighted through-ball for Daniel McCuish, who lifted a tidy finish over the head of Ben Pollock for his second goal of the match.

Three minutes later the turnaround was complete with the goal coming from an unlikely source. Myles McAuley, thriving in an unaccustomed advanced role, made a powerful run on the left and dispatched a shot from a tight angle which beat Ben Pollock at his near post.

Graham Douglas kept his side in the lead with fine saves from Matthew Kelly and, inevitably, Lewis Campbell before Ben Pollock replied in kind for the bibs denying Daniel McCuish a hat-trick and what would surely have been a winning goal.

With referee MacCallum

allowing a generous amount of stoppage time he even more generously awarded the bibs a last gasp penalty kick for an innocuous looking coming together between Graham Douglas and Ross Maitland. Ross calmly sent Sugar in the wrong direction burying his spot kick in the bottom corner before Mr MacCallum blew the full-time whistle with honours even.

Although disappointed not to have more of his first team squad involved manager Alex Craik will be pleased with the workout and delighted with the performance of the youngsters who were a credit to the club's youth set-up and continue to show great promise.

Following two postponements because of an unplayable pitches, Oban Saints and Greenock High School Former Pupils are scheduled to meet this Saturday at Glencruitten in their Scottish Amateur Cup 4th round replay to decide who will advance to the fifth round of the national cup competition. The Oban side have reached the semi-finals for the last two seasons, but face a stiff test from the Tail 'o the Bank side.

The winner will face an away tie on Saturday January 13 against either St Joseph's FP from Duntocher or East Kilbride Rolls Royce. The St Joseph's v East Kilbride replay game is also scheduled for Saturday.

The first game between Saints and Greenock, which ended in a 2-2 draw, was an enthralling encounter between two evenly

matched teams who were both far from full strength.

Saints had a number of players missing for various reasons but manager Alex Craik is hoping he will have most of them back for Saturday's crucial cup tie.

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side came from behind twice to gain a creditable draw at Battery Park four weeks ago but unfortunately due to the bad weather haven't played a competitive game since.

Saints and Greenock must slug it out to a finish on Saturday with extra time and penalty kicks coming into the reckoning if a winner can't be found after 90 minutes. Kick-off at Glencruitten is 1.30pm with referee Tommy Lacy from Glasgow in charge.



Referee Peter MacCallum, who never strayed far from the centre circle all morning.



Erika Scofka in action for Oban Lorne Ladies. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Erika joins international training camp

Women's rugby

OBAN Lorne Ladies player Erica Scofka has been selected as part of a squad of 30 players to join the Italian national team training camp before the Six Nations tournament gets underway in February.

If Erica is successful in getting into the Italian squad she could be up against another ex-Oban Lorne player in the form of Scottish International Abi Evans. Italy face Scotland on Sunday March 18 at Stadio Plebiscito, Padua.

Scottish Amateur League fixtures

Football

SCOTTISH Amateur League teams resume playing on Saturday after the festive break with the following fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup 4th round replay Oban Saints v Greenock HSFP; Premier Division One - Barrhead Arky v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two - Easthall Star v Lochgilphead Red Star; Tarbert v Houston.

Green Machine back in action after break

Rugby

OBAN Lorne RFC return to action on Saturday when they travel to take on top of the table Allan Glens at Bishopbriggs.



The over 35 Atlantis Leisure league is finished for the season. Taynuilt did the double winning the league and the cup without losing a game. The last time Taynuilt won the league was 12 years ago, only two players still playing are H Matheson and J Johnston. The players left to right, S Scott, D Campbell, K Roy, J Muir, J Jackson, I Rodgers, D Bryers, J Johnston, H Matheson and S Bratton. Any teams interested in joining next season please contact Johnny Johnston.

Martin Heath Team win Glensanda-sponsored Oban mini squash league

Squash

THE FINALS of the Glensanda Mini Squash Team League took place at Atlantis Leisure recently, and what a close run competition it was with everything to play for on the final day.

Congratulations go to the Martin Heath Team, who have held on to their lead throughout most of the matches played between April and December this year.

Thanks

Many thanks were made to Glensanda for sponsoring the tournament, also thanks were given to Donald MacLean for sponsoring the balls, to Atlantis Leisure for giving the courts free of charge to play on and to all the referees who helped

Squash

out on match days as well as the team captains and their players for making it a great fun squash competition, which will be running again in 2018.

Paul Kersley from Glensanda presents the Glensanda Trophy to Jo Gaz, captain of the winners - The Martin Heath Team. Also in the picture is Malcolm Croarkin, one of her team members.

FINAL LEAGUE TABLE					
	F	A	Diff	Joker	Pts
Martin Heath Team	88	38	+50	Yes	88
Norfolk-in-Chance	70	59	+11	Yes	70
Paul's Nickers	70	61	+9	Yes	70
The Hotshots	64	54	+10	Yes	64
Kelly's Heroes	60	65	-5	Yes	60
Jackie's Ballbreakers	54	78	-24	Yes	54
The Magnificent Six	52	82	-30	Yes	52



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WEATHER

Thursday Light rain
Winds light Easterly
Temperatures 1°C to 5°C.

Friday Cloudy
Winds moderate North Easterly
Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.

Weekend Sunny on Saturday
Sunny on Sunday
Winds moderate Northerly
Temperatures -2°C to 3°C.

FRIDAY

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday January 4, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm		
Thu	00.55 0.5 06.55 4.2 13.37 0.7 19.25 4.0		Ardrishaig	-5.35
Fri	01.42 0.5 07.39 4.1 14.25 0.8 20.09 3.8		Campbeltown	-5.30
Sat	02.29 0.6 08.24 3.9 15.14 1.0 20.54 3.6		Crinan	-0.47
Sun	03.17 0.8 09.10 3.7 16.05 1.3 21.42 3.3		Islay Port Ellen	2.00
Mon	04.07 1.1 09.59 3.4 16.59 1.5 22.39 3.1		Lochboisdale	+0.30
Tues	05.00 1.3 10.58 3.2 18.00 1.7 23.56 3.0		Ferry Crossings/Sea States	
Wed	05.58 1.5 12.20 3.0 19.13 1.8 *** **		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)

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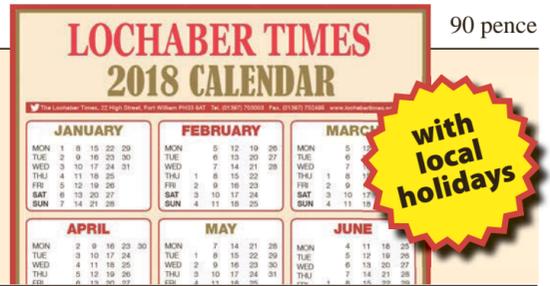
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Lochaber Times
wall calendar



Lochaber Foodbank sees numbers in need soaring

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

BY NEW Year, Lochaber Foodbank was expected to have fed in excess of 300 more people struggling to cope than it did the previous year.

In the week alone leading up to Christmas, the foodbank based in Fort William helped 113 people in crisis who faced having no Christmas, including 47 children, who also received gifts.

Lochaber Foodbank has been operating for four years and in that time has given out more than 35,000 meals to help individuals and families facing hardship. It opens for two hours, three days a week.

It is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks supported by the Trussel Trust and operates on a referrals basis, with vouchers exchanged for meals for a set number of days.

But as the numbers needing help soared towards 1,000 by the end of 2017, foodbank manager Alex McConachie praised what he called the 'wonderful generosity' of local residents and businesses that have kept pace with the growing demand by donating even more items and cash.

Mr McConachie told the *Lochaber Times*: 'This last year has been the busiest of the four since we started. In 2016, we fed 681 people and I expect by the end of 2017 we will have helped 1,000.'

'Why is the number increasing? It's due to a lot of factors. A few of those we help are classed as homeless, but the majority are people struggling to cope on low incomes, while others have

problems with delayed wages or benefit changes. And the introduction of Universal Credit has made the situation worse.

'There's also the general cost of living and the festive season usually sees people facing higher bills for things like electricity.

'But on the brighter side, the people of Lochaber have been absolutely fantastic. Since we first opened, they have kept putting their hands into their pockets and digging deep.

'I remember when we first opened, our then chairman was so worried we wouldn't have enough food to give out, he was on the verge of ringing the foodbank in Inverness to ask for supplies.

'But I knew we wouldn't need to. I said "don't worry, once we put the word out it will be fine" and it was, because the response was amazing.'

As well as individuals donating food and money, Mr McConachie says companies such as Tesco have been helpful.

Tesco in Fort William has a permanent collection point for the foodbank and adds an extra 20 per cent on top of what is collected.

Mr McConachie added: 'And I have to also mention Morrisons, Robertson's and the Co-op, as well as local schools and St Andrew's Church, who have been very supportive.'

Morrisons provided all the trimmings required for Christmas lunches to go with the turkeys given by the foodbank to eight families in need.

Sadly, Mr McConachie, who prior to helping launch the local foodbank also volunteered for many years with the local branch of the Salvation Army, says

Glenfinnan 'dook' brings in the New Year



The brave 'dookers' plunged into the chilly waters of Loch Shiel on New Year's Day. IF F01 Glenfinnan Dip 01: Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

WITH the waters of Loch Shiel a balmy 8°C, 48 hardy souls braved the conditions to take part in the annual Glenfinnan 'dook' on New Year's Day.

The event was organised as usual by Duncan and Manja Gibson of Glenfinnan

House Hotel, which kindly supplied champagne afterwards for those who had taken part in the festive swim.

The 'dook' has grown in popularity over the years and is now an established event on the Glenfinnan calendar.

This year's group of intrepid bathers had an international flavour with a number of overseas visitors joining local residents for what everyone agreed was a bracing start to 2018.

More photographs on the back page.



Aonghas Grant.

Aonghas honoured

A NUMBER of Highland and Islands residents have been named in the New Year's Honours List.

Perhaps best well-known locally is Aonghas Grant, of Caol, who receives the BEM for services to fiddling and music tradition in the Highlands.

Famous as the Left-Handed Fiddler of Lochaber, Mr Grant's musical career spans more than six decades. A performer, teacher and composer of note, he has been on the faculty of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

Donald Cameron of Lochiel is made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in his role as Lord Lieutenant of Inverness-shire.

An MBE goes to Colin Skeath, who now lives in Strontian. Mr Skeath retired in January last year after 27 years as a police officer in West Yorkshire. He finished his career as a neighbourhood inspector and receives his MBE for services to policing and the community in Halifax.

There is also an MBE for Katherine MacKay, chairwoman of the Isle of Lewis Local Committee Cancer Research UK for services to fundraising.

And there is an MBE for Professor Hugh Cheape, of Glenfinnan, who lectures at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye, for his services to Scottish cultural education and traditional music.

he sees no end to the need for foodbanks any time soon.

'People shouldn't have to go to foodbanks to feed themselves and their children in the 21st century,' he said.

'But you would be very surprised about the sort of people

who we have helped and that includes professionals like nurses.'

Asked if he ever felt overwhelmed by the never-ending plight of people struggling to cope, Mr McConachie, who is assisted by 12 volunteers to

run the foodbank, admitted

there are days when he feels disheartened. But he says he always remembers something his mother told him when he was growing up on the south side of Glasgow in the 1950s.

