

# The Oban Times

## & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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### Argyll nurse who survived landslide 'lucky to be alive'

- full story on page 3

### Celtic Connections blows away January blues!



MacPhail's MUSIC

## Miracles do happen

Obanites rally to support family of baby born the size of a bag of sugar

LOUISE GLEN  
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WHEN the community of Oban heard the baby of a popular Oban couple had been born more than three months early, they raised almost £7,000 to help the couple.

Outpourings of support for Ashton, the baby of Jemma Campbell and Andy Matthews have been 'overwhelming' and are allowing the family to spend all the time they need with their newborn, who was born weighing only 2lbs.

Mum Jemma, who works at Atlantis Community Leisure Centre told The Oban Times: 'Ashton is having good days and bad days in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It's what we have been told to expect for the next few months as he came 14 weeks early.

'Consultants have told us to aim for having him back home on his due date of March 21. I can't begin to tell you how touched and overwhelmed Andy and I have been to see the community come together in support for our little miracle baby.

'It's taken a huge amount of financial stress off our minds and we can shine our main focus on getting our little boy home now. We were thinking Andy [who works at Oban Electrics] would have to return to work in the New Year but neither of us wanted to be that far apart at a time like this. But maybe now it could be different for the three of us.

'It's just so lovely to see how a small town comes together and supports a family with so much generosity especially around Christmas time.

'I pretty much cried for the few days after I saw that my best friend Ashley [Richard] had set up the Justgiving page for us.

'I couldn't read all the lovely messages and pledges through my tears. It's a tough time and all we can hope for is for our little boy to come home and start our family life in Oban.

'We really can't thank everyone enough for this support for Ashton. He's a very well thought of boy in the town already.

'Normally I would be embarrassed to receive money for anything from anyone but as a parent now you have to learn to accept



Baby Ashton with his dad, Andy Matthews.

these kind offerings - as it's for your child.' But it wasn't just money that the couple were offered, as Jemma explains: 'A family friend has kindly given us a set of keys to her flat near by, which is a enormous support as I am now being discharged from hospital.'

On the fundraising Justgiving page, Ashley Bichard's said: 'We're raising £7,000 to transport mummy and daddy to visit baby Ashton because he came into the world three months early.

'He is a fighter and doing well in the NICU in the Princess Royal [in Glasgow], but this is far away from home.

'We all wish there was something we could do to help, so we have set up this page to raise funds to take some of the financial pressure from mummy and daddy.

'We all want to help make this time a little easier, just as they would do for us. At this time of year it makes it all the more important to care and look out for one another and make their first Christmas as a family as stress free as it can be in these circumstances.'

Support on the page has come from all over the world, including from many parents who have had similar experiences over the years, travelling to and from city hospitals and the huge burden of cost this can place on families.

## BEM for Oban Times' stalwart



OBAN Saints Football Club secretary David Buchanan has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for voluntary service to football.

Named in The Queen's New Year's Honour's List, Davie, 67, has been involved with the club for nearly 50 years as a player, coach, manager, secretary/treasurer - and he still washes the strips every week after the games.

Davie, who has worked at The Oban Times for 50 years, said: 'I received a letter at the end of November from the Cabinet Office in London asking

if I would accept the award, which I was delighted to do.

'The hardest part was keeping things quiet from my family and friends.

'I am deeply honoured to accept the award not only for myself and family, but for all members, past and present, of Oban Saints Football Club and other sports clubs in the town whose committee members work just as hard as I do to keep their clubs functioning in their particular spots.

'To think my work at the club is appreciated is reward enough, but

to get the BEM is beyond my wildest dreams.

'I would like to thank everyone who phoned and sent messages of congratulations, and to whoever nominated me for the honour.'

Davie was presented with the McDonald's/Sunday Mail Best Volunteer in Adult Football award in 2011.

Making the presentation at a dinner in Hampden Park that evening was former Scotland, Celtic and Liverpool legend Kenny Dalglish, along with former Scotland head coach, now Director of Football at Hearts, Craig Levein. Turn to page 5.

## TIMESLINE

### Senior dentist appointed

THE PUBLIC Dental Service, NHS Highland, has successfully recruited a full-time Senior Dental Officer in Special Care to the Oban Dental Centre.

It is hoped the successful candidate will take up their new job in early February.

A spokeswoman for NHS Highland said: 'Work is ongoing to get the independent NHS dental practice established within Oban Dental Centre, however in the meantime, the Public Dental Service will continue to provide care from the Dental Centre in Oban.

'Unfortunately the service remains at a reduced level but we are doing everything to give the best service we can.

'Thank you for your continued patience at this difficult time.'

### Students set for dance showcase

OBAN High School will be hosting its annual dance show next week, with three performances in the Corran Halls.

Dance groups from the school's gymnastics club, Highland Dancing, the Oban High School Pipe Band, Traditional Music Group, School of Dance, Ballet West, sports coaches and school staff will take to the stage for a eclectic showcase of dance.

Shows are on Wednesday January 13 at 7.30pm, and two on Thursday January 14 - one at 12.15pm, and one at 7.30pm.

Tickets will be on sale from Oban High School from Friday, or at the door if still available.

Oban Times  
newsdesk  
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## Authors join fight to save Mull school library provision from budget axe

A CAMPAIGN to save school librarians in Argyll and Bute has gathered widespread support, including from author Debi Gliori and Michael Russell MSP, writes Louise Glen.

Rejecting the current proposals to remove school librarians throughout the region the petition says: 'I support school librarians in their important work and reject the current cuts process in Argyll and Bute.'

Author of more than 40 children's books, Debi Gliori said: 'I've worked with children in libraries in Argyll and

Bute over the last 20 years. This is a region of Scotland in desperate need of higher levels of literacy, engagement with books and open access to libraries. To slash budgets for school librarians is to court disaster.

'Where are children on Mull supposed to access books if their library provision is axed?'

Jenny Des Fountain, a former head teacher from Mull and a campaigner against the cuts said: 'Trying to save money this way is a very short-lived solution that has long-term implications

for students, the potential workforce of the future. I truly hope the school library and librarian will be there for students for years to come.'

A spokeswoman for CILIPS, the librarians' organisation said: 'The proposal to remove all school librarian posts runs counter to current national initiatives aiming to support and enhance literacy, and will inevitably lead to a poorer overall educational experience for pupils. A body of impact studies highlight the contribution of school librarians

to improved attainment and achievement, and maintains that school libraries are valuable for their ability to support teaching and learning, and should be the central resource of the school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian.

'We therefore urge you to reconsider ending professionally staffed school library provision in Argyll and Bute.'