'Back then you always used to see people without arms and

legs and my mother used to give me a ha'penny to give to them because she said there were always people worse off than yourself.

'So I've always taken the view that we need to look out for each other and do what we can.'



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Star Wars: The Last Jedi (12A) 152 mins
"about as much fun as you could have at the movies" Deadline
09/01 at 8.30pm, 11/01 at 8.30pm

Murder on the Orient Express (12A) 114 mins
Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench and Michelle Pfeiffer join an all-star cast. *"impeccable styling"* Times
10/01 at 5.30pm, 12/01 at 8.30pm

Call Me By Your Name (15) 132 mins
"Call this movie by its name: Masterpiece"
New York Post 13/01 at 5.30pm

Rocket Post: A National Theatre of Scotland show (£6/£4) (PG) 60 mins
Filmed at a special performance on the Isle of Harris, a new collaboration with National Theatre of Scotland. An extraordinary show for families, packed with songs, charm and humour. *"Rocket Post lifts off and flies ... thoroughly engaging"* Herald 13/01 at 2pm

The Death of Stalin (15) 104 mins
Black comedy from creator of *The Thick of It* & *Veep* *"funniest film of the year runs riot through Russian history"* Mirror
10/01 at 8.30pm, 13/01 at 5.30pm

Book at: www.screenmachine.co.uk. Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings. Cash only, no cards. £7.50 Adults. Concessions £5.50, (except Rocket Post - £6/£4)

MSP fights baby scan charges

KATE Forbes has renewed her call to NHS Highland to rethink its charging policy after it confirmed it continues to be the only health board in Scotland to charge pregnant mums £5 for a baby scan photo.

Last summer, NHS Highland promised to review the controversial practice following an investigation by MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch Kate Forbes after she was contacted by a constituent.

But recent freedom of information requests have revealed the health board continues to charge expectant mums £5 for a photo, or £10 for three, at antenatal scan appointments.

The requests also showed not a single piece of paper formed part of the promised review and that it had been conducted by a sonographer who made telephone calls to four other hospitals - one of which did not respond.

And it emerged all three hospitals that answered were operating within health boards with a donations-only policy.

Ms Forbes believes strongly that those who live in the Highlands should not be penalised by higher costs for living and working and said: 'We already face longer journeys, higher fuel costs and surcharges on various services.

'That is why I raised my concerns about the additional costs faced by expectant mothers for copies of their antenatal scans in the Highlands over the summer.

'There are very few mums-to-be who don't want a copy of the antenatal scan and so most mums are charged.'

Ms Forbes says her campaign to get NHS Highland to reverse its policy is not about whether the NHS should charge for such scans, but why only mothers in the Highlands face a mandatory charge for scans.

'Ultimately, this is about the discrepancy across Scotland and about equitable access and

costs,' she added. 'While I welcome the fact NHS Highland has given this consideration, I would question how thorough the review has been if it only amounted to a quick chat with a colleague in another health board.'

'Speaking to three other hospitals on the phone does not strike me as being a comprehensive national review and I am disappointed NHS Highland believes this is adequate.'

'NHS Highland has confirmed there are no documents or paper trail associated with this review and that makes it harder to take their findings with any real authority.'

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FW

Commemorating 50th anniversary of tragic plane crash at Lochailort

Iain Thornber
editor@obantimes.co.uk

LAST THURSDAY, on the shortest day of the year, 21 people wound their way slowly up a rough, boulder-strewn path to a cairn on the south side of a hill a mile above Lochailort to remember 13 Royal Air Force personnel who were killed when the plane they were travelling in fell out of the sky exactly to the hour half a century before.

It was a pleasant winter's morning. Save for the low murmur of a few cars on the Road to the Isles and the rattle of the Mallaig-bound train on the West Highland Line below, there was nothing of the present to draw their thoughts and memories away from the past.

From a knoll above the cairn where the ceremony would take place, six stags watched the approaching party until one of them gave a hoarse bark and they vanished over the timeless skyline, disturbing a pair of snipe as they went. Just so did these wild things live on that remote hillside when the plane of 206 Squadron plunged into it 50 years ago.

Witnessing the crash on December 21 1967 was Angus Cameron, a county council roadman from Glenfinnan, who was working near Arieniskill, when he heard two loud explosions and saw a bright flash. He rushed down to Inverailort Castle to inform local landowner Mrs Cameron-Head, who immediately alerted the police and rescue services and sent her companion, Barbara Mackintosh, racing to the site.

Mrs Cameron-Head, who had been stationed in the area as an ambulance driver with the commandos during the Second

World War followed, but from what the ladies saw they soon realised there was nothing they could do.

In an act of public spiritedness and generosity for which she was well known throughout the Highlands, Mrs Cameron-Head threw open her home to the RAF air accident investigation unit and the mountain rescue teams over Christmas and the New Year.

Last week's pilgrimage was organised by the chairman and members of 206 Squadron Association and accompanied by Reverend Andrew Tucker, the Padre of RAF Lossiemouth and Wing Commander Bruce Farquhar, the officer commanding the present 206 Squadron. Mr and Mrs Ken Bowker from nearby Roshven, who were instrumental in having the first memorial plaque placed on the site on behalf of the Moidart History Group, led the column.

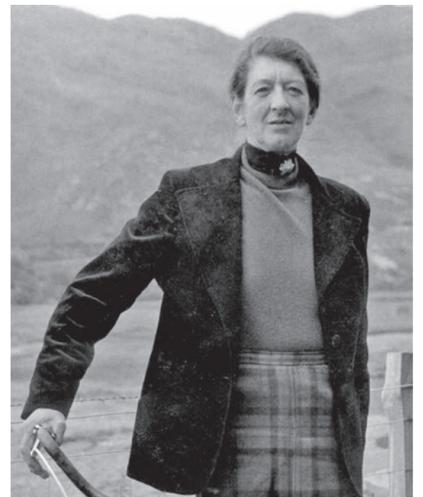
Donald Cameron of Lochiel, Lord Lieutenant of Inverness, was represented as were family members of the deceased and friends of the former RAF personnel who had taken part in the search for survivors. Also present was Jimmy MacDonald, formerly of Loch Morar-side, who earlier in the year rebuilt the cairn with almost a ton of stone which he carried on his back in a rucksack up the hill from Arieniskill. The dry stone cairn, now surmounted by a wooden cross, incorporates material from an earlier one with small pieces of wreckage gathered round its base. It is capped with a thin layer of cement into which Jimmy set thirteen white stones - one for each man who died.

Rev Tucker led the simple but moving commemoration service with prayers and readings. John



Channon of 206 Squadron listed those who died and, having known many of them, reflected on their personalities. A poem was read and Wing Commander Farquhar gave an account of the circumstances leading to the crash and the final hour of the plane and its crew.

He said: 'Shackleton MK3 XF 702 took off from RAF Kinloss at 12.30pm on December 21 1967



Pictures clockwise from top: A salute to the young men who died on that fateful day. Photograph: Martin Briscoe; Mrs Cameron-Head of Inverailort. Photograph: Brodrick Haldane; Inverailort Castle. Photograph: Iain Thornber; People make their way to the crash site and cairn above Lochailort. Photograph: Martin Briscoe; Reverend Andrew Tucker of RAF Lossiemouth Photograph: Martin Briscoe.

to conduct anti-submarine training off the west coast of Scotland, south west of Tiree. The meteorological briefing noted a weak cold front over the Scottish hills; associated with that was a forecast of moderate icing, severe in cloud, with the freezing level expected to be around 8,000 ft, which was also the aircraft's planned transit level.

'The crew's radio transmissions with Lossiemouth radar and later, Highland radar, indicated no particular problems. But contact was lost shortly after 1pm. One witness saw the aircraft emerging from cloud and shortly after a loud explosion was heard and a fireball seen. XF 702 had crashed on Creag Bhan around 1.05pm. Several witnesses from Lochailort and Arieniskill went to the scene but no help was possible.

'The board of inquiry concluded that the most likely cause of the crash was excessive accumulations of ice on those parts of the aircraft not protected by anti-icing systems; the propellers, the underside of wings and especially the tail planes.

The aircraft had experienced worse than forecast icing, and the freezing level was lower than expected. Aircraft speed would have fallen due to the extra weight and deterioration of aerodynamics, and with little reserve power, the plane stalled. The board of inquiry concluded, finally, that the aircraft had entered a steep

stall from which recovery was not possible.'

Those who died were: Pilot Sqn Ldr M C McCallum (33) Fleet, Hampshire; Sqn Ldr H Harvey (46) Tipton, Staffordshire; Flt Lt B G Mackie (33) Aberdeen; Flight Officer R F Fonseca (27) Nairobi; Flight Officer T C Swinney (25) Beverly, Hull; Flight Officer D J Evans (22) Middleborough; Flight Officer J V Young (31); Pilot Officer L C Maclean, Buckie; Flt Sgt D J Harris (30) Axminster; Sgt C P Mathews (33) Birmingham; Sgt M B Bowen (23) Nottingham; Sgt K B Hurry (26) Whittlesey, Cambs and Sgt M A Jones (27) Stockport.

Fiona Wilde, daughter of the late John Hinde, leader of the Kinloss Mountain Rescue team which was responsible for searching for debris over a wide area, came from Fort William. Her father's diaries reveal how thorough the ground investigation was in the days that followed.

He wrote: 'Kinross MRT left the station 23 minutes after being alerted and reached the incident in three hours 17 minutes. Team leader was informed by Sgt Banks of Mallaig police that there was no chance of survivors once Sgt Banks knew that no parachutes were carried. A night crash guard was immediately placed.

'Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team and civil defence units were thanked and told that they would not be required for search duties. Press repre-

sentatives and photographers were discouraged from going to the crash location during the first night. RAF Kinross was asked to provide a crash guard as soon as possible to ensure that the MRT was available for further emergencies.

'On December 22 1967, MRT and police removed the remains and made sweep searches of the immediate crash area; MRT searched the ridge of Creag Ban. Assistance was given to the president and members of the Accident Investigation Board who arrived in the afternoon.

'On December 25 and 26 the MRT was employed on the following tasks; marking out the crash area into 50 ft squares, digging in the crater for engine and propeller parts, salvaging of engine and propeller parts from a point 280 yards to the east of the crater, sweep searching the area and collecting classified papers, unexpanded pyrotechnics, pieces of controls and control surfaces and other named items, collection of propeller and engine parts and stacking for salvage by helicopter and removal to the lawn of Inverailort Castle.

'On December 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 1967, Leuchars and Kinloch MRTs carried out sweep searches [over a wider area]. It was necessary to charter a boat from Mr R Watt of Mallaig to take search parties to Oban at the head of Loch Morar on December 27 and 29. After December 28 all personnel going to the hill were briefed

to use disinfectant baths which were provided as boot-dips for prevention of spread of foot and mouth disease.

'On January 7 1968, a boat was chartered from Miss N C Ford of Meoble Lodge to take MRT to the head of Loch Morar to search a corrected estimated track of the crashed aircraft. All the new estimated track below 1,300 ft was covered within five miles of the crash but searching above this altitude was abandoned as being ineffectual because of a covering of snow to a depth of 4-6 inches. All local people were helpful to the teams and particularly gracious hospitality and assistance were provided over a prolonged period by Mrs L P Cameron-Head of Inverailort Castle.'

When the shadows began to lengthen and the party fore-gathered to make their way back to Lochailort Inn, which had been kept open specially for them by manageress Mrs Eilidh Gillies, a bottle of whisky, appropriately named 'Shackleton', was passed round in the time-honoured, Highland custom at such poignant events.

As the last man turned to leave the scene of the terrible tragedy, the cairn was illuminated by a sun-burst of pale, yet dazzling gold, before disappearing from view behind by a trailing rain-shower.

Iain Thornber
iain.thornber@btinternet.com

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Lochaber's senior councillor looks to the year ahead

Andrew Baxter, Independent councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, looks back over 2017 and forward into 2018 from his perspective as chairman of Lochaber Area Committee

'HOPEFULLY, politics and particularly local politics, was the last thing on our minds as we enjoyed the Christmas and New Year festivities.

'However, as we start the new year even someone with only a passing interest in current affairs might raise an eyebrow at what an extraordinary year we experienced in 2017.

'From President Trump's tweets to an unexpected General Election, it was a year of momentous events and political change at national and international level.

'Closer to home, events have been calmer but seen no less important changes. We've seen a change at Highland Council headquarters as a new independent-led coalition took responsibility for running the council.

'Here in Lochaber we said goodbye to four long-serving councillors. Bill Clark, Bren Gormley, Thomas MacLennan and Brian Murphy all retired at the May election.

'Collectively they provided decades of service to our local communities and, despite our sometimes strong political differences, I would like to thank them for the contribution they all made over many years.

'It's fantastic to see the significant changes in and around Fort William, with the long-awaited retail park on North Road top of the list. The new Marks and

Spencer Food Hall is proving extremely popular and now an envious Oban wants to follow suit.

'When all the units are occupied it will be a real asset for the town and Lochaber. The long derelict Fort William Secondary School is almost transformed into new offices.

'Although the new additions are not to my architectural taste, the whole site is a more welcoming entrance to the town.

'Already we've seen vital new homes created in the redundant Tweedale Buildings in the town centre. As the council moves out of other long-term and expensive office leases, the new offices will also save taxpayers' money.

'Savings like this are all important as the council grapples with the continuing financial challenges that will last for many more years.

'And with the change of ownership at the Lochaber Smelter, there is real optimism that new investment will bring new jobs and renewed infrastructure to the area.

'Councillors will soon get the chance to consider the plans for the new alloy wheel factory. As this is a significant development that will have a long-lasting impact on the area, including our road network, housing demand and wider infrastructure, it's only right it receives full and detailed scrutiny before approval.

It's also why the transport appraisal, looking at the requirement for a realignment of the A82, is so important.

'Now that both Scottish ministers and Transport Scotland are listening to local views, councillors will continue to lobby for funding.

'We need to do the same for a long-term solution to crossing the Corran Narrows; councillors are looking forward to the results of the options study to be conducted by HITRANS, our regional transport partnership.

'Likewise, we all want to see significant progress this year from NHS Highland on plans for our new hospital at Blar Mhor.

'Councillors collectively also want more decision-making devolved from Inverness so that they are made here in Lochaber.

'There are real opportunities to do that this year, with councillors also demanding budgets come with those new powers.

'The key will be how we can make those decisions not in isolation in a council chamber in Fort William, but in partnership with individual communities.

'Residents from Kilchoan to Kinlochleven to Kilmallie need to have every opportunity to influence the decisions that affect their areas.

'As we look forward to 2018, may I, on behalf of the team of Lochaber councillors, wish you a very happy New Year.'



Independent councillor Andrew Baxter.

Lochaber Foodbank gets present from TSB

TSB Fort William is giving Lochaber Foodbank £200 to support families over the festive period who are experiencing financial hardship.

The donation is part of a nationwide Christmas donation programme by TSB, which is giving every one of its branches money to gift to a local cause, as a little extra support at this time of year.

TSB has given more than £1.7 million to local causes across Britain since its local charity partnerships launched in 2015.

This year a record 27,000 nominations were received from local charities across the country to join the programme which sees TSB Partners from 550 branches and eight office sites volunteer and raise money on behalf of the chosen charities.

Brian Foster, bank manager at TSB Fort William, told the *Lochaber Times*: 'We're delighted to be able to help Lochaber Foodbank with this donation. We chose to give this money to Lochaber Foodbank because of the brilliant work the team does in supporting local families who are experiencing severe financial hardship, particularly over the festive period. It's fantastic to know that the £200 we are giving them will really make a difference to people in our local community.'

Alex McConachie, manager, Lochaber Foodbank, added: 'Thanks to TSB Fort William we can provide assistance to more families.'



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Woman's near fatal anaphylactic shock sparks hospital cover row



Sleat parents and families enjoy pupils' fine Christmas concert

A HUGE successful Christmas concert by pupils of Bun-sgoil Shleite was enjoyed by Sleat parents and families shortly before Christmas.

A wide variety of acts and performances, including a 70-pupil whole school show of

'Hosanna Rock' entertained a full-house at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

The £300 proceeds from the door on the night will be shared between school funds and UNICEF.

The parent council also raised more

£500 with its terrific raffle at the event. Head teacher Gwen Culbertson thanked staff, parents and 'especially the talented Sleat pupils' for a fantastic show and continued support and generosity. And many thanks to Steve Mckenzie for the photos.'



A hugely successful Christmas concert was staged by pupils of Bun-sgoil Shleite.

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A PORTREE man whose partner suffered an almost fatal anaphylactic shock after eating prawns last week, says he fears what would have happened if the incident had happened a few days later due to changes to festive season out of hours care on the island.

It was three days before Christmas when Rosie McDade, 43, ate some prawns while at home. Fifteen minutes later she experienced itching and a burning sensation to her hands, arms, neck and face.

A few minutes more and her lips and eyes started to swell. Her breathing became wheezy and it was decided a trip to hospital was needed.

Rosie's partner, Donnie Nicolson, told the *Lochaber Times* that in the few minutes it took to get a jacket on and get to the car, Rosie was vomiting, struggling to breathe due to her throat and tongue swelling and struggling to stay upright.

'By the time we reached Portree Hospital - just a few minutes drive from our home - she was unable to walk,' added Mr Nicolson.

'The medical team on duty at Portree Hospital quickly took her into their care and went to work. As you would expect, it was true professionalism at its best.

'Within a short time the drugs administered had taken effect and her symptoms were brought under control.'

It turned out Rosie had suffered an anaphylactic reaction to prawns - something she and Mr Nicolson love to eat.

Mr Nicolson said once the couple were back home, relief soon turned to concern over what would have happened if Rosie had taken ill a few days later.

'Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening severe allergic reaction. Had we gone to Portree Hospital and found there was not the appropriate staff or equipment we would have had to go to Broadford,' Mr Nicolson continued.

'The treatment that Rosie received within 20 minutes of experiencing symptoms saved her life.

'If this had happened just a



Rosie McDade, who could have died were it not for the immediate help available at Portree Hospital, said her partner.

week later - when we believe the same level of care will not be available in Portree - the outcome may have been very different.'

And Mr Nicolson says he fears what will happen if NHS Highland fails to recruit more staff.

'At the moment there are staff doing a fantastic job through loyalty to their profession and community. Excellent staff have left, but what's being offered to those looking to fill the roles is not satisfactory,' he said.

'Rosie was lucky. She got the required treatment quickly and has made a full recovery. Our fear is that others will not be so lucky. Once the basic life saving capability has been removed from Portree hospital, lives will be lost. And once something is gone, you'll not get it back.'

Emergency out-of-hours cover at the Portree hospital was suspended on Boxing Day, with just restricted services on Wednesday December 27 and on Hogmanay due to staff shortages.

NHS Highland said the decision was made following safety concerns raised by senior clinicians over the number of available qualified staff, especially advanced nursing practitioners (ANPs), at Portree.

During these times of restricted hours, cover will be provided by the rural support team based at the Dr MacKinnon Memorial

Hospital in Broadford. Senior clinicians who cover the service were said to have been unanimous that unless a clinician is based in Portree who is able to 'see, treat and discharge', it is safer to provide the service from a single site at Dr Mackinnon Memorial Hospital.

'While we appreciate this will not be popular, it was felt there is a greater risk of clinical error if Portree patients are managed remotely without a senior practitioner onsite,' said NHS Highland. 'There is no change to accessing emergency services and people should dial 999 if they experience a medical emergency and the Scottish Ambulance Service will respond as appropriate.'

But Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP Ian Blackford says there is considerable anger and real worry in the north of Skye that for those needing medical attention there will be no local service on the days in question.

'This situation is just not acceptable, especially at a time when GP services are restricted and their surgeries closed over the holiday period,' said Mr Blackford.

'Surely NHS Highland management must have known about this for some time and if so should have been able to take more appropriate action.

'Let us hope there are no major incidents at this time.'

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From left: Colin MacAndrew, Raymond King and Pat McElhinney from Fort William Fire Station during the visit to the town's health centre to reach out to the more vulnerable members of the community. JP F01 Fire service event

Fire safety advice given out at Fort health centre

SCOTTISH Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) staff visited the health centre in Fort William recently to advise and support community members.

Several home fire safety checks were also arranged as a result of the visit.

SFRS group manager Pat McElhinney commented: 'Raymond and Colin have

done a fantastic job of educating and supporting members of the community at the health centre and hopefully this will be a regular event.'

Ferry contract news will be welcomed says MSP

NA H-EILEANAN an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan has welcomed the announcement the Scottish Government hopes to be able to award future ferry contracts directly to public sector operators such as CalMac.

Minister for Transport and the Islands Humza Yousaf MSP gave an update to the Scottish Parliament last week on the on-going procurement policy review for ferry contracts.

During this speech, the Minister announced it was the Scottish Government's

preference, if legal questions can be resolved, to scrap the tendering process for the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services and award the contract to CalMac indefinitely.

Mr Allan is sure the news will be widely welcomed across the islands.

'During the most recent tendering process, it was clearly the wish of most islanders that these services should continue to be run by CalMac' he said.

'While the Scottish Government has always been clear that its preference was

not to have to tender ferry services for the west coast, the EU rules obligated this Government and the former Labour/ administration to initiate a tender exercise.

'I am glad the Scottish Government is working to ensure a simpler situation for ferry services in the islands in future and help us protect the huge increase in spending on ferry services that has occurred since the SNP took office.

'Whatever happens, the views of communities should be at the heart of future decisions.'

Ardnamurchan High pupils put on cracker of Christmas show

ARDNAMURCHAN High School pupils performed to a packed hall ahead of the Christmas break, showcasing the wide range of talented young people in Ardnamurchan and Movern, writes Mark Entwistle.

The evening started with practically the whole of S1 on stage performing A Christmas Desposito, with their own lyrics (and spelling) to a well-known song.

The school's group performed a stunning version of Walking in the Air followed by The Traditional Group, led by Head Girl, Kate Bradley, performing a local arrangement by of Chasing Daylight.