To sign the petition, visit [www.change.org/p/shout-out-for-school-librarians-in-argyll-and-bute](http://www.change.org/p/shout-out-for-school-librarians-in-argyll-and-bute)

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## Energy plan could kill two birds with one stone

SUSTAINABLE energy planning for the islands is among the topics the Scottish Islands Federation would like to see in its response to the consultation on the future Islands Bill.

The islands' potential for renewable energy production is a real asset which communities can build on, as has been done on Egg and the Small Isles, Mull and Gigha for example, according to federation chairwoman Camille Dressler.

Ms Dressler said: 'The islands' potential to become pilots in the circular economy is equally exciting. Bute, one of our member islands, has become the first island in Scotland and the EU to be a ZeroWaste island and we look forward to seeing how we could to help other islands achieve such status in future.'

'The presentation made by Roland Arnison of Shearwater consulting, at our AGM in Luig, has identified several areas where projects could be scaled down to suit island conditions.'

'Feedback from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and ZeroWaste Scotland was that there was a strong interest in investigating how small-scale anaerobic digesters could produce heat for green houses and polytunnels to extend the growing season. This is something we are very keen to look into as it could help turn waste into a valuable island resource.'

## Fishing boat rescued

ON THE evening of Tuesday December 22, the volunteer crew of Oban lifeboat, Mora Edith MacDonald, was called to help a fishing vessel with two people on board that had broken down a mile south of the Corran Narrows.

The lifeboat arrived on scene at 8.10pm and found the crew had taken the precaution of dropping an anchor to prevent them drifting into further difficulties.

Because of strong winds, the decision was taken to tow the vessel to a safer location. However, the sea conditions were such that the vessel was unable to keep the seawater spray from filling the bilge, so the vessel was towed to Linnhe Marina where it was taken alongside the lifeboat which was used to pump out the fishing vessel.

Once this was completed, the disabled boat was towed to a suitable mooring and its crew were taken to Oban, where the lifeboat was refuelled and made ready for service shortly before midnight.

# Planned MPAs will create exclusion zone warns Mallaig fisherman

LOUISE GLEN  
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A MALLAIG fisherman says the future of fishing is bleak for the mobile sector because of appalling weather and the decision to control fishing around the West Coast under Marine Protected Areas (MPA).

Angus McLean of the FV Silver Dawn OB333 says the proposed legislation will create an exclusion zone in the heart of traditional fishing areas and devastate communities.

Mr McLean, who has always been a fisherman and has family ties to the industry stretching back several generations, said: 'The

fishermen in Mallaig cannot see this latest consultation - which will close the important Canna Sound fishery - as anything more than a rubber-stamping exercise that will be ratified following the time allocated to the consultation.'

'Marine Scotland quite cynically published this consultation in the afternoon of Friday December 18 and the responses will have to be submitted by January 18 2016. Not much time to gather our forces, given the holiday break.'

'My family has been fishing out of Mallaig for many generations and I have always been a fisherman, but I am also interested

in politics. I was going over the 'Scotland's Future' referendum manual again recently and noted the words that relate to fisheries, which say 'supporting our fishing communities and seafood sector will always be a priority for Scottish governments'.

'Have I missed something here? How have west coast fishermen been supported in this Marine Protected Area fiasco? We moved from a perfectly coherent process agreed by the fishing industry, based on the best available science, a position agreed by the government advisor Scottish Natural Heritage and a proper consultation process, to one where we now read

open criticisms of the Marine Scotland position on a weekly basis in the fishing press because of its appeasement to the powerful environmental lobby.'

Mr McLean refers to the MPA consultation to which there were 4,974 replies.

'There were 4,758 formulaic responses made from Scottish Environment LINK and that represents 95.6 per cent of the consultation responses.'

'The substantive responses from fishing organisations were ignored, as was the scientific advice and the advice of Scottish Natural Heritage.'

'We need the protection of land masses and islands at the

time of bad weather and this was the basis of our response to Marine Scotland, along with data on economics supplied by fishermen, fish processors and ancillary businesses.'

'The Scottish Government has on many occasions berated the Conservative party for comments made by Edward Heath that the fishing industry was 'expendable' when the United Kingdom joined the Common Market in the 1970s. And quite rightly so.'

'It will be interesting to see whether Marine Scotland and Richard Lochhead are going to be tarred with the same brush in the years to come.'

## Pregnant women warned of farmyard dangers

PREGNANT women should avoid close contact with animals that are giving, or have recently given birth, the Chief Medical Officer Dr Catherine Calderwood has advised.

The Scottish Government, along with other UK health departments, issues annual advice to pregnant women who come into close contact with sheep during lambing or other farm animals that are giving birth, which may risk their own health and that of their unborn child.

Dr Calderwood said: 'Even though the number of pregnancies affected by contact with infected animals is extremely small, it's very important pregnant women understand the risks and take appropriate precautions.'

'If pregnant women experience a fever, or flu-like symptoms, and think they might have acquired an infection from a farm-like environment, they must seek immediate medical advice.'

'These risks are not confined to the spring and do not only apply to sheep, but also to cattle and goats that have recently given birth. All can carry similar infections, such as chlamydia, toxoplasma, listeria and Q fever.'

To avoid the possible risk of infection, pregnant women should:

□ Not help to lamb or milk ewes, or to provide assistance with a cow that is calving or a nanny goat that is kidding.

□ Avoid contact with aborted or new-born lambs, calves or kids or with the afterbirth, birthing fluids or materials contaminated by such birth products.

□ Avoid handling, including washing, clothing, boots or any materials that may have come into contact with animals that have recently given birth, their young or afterbirths. Potentially contaminated clothing will be safe to handle after being washed on a hot cycle.

□ Ensure contacts or partners who have attended lambing ewes or other animals giving birth take appropriate health and hygiene precautions, including the wearing of personal protective equipment and clothing and adequate washing to remove any potential contamination.

Farmers and livestock keepers have a responsibility to minimise the risks to pregnant women, including members of their family, the public and professional staff visiting farms.

Call The Oban Times newsdesk on 01631 568000

## Nature celebrates new year with spectacular light show



Oban Times reader Stephen Lawson sent us this wonderful photograph of the Northern Lights from Ganavan, Oban, on Hogmanay.

## Help wanted for farmland bird

LAST year saw nearly 1,000 bird enthusiasts take part in The Big Farmland Bird Count, which resulted in 127 different species of bird being spotted.

And the organisation is once again counting on farmers, landowners, birdwatchers and gamekeepers spending 30 minutes recording the species and number of birds seen on one particular area of the farm this coming winter.

The 2016 big count will take place between February 6 and 14.

Anyone interested can get a Big Farmland Bird Count form by visiting [www.gwct.org.uk/BFBC](http://www.gwct.org.uk/BFBC) or calling 01425 651000.