Virtually a whole class group came up on stage again as S2 then performed Thunder, complete with synthesised sound effects, before Rachael and Bethan White came on stage to perform a beautiful flute duet for a Christmas Medley.

Jim Hunter's influence across the Lochaber was clearly in evidence as his students, Hunter's Heroes performed Jessica, complete with amazing instrumental solos, to rapturous applause.

The school's vocal group then performed the Coventry Carol with beautiful lead vocals by Isabella Sutherland and Christina Findlay, before the string group performed a surprisingly jazzy version of an ancient medieval piece Gaudette.

The band Moving Swiftly On ended the first half with Counting Stars and Merry Christmas Everybody.

The second half was opened by Moving Swiftly On, led by Janie Patterson's soaring vocals and with Aaron Mellis's thundering



All the singers and musicians got on stage for the finale.



The high school also held a Christmas dance.

bass, playing 7 Nations Army (a staff request). The next whole-class performance was S3's brilliant version of Queen's Don't Stop Me Now.

Bethan White returned to the stage to sing a heart-rendingly beautiful version of Oh Holy Night with sister Rachael's piano accompaniment, followed by Ruby Sansom's stunning version of The Norah Jones classic Don't Know Why.

Mr MacInnes's Gaelic Folk group then returned us to our Gaelic roots with Tàladh Chrìosda, a 19th-century carol local to the Moidart area and the Kesck Jig, followed by Kate Bradley's return to the stage to dazzle the audience with her brilliant clarsach playing.

Chloe Macpherson followed this by nailing Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah, again, to rapturous applause, followed by Rachael

White's return to the stage to demonstrate her excellent grade six skills with a classical piece on the flute.

The orchestra (uniquely and ably supported by guitars) performed a brilliant version of Viva la Vida before all performers returned to fill the stage to overflowing to lead the audience for the finale with Merry Christmas everyone.

The High School also held its Christmas dance last month with excellent music provided by Gary Innes and friends.

Head teacher Chris Millar-Craig said pupils had been a credit to the school on the night with the floor virtually full for every dance.

'Well done to head pupil, Kate Bradley, the rest of S6 and her team of helpers for all their efforts and organisation,' said Mr Millar-Craig.



The festive performance showcased the wealth of musical talent that is encouraged and nurtured at Ardnamurchan High School.

WHAT'S ON in Lochaber

■ Nether Lochaber Village Hall will be the venue for a family ceilidh on December 29, from 7-11pm. The Midgies Ceilidh Band will provide the music and there will also be a piper, good craic and dancing. This is a family event. BYOB with some traditional fayre available for a small donation. Entry and local minibus service are by donation - no tickets. Booking is advisable - places are limited due to the size of the venue and number of bus runs we can offer. To reserve your places, text/call: 07767 318857, or email: netherlochaberca@btinternet.com

■ Bring in the new year with a dip in Loch Linnhe during the Hogmanay Open Water Swim at the Old Fort, Fort William, at 2pm. For more information visit Off Beat Bikes or call 01397 704008.

■ The next meeting of Fort William Scottish Women's Institute will be at 7.15pm on Monday January 8 in the Montrose Centre, Inverlochty. The speaker is Hazel Smith who will talk about disfigurement makeup. A warm welcome is extended to women of all ages.

■ Fort William Accordion and Fiddle Club is hosting a musical evening on Tuesday January 9, at 7.30pm in the Railway Club at Inverlochty. Guest musicians will be the Iain Smith Trio. All Welcome. Admission £5. Tea and raffle extra.

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FW



Glencoe primary puts on cracker of a show

Glencoe Primary School's recent musical nativity show was well attended by parents and other members of the community. Entitled 'Christmas Praise', it featured all children from primaries one to seven, who performed two shows.



Strontian pupils' perfect panto performance

Strontian Primary School pupils performed their pantomime *Cinders*, a comic Christmas tale based around the village and held in the village hall to a full house.

Duror primary's nativity proves a big hit



Above: Duror Primary School pupils recently staged a musical nativity, entitled 'Hey Ewe'. The children in primaries one to seven performed two shows to their parents and local community.

Boys Brigade members in Fort William enjoy Christmas party

Members of the 2nd Company of Fort William Boys Brigade enjoying their Christmas party in Duncansburgh Macintosh Church Hall.



Rotary Club in fine festive voice for carol singing

Lochaber Rotary Club members enjoyed carol singing round the Christmas tree recently. IF F01 Rotary Christmas carols

RETRO Roamer

More Roamerisms from 30 years ago

□ The very large cuddly toy, aka The Clown, lying in the bed in the shop window of a Fort William furniture retailer, has been drawing interesting comments since it/he was first tucked in there before Christmas. In the early hours of last Sunday morning then, it was no surprise when three young lassies en route from the Disco for The Village and Claggan, stopped to admire the clown. The Claggan one knocked on the window and made faces at it. Then one of the Inverlochyites screamed 'That clown moved!' The joint response from the other two was predictable: 'How much have YOU had to drink tonight?' But, sure enough, on the other side of the window, something had stirred. And then, from under the duvet, appeared a Lochaber man who, having found that the door of the premises had been left open, had nipped in for a nap and donned the clown's hat. The knock on the window had awakened him. Presumably he just got up to see who was at the window. But by that time our three heroines had fled to The Village and Claggan.



The exterior of what are now the Lochaber Times' offices in the High Street, Fort William, taken in the late 19th century.



The same buildings today, including the Lochaber Times' office on the right.

□ Did you see that beautiful rainbow on Sunday evening? It was certainly a colourful and much photographed sight. One end of it was focused on Blarmafalach. So maybe there's gold in them Blar hills right enough.

□ After much certainty and confusion surrounding a decision - or otherwise - on a particularly convoluted application at Monday's planning committee meeting, my eyes did not deceive me when I noted the official reference at the bottom of the page containing this agenda item. It read 'CR/AP'!

□ It seems £3 a day keeps the climbers away. At least that appears to have been the result following the posting by Fort William Golf Club of a £3 notice at the overflow car park aimed at discouraging visiting mountaineers from parking there for free all weekend. What to do about achieving some monetary redress from them? Put the cost up and shout 'four'?

□ Take a letter Dear Roamer, There was no mention of Drew Purdon in last week's LN. Is this a record? Yours sincerely, Drew Purdon. (Well, then, that's you mentioned twice already - in this week's Roamer)

□ In the old Welfare League football days at what most locals hoped would forever be the Town Park, you could always spot the railwaymen in the crowd by the way they checked their watches around 8.20pm. Not, you understand, to see how long there was to go in the match, but

to find out if the Glasgow train was up to time as it chuffed past the Belford and Belhaven. So it was shades of the 1950s at Claggan Park last Saturday when the steam train tooted just after the 3pm re-start. It should have been heard at 2.30pm, but Banavie Bridge was playing up again and, it seems, will continue to do so.

□ You possibly haven't heard about the experimentation on Loch Arkaig by amphibious diggers. The administrators have been keeping their underwater trials something of a secret, but some news has leaked through. It appears that a digger, standing by the side of the loch, was in need of a wash. And that is what it got. Unfortunately, while the deep clean was in progress, the digger began to slip sideways into Loch Arkaig, finishing up with total immersion. Dig! Dig!

□ Japanese experts working at British Alcan's Lochaber Smelter on an exchange visit were full of praise for the technological prowess of those they call 'The Scottish Men'. They were even more impressed when they discovered that the 'The Scottish Men' had worked all day on Sunday on what the Japanese gentlemen considered to be a Scottish holiday.

□ Well, the councillors appear to be earning their £16.70 attendance allowance in Lochaber

House. Last Tuesday they ploughed through a 36-item agenda. Then the meeting went into extra time for two members to select play area equipment for their wards. And all this in front of an audience of one. Me!

□ 'Mummy, Claire's big sister says bad words.' Thus announced one of Claire's little friends. 'Of course she doesn't,' came the obvious parental reply, especially as little friend isn't old enough to know what 'bad words' are. 'Oh yes she does,' replied little friend, 'She says 'oh sugar'!

□ A member of Spean Golf Club was about to play his approach shot to the seventh hole on Thursday. As he addressed the ball, this bloke came running up and said, breathlessly: 'Excuse me, I've just landed on the fairway along there.' Club member replied: 'That's all right, people are always doing that. You can just play through.' The bloke recovered his breath sufficiently to say: 'But you don't understand. I've just landed my glider on the fairway.' And he had, too. Apparently he had been seeking to touch down in Roy Bridge.

□ Courier on a tour coach carrying mainly matrons went into one of our High Street emporia to buy - a jock strap. On the box was the wording 'What the Scotsman wears under his kilt'. At the hotel evening sing song the courier prepared to reveal the Scotsman's 'secret'. She held up the box in full view of the blue rinse brigade. 'I shall show you what you've all been wanting to know,' she announced. Then she opened the box. It was empty! The shop assistant had omitted to put the jock strap back in after she'd shown it to the courier! Give the courier her due. She recovered well enough to say: 'Well, that's what the Scotsman wears under his kilt. Nothing!'

□ I was interested to observe the training schedule of Councillor Brian Murphy as he was pounding the pavements last week. Getting himself ready for electioneering or for the Steenhive Half Marathon, I mused. Brian had completed the lap from the village to Achintee and was back at Inverlochy Road End en route to the village itself. It was there that he had to stop his watch. Because, such was the volume of traffic that Brian was stranded on the kerb for two minutes which knocked his timing to the four winds.

□ The news that something might be done at last about the roving sheep in Mallaig will be heartening for one local shopkeeper in particular. Apparently, last week, he discovered an ewe munching its way happily through half a stone of pears inside his shop. And since then he has been finding it hard to keep his wool on.

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Viewpoint



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

As we said goodbye to the old and welcomed in the new year, for many people it is a time for reflection – thinking about all the good times we've had with family and friends, colleagues and in our community in the last 12 months, but also remembering those we've lost, or the difficult or painful circumstances we faced during the year.

This week's front page interview with Lochaber foodbank manager Alex McConachie revealed the shocking news that the charity fed 113 people in crisis, who faced having no Christmas – including 47 children, who also received gifts.

Mr McConachie told the *Lochaber Times* that last year

was the busiest of the four since the foodbank started and that 1,000 people will have been helped in 2017. The majority are people struggling to cope on low incomes, while others have problems with delayed wages or benefit changes – the Universal Credit has made it worse.

For most people the news that our governments are failing people in Lochaber is depressing, but there is light in the gloom, with residents and businesses in Lochaber showing what it means to live in a caring community.

The *Lochaber Times* wishes all its readers and advertisers a happy new year and may this year be one of hope, joy and positivity for you and yours.



Days gone by – 1997

The date is June 5, but what was the occasion that brought Billy Connolly to Argyll and who are the young dancers who shared the stage with the Big Yin?

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL
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Happy New Year to all readers!

IT'S BEEN a while since I've covered travel on land, sea or sky, so for the first instalment of 2018 a wee hop across to Poland for Christmas is the general subject of this piece with a few musical, food and festive strands to accompany the journey.

We flew off from Glasgow Airport on Christmas Eve, first heading to Amsterdam for a few hours at Schiphol Airport, then on to Warsaw where we would be till December 28.

My favourite way to begin a holiday is going straight into it after a busy period of work. There is an element relating to the contrast in activity that agrees with me and the effect of getting on a plane, train, car or ferry and going somewhere different after being under pressure in the days and weeks leading to it gives a strong feeling of relief and release. After

the hustle and bustle of most of December, the feeling of relief when the plane took off into the mid-winter sky was sublime.

We arrived in Warsaw just in time to make the Christmas Eve *piszaniar* feast. Christmas Eve is as big a part of the festive celebrations in Poland as the day itself. No meat is consumed in the meal and it is usually served late in the evening.

Twelve courses – representative of the 12 apostles – of fish and vegetarian dishes are enjoyed over the night and this is augmented by shots of vodka served from the freezer. A strong contributor to the menu is herring, served both salted and in various pickles.

The Polish and *Tirisdeach* dual traditions and appreciation for herring was a good topic of translated conversation.

The next day it was south to Radom for the Christmas meal with the other side of Ania's family. By the time I reached the town, about 70 miles to the south, I was getting the hang of driving on the 'wrong' side of the road.

A similar massive quantity of food was on offer here, this time with meat courses added in, and unlike the previous evening, Ania was driving the return leg so I was able to take part in the shots of the frozen vodka.

'Nastrovia' and 'Slainte' were used alternately on each toast, which is always taken together round the table.

I had brought the box with me, so after the feasting we all joined together and sang songs. Christmas Carols and songs of both Scottish and Polish traditions were shared and they even sang along with a few Skipinnish numbers.

Most of Ania's family have no English and I have no Polish, but the amount of good crack and communication you can have with people without a common tongue is incredible.

The language of life goes much deeper than the spoken word. The language of music, food, drink, celebration, love, friendship and of warm welcome transcends words and that was the overarching feeling I had flying home full of festive cheer last Thursday.



Social media

Our breaking news about the A828 having to be closed after a lorry hit the bridge over the Falls of Lora at Connell received a lot of comments. Here are just a few:

Jacinta Maclean-Black: How does a lorry driver not know the height of their own vehicle

Jo Allen: Everyone who made the detour like me or was otherwise inconvenienced put a claim in against driver's insurance

Fran Kirkham: Any lorry driver worth their salt knows what height their lorry is

Liz McIntosh: Should have gone to specavers. Really!

Susan Jones: Thought there were lines/poles across the road before the lights on both sides to stop this from happening?

Shona M Gillies: Not a great advertisement for a logistics company.....

Margaretanne Browne: Why did the driver think he could get through the

bridge. He should be charged with careless driving.

Kate McNab: That's height of stupidity and a hell of a detour for everyone stuck. What a clown.

Meanwhile there was a lot of good will for retired handyman Cammy Dempster who shone brightest to win The Oban Times' best decorated house competition, with Angela McDougall commenting: Fab...well done Cammy ..well deserved! x

Wild salmon are being sacrificed for profits

Sir,
As chairman of Nether Lochaber Community Council, I am very disappointed at the decision by the Highland Council Planning Committee (South) to grant permission for an expansion of a Marine Harvest Scotland Loch Leven fish farm, without stipulating a requirement that this be responsive to widespread local concerns over the decline in wild fish stocks.

This is the second expansion of a salmon farm in our area (Gorsten, Ardgour, being the first) granted permission in recent months, despite opposition from the Lochaber Fisheries Trust and Lochaber District Salmon Development Board, local Highland councillors, community councils at Nether Lochaber, Glencoe and Ballachulish and residents.

This is not only a Lochaber issue, but on the basis of evidence gathered by Marine Science Scotland, one that is affecting the entire west coast of Scotland, while being ignored by the Scottish Government.

There are two main strands to the negative environmental impacts of salmon farms on local biodiversity.

First, the chemical emamectin benzoate, known by its product name Slice, and used to treat sea lice infestation on the farms, has been shown to toxify the seabed in inland waters, killing off native crustaceans. Secondly, the sea lice infestations on farms can increase the lice burden for both wild trout and salmon, particularly on young fish.

Other factors further exacerbate this situation.

Most salmon farms are in sheltered inland waters without strong tidal flows that would inhibit sea lice taking hold in pens. This is likely to be for both the safety and convenience of working in these locations and to avoid the additional cost to farm salmon producers of siting pens in faster flowing currents.

Also, in recent years sea lice numbers have been shown to spike in warmer average sea temperatures which have been recorded in inland waters such as Loch Leven (up by 1.5°C during 2015-16), reaching numbers that exceed the accepted lice burdens recommended by the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation.

In Scotland, the most lucrative wild fishing rivers are protected from the development of fish farms in their vicinity.

It is as if salmon farms are satellites floating in space, disconnected from local or regional eco-systems, with SEPA limited to regulating their operational standards, SNH commenting solely on their visual impacts in national scenic areas, and MSS not actually being required for planning consultation.

We have a situation where our common natural heritage, such as once abundant wild fisheries in rivers and lochs, is being sacrificed in the name of economics. A situation in which Scottish Government agencies

have basically institutionalised degradation of our wild environment. For jobs, apparently.

And if you examine that idea of job creation making this justifiable, consider the number of prawn creel boats that have gone out of business, the complete ban on traditional wild fish netting at river mouths on the West Coast and whether there are as many opportunities to be a ghillie or water bailiff as there once were.

This is a complex situation, but it needs to be examined honestly and reacted to with joined-up thinking by the agencies, producers, planners and communities involved, or we will end up in a future without any wild salmonids in areas like Lochaber.

It is, after all, the job of public agencies such as SEPA, SNH, HC, MSS to know what we have and to protect it, not sacrifice it.

Iain Jenner,
Chairman, Nether Lochaber Community Council.

Misconception over Brexit is common

Sir,
I feel obliged to address a common misconception apparently shared by Iain M MacDonald of Lewis in the *Lochaber/Oban Times* of December 14 concerning Brexit.

The slogan on the 'Brexit bus' said, quite distinctly: 'We send the EU £350 million a week: let's fund our NHS instead.'

Nowhere did it say anything about all, or even part, of that sum going directly to the NHS (although I and many others wish it would). It was simply an example of how much we were giving to the EU and how much better we could spend that sum within the UK.

Davie Kerr,
Onich.

Generous gifts of donated Gaelic books

Sir,
The Gaelic Books Council warmly thanks Acair, Wee Mackay Press and everyone who contributed to our Christmas charity campaign, the Gaelic Book-Gifting Tree.

Support from the publishers and customers has allowed the Gaelic Books Council to provide 120 pupils in Gaelic-medium education (GME) who are living in difficult circumstances with Gaelic books for Christmas.

All GME schools were approached in November through Education Scotland's newsletter asking if they were aware of any families who were particularly struggling at this time of year and who would not otherwise be able to buy a book for their children.

The schools sent the Gaelic Books Council requests for books, which were all added to the gifting tree online and in the Gaelic bookshop. A total of 120 books were added to the tree, for pupils ranging from P1 to P7.

Following a social media and email campaign, £323 worth of books were bought online and in our shop.

The Gaelic Books Council held a coffee morning during Book Week

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
ailean@obantimes.co.uk



BLIADHNA MHATH ÙR dhuibh uile, agus gach soirbheachadh leis gach rùn agus dòchas a th' agaibh air a son!

Ri linn 's mar a tha obair-deasachaidh a' phàipeir seo ga dhèanamh aig an àm seo den bhliadhna, tha mise a' sgrìobhadh seo seachdain ro dheireadh 2017, air an latha ron an Nollaig. Abair othail thall 's a-bhos! Tha àm ceannach thiodhlacan seachad agus spàirn a-nise gam pagadh gu brèagha le aithne gum tèid na parsailen grunn sin a' reubadh o chèile ann am beagan uairean a thide! Ach nach math an cothrom a bhith againn leithid sin a dhèanamh, agus comas coibhneas agus fialaidheachd a nochdadh dha càch a chèile. Agus tha othail cuideachd a' deasachadh biadh Nollaige agus bidh milleanan a' dèanamh toileachas ri ròic eireachdail agus tha mi 'n dòchas gur ann mar sin a bhios cuisean dhuibhse cuideachd. Ach mar a tha fios againn uile tha feadhainn a bhios fuar, acrach, aonranach, agus 's e suidheachadh duilich a th' ann gum bheil

uimhir fhathast ann am bochdainn agus an eisimeil taice agus cobhair. A dh'aindeoin na h-obrach luachmhor a tha ga dhèanamh às leth agus le cart-hannais, tha mòran air an t-sitig gun dìon, gun bhàthas. Saoilidh mi gum bheil coibhneas dualach dhuinne mar Ghàidheil agus cuimhnicheamaid air an fheadhainn a tha feumach air taic, chan ann a-mhàin aig an àm seo ach fad na bliadhna. Mar a tha an sean-fhacal ag ràdh, 's ann an àm a' chruadaid a dh'athnìchean na càirdean, agus bheir an taic as lugha furtachd mar a tha eachdraidh a' fàgail ann am briathran Iarla Mhàir.

'S math an còcair' an t-acras, 'S maing nì tarcais air biadh, Fuarag eòrna an sàil mo bhròige - Biadh a b'fheàrr a fhuair mi riamh! Bidh mi a' cuimhneachadh air an àm nuair a bha mi nam bhalach is mar a bhithinn a' cur seachad ùine cuide ri m' athair feasgar na Callainn a' sgioblachadh chùisean air a' chruit. Bhiodh mo mhàthair a' dèanamh an aon rud taobh a-staigh an taighe gus am biodh an t-àite deiseil agus an

Scotland, which raised a further £108 to buy more books. We are hugely grateful to the publishers who supported this campaign, particularly Acair, which has had a successful year celebrating its 40th anniversary.

All books were delivered to the schools before the Christmas holidays to allow them to be distributed to families.

The kindness of those who supported the campaign will allow more young Gaelic readers to enjoy a book on Christmas Day.

The Gaelic Books Council wishes you all a very happy New Year.

Shelagh Chaimbeul,
Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council).

Accolade for bus shelter not deserved

Sir,
I was congratulated recently for helping to get a bus shelter at Ellenabeich. I had to refuse the accolade as it had nothing to do with me.

In the late 1990s, I was contracted to build five drystone 'moles' in the square to be used as planters, three greenheart benches and to arrange placement of cast steel bollards around the crane which had been brought up from the pier head.

At that time, the plans showed a site for a bus shelter on the wider stretch of pavement between C John Taylor's and the square. The community council (CC) wanted a stone structure. Argyll and Bute Council refused as in the past these structures had been used as toilets and much else. They offered a standard shelter.

This was refused as, despite the fact it was see-through, it would spoil the view. I offered to hold an auction of people's bric-a-brac, antiques and collectables to raise the money. I had absolutely no response from the CC.

None the less, I girded up my rain-soaked loins and bought several fair-condition umbrellas and placed them in the telephone box with a note. I also put a notice where the, by now, mythical shelter would never be, saying that people should return them after boarding the bus. They disappeared within a fortnight.

I took to sheltering in the telephone kiosk and I put in a small wooden stool so I could wait in comfort. I did think of opening a pizza parlour but there would be no bus shelter for the customers to eat their pizzas.