## Bullying helpline highlights ongoing workplace problems

A WEBSITE that supports people who are victims of bullying in the workplace has received more than 7,000 calls.

Tackling Oppressive Behaviour in Employment (TOBIE) - [www.tobie.org.uk](http://www.tobie.org.uk) - was set up by Highlands and Islands MSP Rhoda Grant, who says the page 'has only just scratched the surface of people who need help'.

Mrs Grant said: 'I launched this site in December 2014 and over the following four weeks I was contacted by so many individuals who have a story to tell, including many who are sufferers of

this anti-social unacceptable behaviour.'

'Sad to say, most told me they suffered in silence because they did not know where to turn.'

Currently, the site has been visited by more than 7,242 people.

Ms Grant said: 'It is really a double-edged sword. I am delighted so many have visited the website, but at the same time I am taken aback by the fact that across the Highlands, Islands and Moray there are so many people who have been or continue to be adversely treated by bullies.'

'What makes the whole situation worse is the fact that the 7,242 who have accessed our site account for a tiny proportion of people in this area who suffer bullying or harassment.'

'This just shows what a real problem and issue this type of anti-social behaviour is.'

'However, a particular pleasing aspect is the fact that individuals and organisations have made favourable comment about this site and they have also suggested ways we can improve it further.'

Ms Grant continued: 'I will be sitting down with my team over the coming weeks and

ascertaining the direction we will take with this initiative. At this stage I am still minded to consider consulting widely on the benefits or otherwise of trying to make bullying a specific offence.'

'This would, of course, be similar to other type offences such as stalking where there is a specific offence now under the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, a Bill I was instrumental in progressing.'

'I see bullying as a specific offence, although the offender may actually be charged with breach of the peace, assault or harassment.'

## Hugh Smith's letter from ISLAY

### Island welcomes in 2016 with a bang

ISLAY greeted the arrival of the New Year with spectacular firework displays and family ceilidhs which attracted large crowds of supporters.

The Bowmore display, held at the local harbour, was the most impressive and imaginative to date and greatly pleased the revellers in attendance.

The 'big bang' was preceded by piper Linsay MacArthur, accompanied by her drummer sister Rhona, musically setting the celebratory tone as the bells of the Round Church chimed out to welcome 2016.

The Bowmore display was organised and financed by a small group of community-minded friends and the £600 plus proceeds from the night will be shared by the Fire Brigade Benevolent and Islay and Jura Sick Children's funds.

As the last rocket streaked across the night sky, everyone headed for the village hall where they danced the night away at a ceilidh.

Looking across Lochindaal, it was evident the pyrotechnics at Port Charlotte were equally spectacular and impressive and were generally regarded as 'the best yet' by the locals and visitors who had gathered to share in the festivities.

### It's behind them

LOCAL primary school pupils were in full festive mode in the lead-up to Christmas when they presented their



CHEER: The bells of the Round Church brought in the new year at Bowmore.

annual pantomimes to packed-out houses in their own catchment areas.

The Port Charlotte pupils were in top form with their hilarious 'Splash', a madcap adventure on a CalMac ferry crewed by seagulls.

Unlike the 'Finlaggan', this vessel was plagued with crazy lemmings and scurvy rats.

The audience was on the side of put-upon Malcolm the Penguin, and enjoyed the passengers' party, organised by hospitable parrots, and featuring jiving monkeys, groovy giraffes and terpsichorean armadillos. This was a rumbustious production performed with great verve by the Rhinns children.

Keills Primary School chose 'Hansel and Gretel' as their festive offering and the performers gave it

their all. The fur coat-seeking wicked stepmother was suitably hissed at and adding to the merriment were dancing trees and the 'Birdy Song'. Scenery and costumes impressed and everyone acted, sang and danced their socks off, despite space limitations.

King Arthur and Camelot featured in Port Ellen school's 'What a Knight!', a performance enhanced by the subtle use of sound and special effects. The audience responded in all the right places and wizards and dragons, knights and henchmen, along with characters imported from other pantos, kept up the pace and impetus.

'The Snowflake Factory, performed by Bowmore Primary School pupils in the village hall, saw bags of snow-

flakes being illicitly removed from storage, with the finger of suspicion pointing to the King of the North.

This caused problems for the investigators who were as inefficient as they were comical. Aiding and abetting everyone were the little snowmen, woodland animals and a zebra unaccustomed to frozen wastes. The mystery was solved, fairy dust was liberally sprinkled and all was right in the colourful panto world.

### Ilich at Celtic Connections

THERE will be a strong Islay presence at this year's Celtic Connections festival when the island's junior and senior Gaelic choirs, both under the baton of Arlene MacKerrell, appear in concert in the Strathclyde Suite of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Saturday January 16, at 8pm.

They will be sharing the stage with the fiddle/guitar duo Archie McAlister and Ross Kennedy, singer/piper Alasdair Currie and the fiddle-led Simon Moran Trio.

The concert will also pay tribute to Islay Sessions founder Fraser Shaw whose untimely death last year saddened many.

A stellar cast of friends and colleagues, including members of the Treacherous Orchestra, Breabach, Dàimh and Shee, will perform a selection of Fraser's compositions.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay, PA43 7JX. Telephone 01496 810658.



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University of the Highlands and Islands

# Argyll nurse who survived landslide 'lucky to be alive'

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AN ARGYLL woman has said she is 'lucky to be alive' after her car was hit by a landslide and left hanging at the edge of an embankment on the A83.

Jane Else, 50, from Lochgilphead, was travelling along the trunk road at the Rest and Be Thankful at around 7.30am on December 30 when more than 200 tonnes of debris washed down the hillside onto the road.

Jane, a mental health nurse, suffered injuries including a broken breast bone during the terrifying accident, while travelling to Glasgow Airport in her Nissan Micra.

She said: 'Obviously you're not expecting it. One minute the road was clear, the next all this debris was coming towards me.'

'It looked like kerb stones, huge plinths of concrete, rubble - the metal barriers didn't stand a chance.'

'It's only a small car and because of the conditions I was only going around 40 or 45 mph. I tried to swerve to avoid it but there was absolutely no way, it was terrifying.'

'When I saw the car from a different angle it was really quite scary as it was not the barrier stopping the car from sliding down the embankment on the other side, it was a snow pole.'

'If that hadn't been there I would have slid all the way down the embankment and could have been killed.'

Another car was also involved in the landslide. Remarkably, its driver was also not seriously injured.

Mrs Else continued: 'It wasn't



The two cars hit by the landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful.



Jane Else, who suffered a fractured sternum as a result of her car being hit by the landslide.

in the same direction. I came to a stop and it was probably only seconds, but it felt like forever.

'I've got extensive bruising from the seatbelt and a fractured sternum. But I'm very, very lucky to be alive and to have walked away from the car.'