Sadly, all the rain-soaked waits took their toll and I found it more and more difficult because of a chest infection to make it to the square, so I gave up. Fortunately, many people, being kind beyond the extreme, are willing to take me from door to door, so to speak.

So, to the lady who offered the congratulations for getting a shelter in Ellenabeich: 'It wisnae me' – I was too busy taking the antibiotics. Sorry about my attitude: 17 years is a long time to wait for a bus in a shelter which is now in the wrong place so that the tourists' eyes are not offended.

George Doyle,
Ellenabeich.

Ailean Caimbeul

òrdugh airson na Bliadh' Ùire! Mar a gheibhte sinn toiseach na bliadhna, bhiodh dòchas gun leanadh i mar sin dhuinn!

Gun teagamh sam bith cuiridh an saoghal iomadh car eadar seo agus a' chihad latha de 2018, agus fiù 's barrachd chun an àm a bhios sibhe a' leughadh seo. Agus gu cinnteach bidh mòran a bhios glè thoilichte cùl a chur ri 2017 agus coimhead le dòchas air bliadhna ùr agus cothroman ùra. Nach bu mhath gun tigeadh leasachadh air cor an t-saoghail anns an fharsaingeachd air a' bhliadhna seo, agus gum faigheadh luchd-riaghlaidh gliocas gus sin a choileanadh!

Cha chudrom air loch an lach,
Cha chudrom air each a shrian,
Cha chudrom air caor' a h-olann,
Cha chudrom air colainn ciail.

MAY 2018 bring harmony to the world and to all of you success, contentment and the opportunity to help those in need of support.

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

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Lone hero Len averts dry Christmas crisis on Colonsay

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

IT'S THE stuff of island Christmas nightmares: you've stocked up all the food and drink for the big day, ready for anything your hungry and thirsty family might demand, and then the water pipe springs a massive leak in a remote spot that needs a helicopter to get to.

That was the logistical challenge facing 10 households on Colonsay when a three-inch mains pipe burst the day before Christmas Eve, depriving households of water to boil their potatoes and sprouts for Christmas dinner, or even make a consoling cup of tea.

Scottish Water engineers were dispatched to dispense bottles of water and find the troublesome leak.

They tracked it down to a remote part of a beach, but accessing the spot with all their equipment proved too difficult a task.

So they decided to hire a helicopter or a boat to get there, and in the end plumped for a rigid inflatable vessel to speed them 60km across the sea from Oban.

The boat left on Christmas Eve morning, but the weather was so awful the boat had to return to the mainland.

Just when all looked lost for the Colonsay residents, local Scottish Water operative Les Robinson stepped in, trekking overland with his equipment to carry out a full repair single-handedly in the rain, restoring normal supply by lunchtime on Christmas Eve.

Ross Barclay from Scottish Water, who was on the boat that

Sine MacVicar awarded MBE in New Year honours



Fireworks explode over Oban to herald 2018 and, inset, Sine MacVicar who received an MBE. Pictures: Kevin McGlynn

THE former head teacher of Dunbeg Primary School, Sine MacVicar, has received an MBE in this year's New Year's honours.

Ms MacVicar, who devoted 44 years to the school, received the title Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to education and the community in Dunbeg.

A number of other Highlands and Islands residents have been named in the New Year's honours list. Also in Argyll, Robert McPhail, the secretary of Tarbert Castle Trust, was awarded an MBE for services to the community.

Perhaps best known in Lochaber is Aonghas Grant, of Caol, who receives the BEM for services to fiddling and music tradition in the Highlands. Famous as the 'left-handed fiddler of Lochaber', Mr Grant's musical career now spans more than six decades.

An MBE goes to Colin Skeath, who now lives in Strontian. Mr Skeath retired in January last year after 27 years as a police officer in West Yorkshire.

He finished his career as a neighbourhood inspector, and receives his MBE for services to policing and the community in Halifax.

There is also an MBE for Katherine MacKay, chairwoman of the Isle of Lewis Local Committee Cancer Research UK for services to charitable fundraising.

And there is another MBE for Professor Hugh Cheape, of Edinburgh, who lectures at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic language and culture on Skye, for his services to Scottish cultural education and traditional music.

had to return to the mainland, praised Les's effort to get water back to the islanders' homes. 'Les did an amazing job in very trying circumstances,' he said. 'This was a complicated

repair to carry out in a number of ways. We were determined to ensure we would do all we could to make sure those facing disruption on Colonsay had their water supply back to normal

in time for Christmas Day. Our first problem in carrying out the repair was even getting to the area where the burst was located and we were initially looking at hiring a helicopter

to fly us there, but we arranged to hire a rigid inflatable boat to take us to the island to carry out the repair.

'The weather meant we had to turn the boat around and

come back to the mainland. Les Robinson then stepped in and managed to make the repair on his own and restore normal supply to the Colonsay customers.'

Man dies following quad bike accident

A 42-YEAR-OLD man died near Oban on New Year's day following a quad bike accident.

Police Scotland confirmed the news, with a spokesperson saying that there was a road crash at Lerags at 8.40pm and a report into the circumstances has been sent to the procurator fiscal.

Four people have also been injured in a 'serious' road crash near Cladich, by Dalmally.

The accident happened at around 2pm on Saturday December 30 when a 48-year-old man driving a Vauxhall Astra collided with another vehicle.

The driver of the Astra was taken by ambulance to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, where he is receiving treatment, but is said to be in a stable condition.

A 16-year-old passenger was taken by ambulance to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, where he is being treated. Hospital staff describe his condition as serious.

A 46-year-old female passenger and an 18-year-old female were also taken to hospital, but both are in a stable condition.

Oban RNLI helps stricken vessel at Dorus Mor

THE VOLUNTEER crew of Oban's RNLI lifeboat *Mora Edith MacDonald* were called into action by the UK Coastguard to help a stranded motor vessel near the area of water known as Dorus Mor.

On Thursday December 21 at 9.17pm the lifeboat was called to help the motor vessel stranded near the Dorus Mor.

The vessel had suffered engine failure in this notoriously dangerous area of water.

Although the vessel was able to drop anchor, it was deemed necessary to tow it to a safer location for repairs.

The Oban lifeboat arrived on scene and established a tow by 10.27pm.

The vessel was taken Croabh Haven Marina where it was secured to a pontoon.

The lifeboat made her way back to her temporary berth at the North Pier pontoons in Oban where she was made ready for service again by 1.14am.

This was the 80th call out of what has been a very busy year for Oban lifeboat and her volunteer crew.



Volunteers during the rescue.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tesco customers gift festive cheer

THOUSANDS of meals were provided to people in need this Christmas thanks to Tesco customers.

Across the UK, enough food for three million meals was donated to charities thanks to the food collection that ran in Tesco stores until December 2. In Oban, a total of 3,286 meals were donated by generous customers.

This year's UK collection brings the overall total donated by Tesco shoppers since the collection scheme began in 2012 to more than 49 million meals.

Tony McElroy, Tesco's head of communications in Scotland, said: 'We know this annual collection makes a real difference in Scotland and we would like to thank everyone who has donated, volunteered or helped with the food collection in store.'

Dalmally CC meeting

THE NEXT Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council meeting will be on Wednesday January 10 in Dalmally Community Centre.

Please note the change of venue.

The meeting will start at 7.30pm and the guest speakers will be from SSEN who will update the meeting on the proposed North Argyll Overhead Powerline Project.

There will also be a consultation day in Dalmally on January 18 on this topic to allow members of the community to make their views known.

Also under discussion at the meeting will be the outcomes from the last meeting.

Members of the public, representatives of other community groups and schools are welcome.



Organiser Davy Paterson with a fellow singer.

Carol singers raise a song and cash for Dove Centre

A GOOD turnout of locals sang Christmas carols for two hours around Taynuilt and raised £220 for Oban Hospice Dove Centre.

Organiser Davy Paterson thanks Janice Harrison and Davie Thomson who

prepared mulled wine and mince pies for the choristers, the six youngsters who collected donations and helped count the money, the 16 carol singers and everyone who kindly gave towards this excellent cause.

Together for Christmas

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

YVONNE MacHugh has thanked supporters for helping an unbelievable 'miracle' this Christmas, which released her fiancé Billy Irving from an Indian jail to join her and their son William for Christmas at home in Scotland.

Billy and five other British ex-servicemen, known as the Chennai Six, were working as armed guards protecting shipping from Somali pirates when they were arrested for firearms offences in 2013.

The men were sentenced to five years in jail in January 2016 but finally, after a four year fight, they were cleared of all charges in December and returned home to their families.

Yvonne wrote on Christmas Eve: 'We've been to Mass together, sprinkled reindeer food, made hot chocolate and mince pies for Santa and tomorrow we will spend our very first Christmas together and I can't quite believe it.'

'Miracles do happen, but you need to work hard to get them, in whatever way that may be. We would never have got our Christmas miracle without the help from so, so, so many people.'

'The past few weeks have been completely overwhelming. They have been hard but they have been a dream come true. We have received more cards and gifts filled with the most precious of messages and well wishes and have been heart-warming to read, over and over again. You all made this happen and I can't thank



Top: Yvonne, Billy and William wear matching jumpers for their family Christmas photograph and, above, father and son off to see Santa.

you enough. None of us can. I wish you all the happiness in the world and hope and pray that whatever troubles any of you may be facing over the festive period that you can take some

comfort in our family being reunited. Nightmares do come to an end and nothing lasts forever. 'Stay strong and surround yourself with those closest to you.'

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FW

Review of the year

July

Glengarry community spirit wins through

COMMUNITY spirit and determination meant Glengarry Highland Games enjoyed one of its most successful years yet, despite fears the event would not go ahead.

An emergency meeting to recruit new members onto the games committee had to be held earlier this year.

Games secretary Alison Donald, one of two original committee members, along with her husband Gregor, said finding new members is vital to keeping the games going.

'We managed to get a few new people on board and we have our usual band of volunteers,' she said.

Residents, visitors and passers-by joined in last Saturday (July 1) to make the games a resounding success.

Games president Eric MacKenzie said: 'We

have a full range of races and traditional Highland Games, Kintail birds of prey display and a pet show. We are very pleased with the turnout, because the games are weather dependent. If we can get the Highland dancers outside, it always draws in a lot of passing trade. We always have an international crowd.

'A historian who was at the games said he believes Glengarry was the first Highland Games in 1815. We are checking it out to see if we can claim it.

'We had record numbers of entries in the hill race, thanks to a stag party who came and took part. Twenty one people raced.'

Eric added the committee is 'hanging on in'.

'People always rally round on the day, but we always need more people. We would not like to follow the sad fate of the Lochaber games.'



Children take part in a race at Glengarry Games. F27 glengarry games 05 JP

Lochaber dog show success

LOCHABER and District Canine Society held its annual dog show on Tuesday July 4.

Nearly 40 dogs and their owners went along to join in the fun.

Classes for pedigree dogs included a special beginners class for dogs and handlers who have never won at a Kennel Club show to encourage newcomers.

The novelty classes are always highly popular and with 21 dogs entering the best condition class, it was a difficult job for the judges. There was also a puppy walk for those too young to take part and a best trick competition.