Mrs Else was taken to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley and released on Hogmanay. She is now recovering at home.

The Rest and Be Thankful area is notorious for landslides, with a similar incident occurring on December 5. Then, 1,000 tonnes of debris were caught by specially-designed protection nets.

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said on December 5: 'This recent landslide has shown us that our investment has helped to keep the A83 open, as the netting at the Rest and Be Thankful has been successful in preventing approximately

1,000 tonnes of debris reaching the road, ensuring continuity of access to the region.'

However, Mrs Else said: 'Does someone have to die before something is done at this spot? It's not safe.'

A spokeswoman for Bear Scotland, which maintains the trunk road, said: 'Approximately 200 to 300 tonnes of material washed down the hillside, with two cars caught in the wash-out.'

The road was later reopened after debris was removed from the carriageway and the debris protection fences repaired and reinstated by geotechnical teams.

However, the A83 was again closed overnight on Monday following fears a 150 tonne boulder sitting 175m above the road was at risk of moving. The Old Military Road was also closed, with motorists diverted via Dalmlally.

The Old Military Road was reopened on Tuesday morning around 9am as a local diversion route for road users of the A83 and the ground conditions supporting the boulder have been continually monitored by geotechnical specialists.

Efforts by BEAR Scotland to make safe the boulder have been ongoing since first light on Tuesday. A helicopter bringing materials to the site was delayed in reaching the area due to bad weather, but the specialist teams have now begun to install the anchors required to remove the boulder safely.

BEAR Scotland said good progress had been made and preparatory works were expected to be completed on Tuesday ready for safety work to take place on Wednesday morning.

# Business owners call for urgent action over Rest and Be Thankful

POLITICIANS and business owners in Argyll are calling for urgent action to be taken following the recent landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful, with some claiming lives will be lost if nothing is done.

Jane MacLeod, secretary of the Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce, has written to Transport Minister Derek Mackay urging that drastic measures be taken.

The organisation, which represents a group of businesses in the Mid Argyll area, is part of the A83 Taskforce.

The taskforce was set up in August 2012 to oversee improvements on the road, with landslide reductions one of the key issues. It periodically meets to discuss progress on improvements to the trunk road.

She notes in her letter that MSP for Argyll and Bute, Michael Russell, Councillor Dougie Philand and several Argyll business owners have contacted Mr Mackay regarding the two huge landslides which occurred in the space of 25 days in December.

In the letter she said: 'Can I ask that an urgent taskforce meeting be convened as soon as possible to discuss the way forward. We all appreciate that the interests of safety are paramount and, indeed, the recent photographs of a car dangling over the verge brings this acutely home.'

'In the interests of safety, commerce and our population, however, we must meet to decide on measures required to make the route safe and open permanently. Donald Clark refers to the A83 as being our M8. It is now becoming our Forth Road Bridge. The Scottish Government has had to spend money on a bridge which appears to have been poorly maintained in recent years. The same can be said of the A83 but not just in recent years, for very many years.'

Councillor Philand said in his letter to Mr Mackay: 'How long do we in Argyll have to continue to suffer before a permanent solution is established, or even more worryingly, a life is lost?'

'I do hope you will consider the seriousness of this situation and be able to assure the

residents of Argyll that you are committed to providing a permanent solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.'

Conservative MSP for the Highlands and Islands, Jamie McGrigor, said: 'The Old Military Route was deployed and while it is to be welcomed that we have this diversionary route option, it took 26 hours to bring it into use last week and it cannot be seen as an adequate, long-term solution to future landslides, as the closure of both it and the A83 demonstrated so clearly.'

'I am calling on ministers to look again at a flow over canopy option on the most dangerous section of the Rest and Be Thankful.'

'Having visited businesses in Inveraray in the hours after the road was closed I am only too aware of the devastating impact closure has on the whole local economy of Argyll and Bute.'

MSP Michael Russell said: 'I'm very concerned about local people and safety has to come first. Nevertheless, it is very important that local people and visitors continue to see progress with work on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful to guarantee continuous access.'

A Transport Scotland spokeswoman said: 'The recent landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful was the result of extreme conditions, which saw 90mm of rain falling at the Rest and Be Thankful in a 24-hour period. To put this in context, 25mm is the normal heightened alert level.'

'We are working tirelessly with our operating company and geotechnical experts to try to mitigate the effects of these events. More than £48 million has been invested in the A83 since 2007. This includes £9 million towards reducing the risk of impacts from landslides at the Rest and Be Thankful and the establishment of the local diversion route, which helps keep Argyll open for business.'

'As agreed at the last A83 Taskforce meeting, the group will reconvene in the coming weeks when the impact of Storm Frank, the continued work of the group and its next steps will be discussed.'

# 'Grow-your-own' cannabis couple fined

AN OBAN couple who bought a grow-your-own kit online from eBay ended up in Oban Court on Tuesday charged with possession of cannabis.

Police who raided 3a Millpark Terrace, the home of Eion Smith, 40, and his partner Melissa McLaughlin, 25, on November 20, 2015 found three cannabis plants in a tent in the couple's spare bedroom, complete with

lighting, electric fan and ventilation ducts. Both of them admitted producing cannabis, a controlled Class B drug, and McLaughlin also admitted possessing heroin.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty said the plants were in 'a reasonably advanced state of cultivation' and each plant had a potential yield with a street value of £500.

'Police had received intelli-

gence and obtained a search warrant for the premises,' he added.

Both Smith and McLaughlin were open with the police and Smith told them: 'There's heroin under the couch and a bit on a tooter.'

Mr Edward Thornton, defence agent for the couple, said that both had been casual users of cannabis but that McLaughlin

had begun 'for some months to develop a very heavy cannabis habit'.

The decision to buy the growing kit from eBay was to make themselves less vulnerable to dealers.

'How many times have I heard that over the years,' said Sheriff Anderson QC. 'They obviously spent a considerable amount of money setting this up in the spare bedroom.'

Mr Thornton said: 'Both were quite candid that this was for their own personal use.'

Since the time of their arrest McLaughlin had stopped drug use entirely, Mr Thornton added.

Sheriff Anderson fined Smith £600 and McLaughlin £500 for the cannabis production; McLaughlin was admonished for the possession of heroin.

## POLICE FILES with Sergeant Alan Moore

### New Year's Day tragedy

EXTENSIVE enquiries are ongoing after a 35-year-old man was found dead on New Year's Day in Oban.

Police officers were called to an address in the Soroba area of the town at around 5.20am. The death has been described as 'sudden and unexplained'.

### Woman arrested over alleged theft

A WOMAN was arrested after allegedly stealing items including jewellery from an Oban store last week.