This year's chosen charity was Canine Partners and a representative from the charity was at the event.

Fiona Barcenas, and Barnum the dog, were hap-

py to tell owners about the work of the charity and Fiona judged the best trick competition. Fiona said: 'Thank you so, so much for the lovely evening. It was a breath of fresh air, so light-hearted and upbeat. At the same time it was so well-organised and professional.'

'It was an honour for Barnum and I to judge the dog trick section.'

Sarah Holroyd, show secretary, said: 'Once again I'm overwhelmed by the generosity of people in support of our companion dog show. We raised more than £587.79 for Canine Partners.'

'Well done and thanks to everyone who gave generously of their time and money, to all those who helped in the organisation, set-up and running of the show and to all those who came along and took part. I hope you all enjoyed your night.'



Dogs and owners line up before the show. Photograph: Iain Ferguson The Write Image. F28 Dog Show 01 IF

Breakdown reignites fixed crossing call

DAYS of chaos caused by the breakdown of the Corran Ferry and the unavailability of its back-up vessel will reignite calls for a fixed crossing and whether a ferry is still a long-term sustainable solution.

That was the view of Andrew Baxter, councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, yesterday as the ferry shambles entered its fifth day.

Mr Baxter said: 'There has been talk about a fixed crossing of some sort. I think this will focus minds about whether a ferry is a long-term and sustainable solution.'

Engineers working to repair the crippled vessel, which is operated by Highland Council, were said to be waiting on a software specialist to arrive from Germany yesterday (Wednesday).

No hull damage was apparent on the ferry, however, this was to be confirmed by divers and the steering still needed to be



The Corran Ferry.

checked by systems support engineers so the vessel could be signed off by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) for a return to service.

Saturday's transport problems began when a fault with the Corran Ferry's steering saw the vessel 'briefly touch the rocks' beside Nether Lochaber slipway at 12.36pm. The real difficulties started, however, when it emerged the usual back-up ferry, the *Maid of Glencoul*, was also out of action.

The *Maid of Glencoul* has still to return from her spring refit and is moored at Bute, waiting for the

manufacture of a special part for its steering.

After the Corran Ferry service was suspended on Saturday, dozens of stranded cars, vans and other vehicles clogged up roads round Ardgour, Morvern and Ardnamurchan for hours.

There were even reports of one local rigid inflatable boat being pressed into service to retrieve some ferry foot passengers.

One visitor said it took his family hours to get back to Fort William from Ardgour, saying: 'There were cars, vans, motor-homes - you name it - all trying to use the single track roads. It was chaos.'

As the *Lochaber Times* went to press yesterday (Wednesday), it was still not clear how long the Corran Ferry would be out of action, meaning residents on the Ardnamurchan peninsula were still faced with postponing trips involving the ferry or making a 35-mile road trip.

August

Ponies bring smiles to Lochaber care home residents

A LOCHABER family raised money to take two therapy ponies to a Ballachulish care home.

Siobhan Cooper and her dad Andy raised more than £500 for Abbeyfield Care Home to bring in the animals, Wilson and Edwardo.

The family has close ties with the care home as Siobhan's grandmother is a resident there. Her grandfather also lived at the care home but he died earlier this year.

Dominic Duffy, manager at the care home, told the *Lochaber Times* it is lovely to see the family still so involved with the care home staff and

residents, even after their loved one has died. Donations like this are what enable us to do extra activities, such as getting the ponies for the residents. We would not be able to fund things like this otherwise.

'This was not a case of us going out and twisting people's arms to get money for the ponies. Siobhan and her family wanted to do this for us which makes it extra special.'

'It was great for everyone to see the residents' faces light up when they were with the ponies. Residents who maybe would not normally participate in activities got involved with it, which was great to see.'



Residents loved spending time with Edwardo the pony.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson The Write Image. F31 therapy ponies 01 IF

Fort William shortlisted for most beautiful high street

FORT William has been shortlisted as one of Scotland's most beautiful high streets.

Fort William Town Team announced this week that the High Street has been shortlisted, along with nine other Scottish town centres, for the prize of Scotland's Most Beautiful High Street.

Town Team secretary Sue Keen said: 'We are absolutely thrilled to announce that our entry into the Scottish Towns Partnership competition has been shortlisted. Our High Street might not be the most architecturally stunning in Scotland, but the Town Team thinks it's a fantastic place to be.'

After receiving a high number of entries, a judging panel of representatives from Scotland's Towns Partnership and Keep Scotland Beautiful has drawn up a shortlist of 10 finalists.



Fort William Town Team, the group behind Fort William's entry into Scotland's Most Beautiful High Street, next to one of their planters in the High Street. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.



Fair Planning and Design and Lochaber Cinema Group present plans for the new cinema to the Fort William public.

Cinema plans get go ahead

PLANS to bring a cinema back to Fort William have been given the go ahead by Highland Council.

Lochaber Cinema Group (LCG) unveiled their plans at a drop-in consultation session on Saturday afternoon to build a two-screen, 133 capacity cinema facility in the centre of Fort William.

The detailed plans, which have been granted planning permission by the council, outline how two units at Airds Cross (formerly Wynnes Butcher and Oceans takeaway) will be converted into a cinema with an estimated cost in the region of £600,000.

Marie MacPherson, of LCG, said: 'Previous cinema projects in the town have fallen through at this stage so after a year of talking about it, to get to this stage is really good.'

Stephen Fair, of Fair Planning and Design, said: 'It's all gone smoothly. Planning permission was approved with no conditions attached at all so it was all pretty straight forward.'

Obtaining planning permission is a big achievement and a very good stage to have gotten to.'

September

Acharacle's budding legal eagle set to soar at Oxford

THERE was much delight among teachers and staff of Ardnamurchan high and Acharacle primary schools this summer when former pupil Charlie-Anne Fleming gained entry to the prestigious University of Oxford.

Charlie, 18, is the first pupil from either the primary or secondary schools to be offered a place at Oxford, where she will read for a law degree at Lady Margaret Hall.

'I've always wanted to study law and to get the chance to do that at Oxford is amazing. I wasn't expecting it,' said



Charlie-Anne Fleming. 2JP F36
Local Lass off to Oxford- Charlie-Anne Fleming

Charlie, who already had an unconditional offer to study law at Edinburgh University before her exam results this summer secured her a place at Oxford.

Mum Jackie and dad Peter are delighted their daughter has done so well, with Jackie, who works part-time at Acharacle Primary School, telling *The Lochaber Times*: 'It's been a highly stressful year for Charlie with all the studying she had to do. But she has always been very focused when it comes to something she wants.'

'She just set her mind to go off to Oxford University. It's a fantastic achievement and we are all very proud of her.'

In June, as her secondary school career drew to a close, Charlie was honoured with the Lochaber Housing Award for Academic Excellence at a special pupil assembly. She was also the recipient of the Rotary Club of Lochaber Prize for Endeavour.

Despite her excitement, she admits to being a little nervous about the move south. 'I'm a little bit anxious about moving, but also very excited and looking forward to it.'

Allan jets in from Canada all for the sake of Fergie

IF FURTHER proof were ever needed of the affection and respect in which Moidart's 'Ceilidh King' Fergie MacDonald is held by other musicians, look no further than next month's Royal National Mòd in Fort William.

Fergie, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday with a special show at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, will be playing three gigs with his band on three nights during the Mòd in the Volunteer Arms pub.

Fergie will be joined by the usual members of his band - Colm Oru, of Glenfinnan, on banjo; Hugh MacCallum, of Inverloch, on

drums; Iain Macfarlane, of Glenfinnan, on fiddle; Addie Harper, from Wick, on accordion and Robert Nairn, from Acharacle, on accordion. Also in the line-up will be regular fiddler and Blazin' Fiddles founder member Allan Henderson, of Mallaig, who will make a special trip across the Atlantic from Canada where he will be on tour.

Allan will take the stage alongside Fergie and the rest of the band in the Volunteer Arms on Wednesday October 18, Thursday October 19 and Friday October 20.

Following the Friday night show, Allan will grab a few hours' sleep before getting

up at the crack of dawn and making his way to Glasgow for the first flight to New York, where he will take the stage later the same night. Asked what it was about Fergie that made him want to come all that way from Canada, Allan said: 'I'd travel an awful lot further than that for Fergie. I've been playing with him since I was 14 and he has been a huge influence on me and my career - on top of which we're good friends. Every so often he talks about retiring, but then he's out playing again and playing as well as ever. He still has the same amount of energy as when I first met him.'

Review of the year

October

Switch on for £13.6m hydro scheme

IT WAS the first village in the world to have every house connected to electricity at a time London's inhabitants were still reading by gaslight and now, over a century on, Kinlochleven has witnessed the switch on of a new multi-million pound hydro power scheme.

The event on Thursday saw a large number of local residents make their way up into the hills above the village for the official turning on of Green Highland Renewables' latest scheme at Loch Eilde Mor.

The £13.6 million development was declared open by Lochaber councillor Andrew Baxter and was also attended by Kinlochleven community councillors, along with new landowner Jahama Highland Estates, the property arm of GFG Alliance which bought the smelting business in Lochaber and Kinlochleven last year.

Alex Reading, development director at Green Highland Renewables, reminded those present that hydro-electricity had been part of Kinlochleven history for more than 100 years.

'It has provided skilled employment during construction and we thank the local com-



Alex Reading, left, development director of Green Highland Renewables, and Lochaber councillor Andrew Baxter switch on the turbine watched by Kinlochleven residents.

munity for their support since work began in early 2016. We are pleased the project will now offer a steady stream of income to this community in the years ahead,' added Mr Reading.

'The recent reduction in tariffs by the UK Government means the economics of building new hydro schemes is increasingly challenging, however, we still believe there is scope for further projects in the Highlands.'

A new Kinlochleven Common Good Fund is being established

to disperse the £5,000 per MW per annum community benefit from the scheme.

North British Aluminium Company first established a smelter in the area between 1904 and 1909, harnessing hydro-power from the Blackwater Reservoir.

By 1909, 1,000 workers were employed and what had previously been two small separate communities of just a handful of crofts was now a thriving single village.

November

Dragon's Glen winners

ENTERPRISING students behind a community business in Kinlochleven have said they are 'very proud' to have won last week's Dragon's Glen competition.

Kinlochlovin', a non-profit-making social enterprise and charity set up two years ago in partnership with Kinlochleven High School, was announced as the winners of Lochaber Ideas Week's Dragon's Glen competition on Friday night – winning the £10,000 top prize.

The student-run enterprise fought off stiff competition from five other finalists after their business plan and pitch impressed the 'dragons'.

Kinlochlovin' chairwoman Anna McBride is a teacher at Kinlochleven High School and guides the pupils.

She said: 'Going into the Dragon's Glen was a daunting prospect but it was very exciting to compete alongside so many other people in Lochaber with fantastic business ideas.'



Back row, left to right: Anna McBride, Esme Leitch and Hugh Purvis. Front, left to right: Kai Bashir, Cameron Purvis, Ian MacCallum and Morgan Lawrence.

The group's pitch successfully conveyed the group's message of social justice, community spirit and the importance of investing in the talents and skills of young people. Anna continued: 'We were overwhelmed to be

announced as the winners and it means a lot to so many young and adult volunteers who have committed a lot of time and effort over the last two years to make Kinlochlovin' a success. 'We hope the success of this

development will enable us to provide more work placements for young people in Lochaber and sustainably ensure all young people have an educational experience that is rich in a wide range of skills and experiences.'

Torchlight procession celebrates Mòd

COMPETITORS from far and wide, sponsors, supporters and volunteers gathered in Fort William on Friday night, October 13, to celebrate the opening of the Royal National Mòd 2017.

A reception in the town's Lime Tree Gallery was followed by a torchlight procession to the Nevis Centre for the opening ceremony which included music from Lochaber Gaelic Choir, Robert Robertson, Ross Wilson, Moira Robertson, Pipe

Major of Lochaber Pipe Band, and Na H-Òganach. After an introduction by BBC Alba presenter Kirsteen MacDonald, Alister Mackinnon of The Highland Council, Brian Fulton of sponsor Caledonian MacBrayne, John Swinney, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Allan Campbell, president of An Comunn Gàidhealach addressed the crowd before Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, declared the Mòd open.



The torchlit procession to the Mòd opening ceremony at the Nevis Centre

November

Plockton skipper donates tips to charity

A GENEROUS Plockton boat skipper has donated all of his hard-earned tips this year to charity.

Calum Mackenzie, who runs seal trips from Plockton on his boat Sula Mhor, decided against pocketing any tips received from satisfied customers this year and has instead kindly given them

all to local charities. After an especially busy summer season this year, the tips jar on board the Sula Mhor was bursting and once the affable Lochalsh skipper had totted up the collections, he had £2,400 worth of tips to decide what to do with.

On Saturday October 28, Calum presented cheques to

MacMillan Cancer, Marie Curie and Highland Hospice, with each charity receiving a cheque for £800.

Calum's Seal Trips has been operating boat tours around the waters of Plockton for decades, and Calum has been giving his tips to charity for the past 17 years, raising almost £50,000 in that time.



Calum, left, and his crew with representatives from the charities at the cheque presentation.

December



Ballachulish care home celebrates national award

STAFF and residents at Abbeyfield Ballachulish Care Home gathered this week to celebrate being named the best care home service in Scotland.

The Lochaber care home won the Care Home Service of the Year Award at the Scottish Care Awards and were presented

with their prize at an awards ceremony in Glasgow on Friday November 17. Abbeyfield Ballachulish is the first service from the Highland area to win the award. Based in the centre of Ballachulish, the care home is an independent charity reliant on the business it generates on site.

It provides residential care to 30 clients as well as a day care centre for 10 and a daily lunch club for the wider community. Eleven years ago the home faced closure because of poor performance and financial difficulties before a new manager and board appointed the current award-winning team.

Hundreds flock to M&S foodhall opening in Fort William

SHOPPERS flocked to Fort William last Thursday for the opening of the new Marks & Spencer foodhall.

Hundreds of customers had made their way to celebrate the official opening of the store in the town's new North Road Retail Park.

Store manager Sam Nugent, along with his newly-recruited 76-strong team, welcomed locals as they enjoyed entertainment from a piper and a taste of the new Christmas food range.

The 8,000 sq ft store features a 24-seat café, bakery and an extensive range of quality food and drink.

The new foodhall is the most remote M&S store in mainland UK and the first in the area, offering greater convenience for local customers who now no longer need to travel to Inverness to stock up on M&S.

Mr Nugent said: 'Fort William has been waiting a long time for M&S to open. We're looking forward to playing an important



Isabel Campbell of Lochaber Rural Education Trust cuts the ribbon to officially open the new M&S Foodhall in Fort William last Thursday, with store manager, Sam Nugent. Photographs Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

role in serving the community and visitors.

'My team and I are excited to meet locals and make every moment special for customers.' Sheonagh Robertson, from

Fort William, was the first customer in the new store. She said: 'We've waited a long time for M&S to open here.

'The store will be good for the town and I'm sure very pop-

ular among the locals.' Isabel Campbell, of Lochaber Rural Education Trust, which will be supported by M&S, officially opened the store by cutting a ribbon.

Wild Lochaber swimmers mark the new year in style

INTREPID swimmers across Lochaber heralded the new year with a dip in chilly lochs.

While most people were at home enjoying a relaxing New Year's Day, a select bunch of hardy souls donned their swimming gear and headed to the water.

On Hogmanay, just hours before the bells, dozens of people gathered at the Old Fort in

Fort William to go for a swim in Loch Linnhe, which was organised by local bike shop, Off Beat Bikes.

The next morning, on New Year's Day, a hardy bunch of Glenfinnan locals took to the waters of Loch Shiel in what is now an established fixture of the Glenfinnan calendar. Glenfinnan House Hotel was kind enough to supply the bathers

Swimming

with champagne for those in need of warming up after the swim.

Further west at Salen there was a small but hardy contingent of wild swimmers who plunged into Loch Sunart water on the morning of New Year's Day.



Some of the wild swimmers relishing their bracing start to 2018. Photo: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.



Swimmers at the Old Fort tentatively approach the cold Loch Linnhe water on Hogmanay. Photo: Abrightside Photography.

Lochaber duo win New Year's Day hill race

One hundred and eight runners took part in the New Year's Day Aonach Mor uphill race 2018 in what turned out to be almost ideal conditions for a hill race.

With some snow and ice still lying on the hill in the last couple of hundred metres, the annual race up Aonach Mor once again provided the perfect solution to clear the head from the previous night's Hogmanay celebrations.

In the men's race it was Lochaber's Andrew Barrington who took first position in a time of 24:58. Second place was Phillip Mowbray in 25:34, while third place went to Steven Traill, Lochaber AC, in 25:52.

In the women's race, Lochaber's Marie Meldrum



Eventual winner Andrew Barrington (number five), leads the race at the bottom of the hill, followed closely by Lochaber's Stuart Crutchfield (number 24) and Aberdeen's Iain Manson (number 76). Photo: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Athletics

finished first in a time of 31:29, while Alexandra Berry of Westerlands Cross Country Club finished as a close runner-up with a time of 32:59. Third place went to Judith Turner, Falkland Trail Runners, who recorded a time of 34:02.

James Hamilton of Lochaber Athletics Club said: 'Well done to all that took part and a massive thanks to organisers, marshalls and timekeepers, Corrina, Graham, Elizabeth, Joan, Jo, Nick, Ellen any others I may have missed, and Nevis Range and sponsors Run4it, Cotswold's. Many thanks to you all and a happy new year.'



All ages took part in the new year swims across Lochaber. Photo: Abrightside Photography.



Ryan Davies is hoping to make a dream trip to the rugby fields of southern Africa in the spring.

Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Caol's Ryan ready to roar for rugby in Africa

Rugby

FOR ANY rugby player, teaching the oval ball game to youngsters in the South African homeland of the mighty Springboks would be the trip of a lifetime and it is one Caol's Ryan Davies has his sights set on for 2018.

Ryan, 19, who has been playing rugby since primary three, hopes to travel to Africa in May this year as a volunteer with the Bhubesi Pride Foundation to teach rugby in Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia.

The nine-week trip would see Ryan sharing his love of the game with young people as part of the teams of qualified and dedicated volunteers.

The volunteers, known as 'Pride Members', help carry out annual coaching expeditions, supporting rugby and community development in schools and community centres in nine countries across east and southern Africa.

Qualifications demanded of volunteers include being passionate about the difference rugby can make in communities and the lives of others, especially children, and being excited by the challenge of working and living in different countries, each with its own distinct culture.

Pride Members also gain from taking part in the programme helping to organise courses and tournaments while travelling across Africa, meeting new people experiencing their culture, history and landscapes.

Ryan fits in well with these requirements, having been a member of Lochaber Rugby Club for around 12 years, where he is currently a community coach and team manager.

However, to make the trip, Ryan first needs to raise a total of £5,000 for flights and expenses, as well as a fee to join the foundation team, which covers all other costs of food, water, training kit and travelling across southern Africa.

He has planned various activities to raise the total and is currently operating a crowdfunding page - Get Ryan to Africa - and says he would welcome all the support he can get in achieving his goal.

'It would be an amazing trip to be able to go on, and hopefully I will be able to raise the amount of money needed to make it happen,' said Ryan.

Anyone wishing to help Ryan achieve his dream can go to <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ryandavies10>

Tournament raises £650 for Disability First Shinty

WILLIE (Can) MacDonald, Camanachd Association youth director, recently accepted a cheque for £650 on behalf of the association from the brothers of the late Fraser MacPhee - Ruaridh, Niall (former international player) and Arran (Scotland u21s captain).

The money was raised from the annual Fraser MacPhee Sixes tournament in Fort William.

In a statement, the MacPhee family said: 'Every year our team works hard to ensure everyone attending our tournament is well catered for and entertained and generously ask us to donate the proceeds raised to a worthy cause.'

'We have admired the efforts of Ronald Ross and Katie Drain in particular, at the Disability Festival, and think this is an event very worthy of supporting.'

'We also hope that one day

Shinty

an additional disability festival could be held at Fort William.'

Mr MacDonald commented: 'The Fraser MacPhee Sixes has grown over the years and is now one of the biggest six-a-side tournaments for youth within the shinty calendar.'

'The event is run superbly and the kids and coaches are so well looked after, which is great credit to the MacPhee family.'

'To raise money for good causes in the process is a total bonus and it always goes to something good for children/youths and/or shinty.'

'This time it is the Camanachd Association's National Disability First Shinty Festival, which is another wonderful event which is benefitting, and which is much appreciated.'



Willie MacDonald, Camanachd Association youth director, accepts the £650 cheque from the MacPhee brothers Ruaridh, Niall and Arran. Photo: Abrightside Photography

Lochaber club lottery draws

Lottery

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 2, 3 and 19. There was no winner this week. There will now be £700 available for the lotto drawn today (Thursday January 4).

The numbers drawn in the Caol Regeneration lotto were 1, 7 and 10. There were no winning tickets this week. There will now be a jackpot of £1,100 for next Thursday's draw.

The Ballachulish Shinty Club lottery numbers for this week were 16, 19 and 20. There was one lucky winner this week who won the jackpot of £1,200. Next week's prize will revert back to £200.

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Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday January 4, 2018** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	00.55	0.5	06.55	4.2	13.37	0.7	19.25	4.0
Fri	01.42	0.5	07.39	4.1	14.25	0.8	20.09	3.8
Sat	02.29	0.6	08.24	3.9	15.14	1.0	20.54	3.6
Sun	03.17	0.8	09.10	3.7	16.05	1.3	21.42	3.3
Mon	04.07	1.1	09.59	3.4	16.59	1.5	22.39	3.1
Tues	05.00	1.3	10.58	3.2	18.00	1.7	23.56	3.0
Wed	05.58	1.5	12.20	3.0	19.13	1.8	***	**

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

Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

WEATHER

Thursday Light rain
Winds light Easterly
Temperatures 1°C to 5°C.

Friday Cloudy
Winds moderate North Easterly
Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.

Weekend Sunny on Saturday
Sunny on Sunday
Winds moderate Northerly
Temperatures -2°C to 3°C.

FRIDAY

Ardishaig	-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