Police were called and the 37-year-old was apprehended at around 3.45pm on December 30 at McCaig's Warehouse, after she allegedly stole six bracelets and three keyrings. A report will now be sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Dangerous driving charge

A 28-YEAR-OLD man has been charged with dangerous driving following a two-car collision on the Oban to Lochgilphead road.

The incident occurred at around 5.30pm on December 30, on the A816 near Kilniver.

A 56-year-old woman is currently in hospital in Glasgow after suffering serious injuries in the crash.

A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Reported to Procurator Fiscal

AN OBAN man has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal after allegedly being found in possession of a class-B drug on Hogmanay.

The 27-year-old was detained in the Sinclair Drive area of the town at around 6pm and searched by officers under the Misuse of Drugs Act, where he was alleged to be in possession of herbal cannabis.

### Disorderly conduct charge

A MAN visiting Oban from Glasgow on Hogmanay was arrested in a town hotel for alleged disorder offences.

Police attended after reports of the 50-year-old drunkenly shouting inside the town's Queen's Hotel at around midnight.

He was taken to Oban Police Station and charged with acting in a disorderly manner, and released when sober.

A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Police recorded speeding on A82

A MOTORIST alleged to have been travelling at 90mph in a 60mph zone on the A82 has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Officers from the Divisional Road Policing unit recorded the 50-year-old man's speed near the Bridge of Orchy, at around 10.30am on January 2.

# Council tax rise not on cards, but 'nothing off the table', says council

LOUISE GLEN  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

PLANS to raise the council tax are not being considered by Argyll and Bute Council, the deputy leader of Argyll and Bute Council has said.

But Ellen Morton also told *The Oban Times* that 'nothing is off the table' as the budget decision deadline draws closer.

Mrs Morton said that while difficult decisions lay ahead, an email sent out by former leader James Robb indicating the authority planned to raise the council tax were 'without foundation'.

In an email to *The Oban Times*, Councillor James Robb said: 'Argyll and Bute Council were favourably protected by Finance Secretary, John Swinney in his budget.'

'The savings required, in addition to the council's existing plans, amount to only 0.8 per cent of its total spending.'

'The actual reduction from target of around £2 million is more than offset by the additional funding on offer for the Council Tax freeze at £1.432 million and maintaining the number of teachers £895,000.'

'It seems that Argyll and Bute Council is one of the councils preparing to reject the offers of additional funding from the Scottish Government as part of the LibDem election strategy.'

'The cost of this will of course fall on those least able to deal with it - those just above the Council Tax Benefit threshold, children from poorer families in our education system, and the elderly.'

Councillor Robb believes that options under consideration by the LibDem/Tory/Independent Administration are:

■ Reject the SNP Government's offer of an extra £1.432m (equivalent to a 3.5 per cent Council Tax rise to freeze Council Tax). An increase of 10 per cent would raise a net £2.6m.

■ Reject the SNP Government's offer of an extra £0.895million to maintain teach-



er numbers in 2016-17 and cut teachers to the legal minimum levels to save a net £0.605million minus redundancy costs.

■ Reduce the council's contribution to the new Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership in light of its share of the £250million extra funding provided by the SNP Government to ensure its successful start-up and future sustainability.'

Mrs Morton said that Councillor Robb was not included in the administration's conversations about the budget and therefore his comments were 'completely free from any knowledge of current discussions'.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'The council has been and continues to plan for a reduced funding package from the Scottish Government and in light of last week's announcement we have begun the process of assessing the settlement for Argyll and Bute.'

'As part of this process we are conducting a major budget consultation with our communities.'

'Regarding the council tax, the council will notify the Scottish Government of its decision no later than January 22, in line with other local authorities.'

'Decisions in setting the budget will be made at the council meeting on February 11.'

## Water charges set to rise in Argyll

HOUSEHOLD water charges in Scotland will rise this year, but are still expected to remain among the lowest in Great Britain.

Scottish Water will be increasing its charges by £6 for the average house-

hold which will raise the average charge in 2016/17 to £351.

England and Wales haven't announced their future figures, but their current average household charge is £385.

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**LORN**  
lines

**Rotary double delight for charities**



OBAN Rotary Club's annual Christmas Carol Concert raised £860 for Erskine Hospital and Mary's Meals. Mary's Meals is to receive a total of £1,500 from Oban Rotary with the sum matched by the Scottish Government.



MEANWHILE, a bag-packing day at Oban's Tesco raised £516.16 for local good causes. Pictured from left are Rotary Club members Lachlan Beaton, Iain MacIntyre, Kees van Rein and Stuart Cunningham.

**Call for investigation into rotting deer**

**LOUISE GLEN**  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

THE SCOTTISH Gamekeepers Association (SGA) is calling on the Scottish Government to investigate why a landowning conservation charity left dozens of stags to rot on a Knoydart hillside.

However, the John Muir Trust claims the problem was a result of deer populations being too high.

An SGA spokesman said: 'The deer culling practice by the John Muir Trust on its land at Li and Coire Dhorcail has left neighbouring deer managers sickened.

'Stags, some with haunches and heads removed, were left to decompose on the moor and online images of the carcasses, viewed by thousands, have elicited angry responses.

'The normal practice of engaging with neighbours in the local deer group about intentions for the cull was not observed by the John Muir Trust which, instead, informed Scottish Natural Heritage.

'Neighbours in the deer management group have claimed, whilst being disrespectful to the animals, the practice has cost the local area £100,000 in wasted venison and income from visiting stalkers.

'The charity in question has made it its political prerogative



ARGUMENT: culled deer have been left on the hill to rot in Knoydart.

to stand outside of the voluntary code respected by other deer managers in Scotland because they are lobbying to have this replaced by statutory arrangements.

'The only body which can scrutinise this incident properly to decide whether it is

in the best interests of deer, local people in Knoydart or best practice, therefore, is the Scottish Government. Deer were extracted from this area successfully before it was managed by John Muir Trust. The culled animals do not need to be left on open hill.'

The John Muir Trust responded to a press release issued by the Scottish Gamekeepers Association.

Mike Daniels, head of land management for the charity, said: 'As the SGA is well aware, many thousands of deer die on our hillsides each

winter - including hundreds in the Knoydart area - because deer populations are too high and they are desperately seeking food and shelter.

'These deaths from starvation and lack of woodland shelter are slow and painful and are a direct consequence of management practices that aim for high deer numbers for sport shooting regardless of animal welfare or ecology.

'The number of deer we had to cull between July and October - just over one per cent of the total population on Knoydart - was higher than usual because we can no longer rely on close season authorisations, which would allow us to cull deer in the winter when they come down from the higher slopes.

'Consequently, extraction of deer carcasses is much harder, especially in one of the most difficult and inaccessible corners of Scotland.

'Where possible, venison was taken from any remaining carcasses, with the rest left for other wildlife.

'We suspect that the main motivation for this attack from the Scottish Gamekeepers Association is to deflect attention away from Scotland's unsustainably high deer population, which is coming under increasing scrutiny as land reform climbs up the political agenda.'

**Oban youngsters shine as curtain goes up on festive concerts**



STAGE STARS: Oban Primary Campus hosted two fantastic Nativity plays in the space of a week. First to take to the stage, on December 9, was Rockfield Primary School's nursery and primary one pupils, right, who entertained a packed school hall with their tale of the birth of Jesus. Then, on December 16, it was the turn of St Columba's Primary School when their primary one, two and three pupils gave a stellar performance, adding an Oban twist to their event.



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CHEERS: Chairwoman Camille Dressler, from Eigg, and treasurer Frank Corcoran raise a glass of Oban malt to SMILEGOV.

**Federation celebrates end of sustainable energy project**

THE SCOTTISH Islands Federation (SIF) held its annual general meeting at the Atlantic Centre, Luing, in late December.

Among other activities, the board celebrated the completion of project SMILEGOV, a 30-month European project funded by Intelligent Energy Europe.

The SMILEGOV project's acronym derives from Smart Islands Governance, a critical consideration for island communities aspiring to sustainability.

The project supported more effective approaches to

strategic energy planning and development of sustainable energy projects on islands.

SIF participated alongside 11 other networks spanning 163 island authorities throughout the Baltic, Mediterranean and Atlantic regions and beyond, nearly all represented by local government personnel.

The 'community non-governmental organisation (NGO)' model for leading developments on Scottish islands with which SIF has worked is distinct and is of interest to other consortium members, motivating a study group of Estonian islanders to visit Mull in June 2015. Par-

allel programmes of themed island energy workshops have effectively pooled information, knowledge and perspectives to enhance capacity for development of island energy plans and projects throughout Europe.

In Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire, SIF facilitated energy audits undertaken by local communities in participating islands. These have been deposited with the local authorities and will be reviewed regularly.

Terry Hegarty, SIF's SMILEGOV Project Officer, said: 'Energy Audits can supply data essential for improved energy

planning, to enhance the resilience of island communities.

'SIF has learned from SMILEGOV that best practice energy planning for islands ideally involves all key interests coming together to take action, regularly reviewing local scope for efficiencies, fuel substitution and renewable generation.

'Elsewhere in Europe, this process is generally led by local authorities, but on many Scottish islands community-led development trusts and similar NGOs have a key role to play in shaping more sustainable island futures for themselves.'

# Fab four celebrating New Year honours

Steven Rae talks to the Argyll residents who are to receive gongs from Her Majesty, The Queen



**KENNETH IAN MACNAB** has been awarded the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the fishing industry in Scotland.

Kenneth, 60, from Tarbert, is a fifth-generation fisherman from the area, and is now in his third tenure as chairman of the Clyde Fisherman's Association.

The association aims to protect the interests of fishermen on the Firth and adjacent shores, with his grandfather a founder member in 1934.

Kenneth, who is now semi-retired, said: 'I was chuffed as hell when I got the letter through five or six weeks ago. I've not got a clue who nominated me as I've been involved with so many guys in the industry over the years. I've also done quite a bit for charity too.'

'I was quite surprised, but I have done quite a bit of work for the fishing industry over the years. This is my third time as chairman of the association. But really, I think it's the fishermen themselves who really deserve the recognition.'

Describing himself as 'Tarbert born and bred', Kenneth left school to become a fisherman in 1970, and began representing the industry at a local level in 1976, with the Tarbert branch of the Clyde Fishermen's Association.

He and wife Elizabeth still own a boat, but he employs a skipper, giving him a chance to devote more spare time to his work with the association.



**DR SHARON WEBB** has been awarded the MBE for services to heritage and archaeology in Scotland. Dr Webb has been the director and curator of the Kilmartin Museum for the past 13 years.

Dr Webb, 47, said: 'When I first saw the envelope, it looked 'official', and thought it might be something like a tax return. Then when I opened it I didn't think it was real - I thought someone was pulling my leg.'

'I was really surprised because although I have done a lot of work in the area, really it's just my job. So although it was a complete surprise, it was a lovely surprise.'

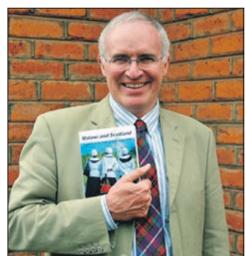
Sharon has herself been involved in nominating someone for a New Year's Honour when she helped to write a letter

of recommendation for Mid Argyll woman Jan Brown, who received an MBE in 2014 for charity work.

She continued: 'I thought it may have been the other trustees of the Kilmartin Museum who nominated me but they said it wasn't them. I may never find out.'

'It's extremely nice for someone to have done this for me, so whoever it was, thank you very much.'

Having grown up in Birmingham and studied and worked as an archaeologist across different parts of Britain and Europe, Argyll is now very much home for Sharon and her partner, Rod, who is also involved in archaeology.



**REVEREND** Professor Kenneth Rankin Ross has been awarded the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), for services to the community in Malawi and to Scottish-Malawi Relations.

Reverend Ross, 57, from Kilmelford, is the chairman and a founding member of the Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP), having lived in the African nation for 11 years between 1988 and 1998, and helping to establish the first theology degree in the country, at the University of Malawi Chancellor College.

The SMP is a national civil society network coordinating, supporting and representing the people-to-people links between the two nations, and representing 94,000 Scottish people with active links to Malawi, which has 700 member organisations and key individuals, including councils, universities, churches and businesses, amongst many others.

Father-of-three Kenneth is already well-known in Argyll as the Parish Minister of the Netherlorn Churches; Craignish, Kilbrandon, Kilchattan, Kilmelford and Kilniver.

He said: 'I was very surprised as there are a huge number of people involved in the Scotland Malawi Partnership, and the relationship goes back a long time. I went there with my family when my children were still young in 1988, and left in 1998, so it was obviously a big part of our lives. There isn't really a day goes by I am not in contact with Malawi in some way.'

'I feel like I am accepting this on behalf of everyone who has been a part of the partnership.'

ALSO in the honours list is Mrs Helen Baynham, who will receive the MBE for services to pre-school education.

Mrs Baynham owns the Cottage Kindergarten in Helensburgh, which won Nursery of the Year in the Nursery World Awards in 2012.

## Man hid bugging device in former partner's home

A **STALKER** who copied the key to his former partner's home and hid a bugging device so he could listen to her conversations was fined £500 at Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday.

Piotr Jakubiec, 42, of 12 Highland Apartments, Breadalbane Street, Oban, had previously been found guilty of visiting addresses in the Oban and Taynuilt areas uninvited and unexpectedly between December 10, 2014 and January 7, 2015, where his former partner lived and worked; repeatedly following her and making a key to her flat where he

fixed a recording device to listen to private conversations.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC had described his behaviour as 'extraordinary and frightening' enough to make a non-harassment order against him contacting the woman.

The sheriff had deferred sentence for three months for Jakubiec to be of good behaviour and handed down the fine on Tuesday when she also admonished him for breaching the conditions of his bail on one occasion during the case on August 20, 2015.

## Good practice and innovation for Lorn Healthy Options

AN OBAN team have been praised for their work to help people suffering from Multiple Sclerosis.

Derek Laidler, team leader physiotherapist at NHS Highland, and Andrea James, lead exercise instructor from Lorn and Oban Healthy Options, were announced winners of the Innovation in Practice award for the rehabilitation pathway they developed together for people with MS.

The award was presented by QuDoS (Recognising Quality in the Delivery of Services) at an event at the Beaumont Estate in Windsor, prior to the MS Trust annual conference.

Derek and Andrea developed a rehabilitation pathway for people with MS which allows for a comprehensive assessment and treatment plan, particularly if someone has had a relapse, developed new symptoms or is newly diagnosed, including clear joint goal setting.

The pathway means that people with MS now have a real say on where and how they have their rehabilitation delivered.

Derek said: 'Our vision was always to provide a patient-centred service built around the needs of our community, and to have such a high-profile endorsement of that vision is just incredible.'



Derek Laidler, team leader physiotherapist at NHS Highland, and Andrea James, lead exercise instructor from Lorn and Oban Healthy Options were presented with their award at the MS Conference.

The team were awarded for outstanding use of information and shared decision making in MS care. The award recognised the importance of

high-quality information to support people affected by MS and to help them make the choices that are right for them.

Director of the SBRC, Manddy Haeburn-Little, said: 'The public needs to be on guard against vouchers appearing on their social media newsfeeds claiming to offer incredible savings.'

## Islanders set to benefit from cheaper air fares

ISLANDERS are now eligible for a half-price air fares, as the Scottish Government recognises flights to remote communities as 'lifeline connections'.

Residents of Islay, Jura, Colonsay, the Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Sutherland are now eligible for the discount, which is an increase of 10 per cent on the Air Discount Scheme which came into force last April.

The 50 per cent discount will apply to all tickets booked on or after January 1, and is also available to students who study away from home, volunteers and employees of third sector organisations.

The move has been widely welcomed by island commu-



nities, however there are no plans announced to include businesses in the scheme.

Derek Mackay, minister for transport and islands, announced last year that the scheme would be extended until 2019. This is in conjunction with the fares on government-subsidised ferries also frozen during 2016-17. Mr Mackay said: 'I've

heard a lot about the issue of high air fares in the Highlands and Islands over the past year. This increase tackles the issue directly and I hope eligible residents take full advantage of the scheme.'

'These services are lifeline connections to many of these communities, so I'm very pleased that we can help them further by increasing the ADS. This makes a real difference to residents of our remote communities, giving people access to significantly cheaper air fares.'

'These changes underline the Scottish Government's commitment to support the communities of the Highlands and Islands.'

## Food for thought for Argyll businesses

CAFES, restaurants and hotels across Argyll and Bute are to be forced to recycle leftovers in a drive to cut food waste.

Under new regulations, which came into force on January 1, any company or organisation that produces more than 5kg of food waste each week will have to separate leftovers and out-of-date items to be recycled rather than sent to landfill. If they don't they could face a fine up to £10,000.

Pubs, colleges, schools and nursing homes, for example, will also be affected.

In order to avoid recycling costs, organisations can use technology that is able to generate heat, electricity as well as by-products such as compost.

## Voucher scam on social media

POLICE Scotland and the Scottish Government are warning shoppers to be on high alert following a spate of fraudulent supermarket vouchers appearing on Facebook.

Following Aldi's own warning that vouchers offering 40 per cent off at the supermarket are false, the Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC) has suggested that shoppers who register are exposing themselves to the risk of identity theft by handing over sensitive personal information to criminals.

With the rise in personal information being cultivated by criminal gangs and sold via the Dark Web [an intricate system of private untraceable web servers often used by hacker groups], police are warning that it is important for people to be vigilant at all times when using devices that may store any personal information.

Director of the SBRC, Manddy Haeburn-Little, said: 'The public needs to be on guard against vouchers appearing on their social media newsfeeds claiming to offer incredible savings.'

'Criminals are constantly devising more complex and devious methods to unlawfully take your information - and your savings - which is why fraudulent offers can often appear official. However, if an offer looks too good to be true, it more than likely is.'

'Be cautious when online, at a time when savings are so often stretched. It is especially important that we don't fall victim and instead take what measures we can to limit risk.'



Aldi issued a warning to customers after a fraudulent discount voucher appeared on social media.

## Driver dazzled by sun failed to see pedestrian

A DELIVERY driver was dazzled by the sun and failed to see a pedestrian crossing in front of his van, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Tuesday.

Alan Thomas Penman, 43, of 69 Dalaruan Street, Campbeltown, pled guilty to driving without due care and attention, and failing to see the 63-year-old woman crossing the entrance to the BuildBase yard off Lynn Road, Oban, on September 3 last year.

Prosecutor fiscal Eoin McGinty said the woman was struck by the van and fell to the ground, striking her head.

She was kept in hospital for observation for two days, had to undergo a x-ray and a CT scan because there were fears about bruising to the brain;

she also had a cut on the back of her head and had to take three weeks off work.

Penman was 'attentive and apologetic' at the scene, the fiscal added.

Mr Thornton, defence agent, said Penman, a driver with AM Transport had a clean licence and had been employed by the firm for 10 years, and was described as a 'steady and reliable driver'.

He had just made a delivery to Tesco and was making another to BuildBase; he was driving very slowly and he was dazzled by the sun and unaware of any pedestrian as he turned into the entrance Mr Thornton added.

Penman was fined £300 and had six points were added to his driving licence.

ADVERTORIAL

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The Garnier Range has some amazing offers as well this January with Essential Wipes, Mineral Deoderant and Fructis Shampoo - all at just £1.

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**Western Isles**

WESTERN Isles residents are being encouraged to take part in a consultation into the future of the islands. The project is part of the Scottish Government's Islands' Bill and asks for views on extra powers for local authorities and the formation of a national islands plan. Angus Campbell, leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the people of the islands and I would urge everyone to make the most of this chance to shape the future of island life. The comhairle has responded to the consultation but the Scottish Government also wants to know the views of people in the community. Whilst the issues may sound complex, the bill and the ongoing Our Islands Our Future campaign is all about improving people's lives and providing decent housing, good employment opportunities, first rate services and improved transport links. In the current financial circumstances this will be challenging but an Islands Bill is about the years and generations to come. I would urge people to go to the consultation on the Scottish Government website and indicate whether you support an Islands' Bill. You don't need to complete all the questions and it will only take five minutes of your time. This is a fantastic opportunity - let's take it.' The consultation is available via <http://tinyurl.com/hfybk4>.

A COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) councillor has backed calls by the local MP to extend the consultation on restriction changes on important fishing grounds. Councillor Alasdair Macleod, chairman of Sustainable Development, said the consultation period should be extended by at least six weeks to give fishermen the chance to respond. He continued: 'The new measures could have serious financial implications on the Western Isles and it is of utmost importance that those affected have the time to respond to the consultation. I would call on the agencies involved to respect local opinion, reverse these proposals and stand up for the islands, the local economy and our communities.'

**Loch Awe**

AN ARGYLL hotel has been named one of the best in Britain by a leading travel and hospitality guide. The Good Hotel Guide's 2016 edition describes Ardarnaiseig, on the banks of Loch Awe near Kilchrenan, as 'full of character with a pleasingly old-fashioned air of country house grandeur'. The 19-bedroom hotel, below, situated in 240 acres of private landscaped grounds, was voted Country House Hotel of the Year in the 2015-16 Scottish Hotel Awards. The Good Hotel Guide lists inspectors' choices of the UK's 'best hotels ... with personality and character'. Hotels do not pay to be included and inspectors visit anonymously. Its praise for Ardarnaiseig included the hotel's food. 'Dinner was excellent: scallops with a suitably flavoured cumin sauce; tender sirloin of beef with mash and crispy shards of bacon.'



**Invergarry/Spean Bridge**

THE ASSOCIATION of British Insurers is expecting the bill for Storm Desmond, which resulted in 200 tonnes of debris falling on to the A82, to reach a total of £520 million. This comes as around 1,500 families throughout the UK had to seek alternative accommodation following extreme weather, which saw rainfall in some areas of Scotland reach 100 millimetres. Earlier this month, as Storm Desmond was at the height of its chaos, a landslide disrupted traffic between Spean Bridge and Invergarry and a 15-mile stretch of the road had to be closed. This forced motorists onto a diversion route that added up to an extra 46 miles to their journey.



**WINNERS:** Lochnell Primary School pupils have been busy picking up prizes. Five children, below, were awarded presents for designing a Christmas jumper in a competition organised by Tesco and 17 pupils, above, were crowned winners in the annual Argyll and Bute road safety calendar competition.



**Lochnell**  
Lochnell Primary School's classes came together and performed their 'It's a Nativity' play. Pupils from primary one and primary seven took part in the play with the backing of a choir made up of children from all the other classes.



Barcaldine Primary School's four pupils on the set of their Nativity play.

**Barcaldine**

PUPILS of Barcaldine Primary School entertained an appreciative audience recently when they staged their Nativity play. The performance, held in St Modan's Church, Benderloch, on December 15, featured a mock court case. The church was packed with family and friends keen to witness a dispute between cows and donkeys over stable accommodation played out. The Barcaldine pre-fives and some former pupils also joined in to tell the story, with plenty of audience participation. The fun continued with celebrations in the church hall, with help from the school's parent council.

**Scottish Water chiefs apologise to islanders**

HIGHLANDS and Island MSP Mike Mackenzie has questioned Scottish Water bosses over defective sewage works on Seil Island - prompting a public apology from chief executive Douglas Millican. The SNP politician, who has been pursuing the issue on behalf of constituents, invited chairwoman, Lady Susan Rice and Mr Millican to visit North Argyll to see for themselves the works, which he described as 'defective both aesthetically and operationally'. The questioning took place during the meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee on December 16, of which Mr Mackenzie is a member. Mr Mackenzie said: 'The execution of the work which I, my neighbours and the community there experi-

enced, was shambolic. Many of the drainage pipes had to be re-laid because they fell the wrong way which caused the sewage to run backwards. No building warrants were applied for in respect of the connections to each home and no wonder - I have never seen worse examples of poor practice. 'In dealing with a very minor environmental problem, Scottish Water has created a local environmental disaster at significant cost. Now you want the community to trust you in providing a solution that appears to be equally ill-conceived.' Mr Millican responded by branding the Seil Island sewage works 'one of the worst schemes that Scottish water has ever delivered'. He added: 'I would like to put it on public record that I apologise for the way this scheme has been conduct-

ed. I am not proud of the legacy of the work we have done there. 'The plant is sub-optimal in its performance. 'We can get better and I would like to give my assurances about future improvements because of past sensitivities.' Mr Mackenzie commented: 'I am sure my constituents will be gratified that Mr Millican has made a public apology and I would like to take up Mr Millican's offer to meet with him because, while I acknowledge that he has inherited many of these problems, I think there is more work required. 'I hope we can now get onto a more transparent footing and that Scottish Water's apology can be the beginning of a better relationship with the community and a better solution for this problem.'

**MORVERN lines**

**Festive delicacies and treats few and far between for forebears**

A HAPPY New Year to all readers of this column and to the many friends and correspondents who took the time and trouble to write to me from all over the world with additional information, stories and old photographs and to say how much they had enjoyed what I had written during the last 12 months. As a result, a book based on Morvern Lines since the column began more than three years ago, has been generously approved by the owners of The Oban Times and is now in the pipeline. Watch this space. As a historian, I am often asked what delicacies and treats our forebears had at this time of the year - not that Christmas was celebrated to the same extent it is today. Indeed, even I can still remember a mail delivery on Christmas Day. The answer is not many, other than a warm welcome and fine old-fashioned hospitality which, unfortunately, appears to have almost completely disappeared from more rural and remote districts. Obviously whisky, brandy, port and other homemade beverages, on which no duty had been paid, were easily obtained and what a comfort they must have provided as soul and pain relievers in the armpit of the years, particularly before the days of blue lights and breathalysers. Some Edinburgh friends who bought a holiday house on Ardnamurchan peninsula a few years ago, learnt the hard way. They gave a drinks party to a wide circle of friends and neighbours assuming, rather naively, that guests would be familiar with Morningside 'rules' - arrive at 6pm and be off two hours later to the next party in much the same way as a herd of heifers might munch their way round a field. Nine hours later the guests were still enjoying themselves, having devoured several cases of fine wine, a dozen bottles of whisky and emptying the contents of the fridge, store room and even a deep freezer. Now that was one good party, and who could blame the revellers. If you live more than 50 miles away you can hardly expect to travel all that distance without giving your host the opportunity to enjoy your company and show off their hospitality - it would be rude! Needless to say, the soiree didn't become an annual fixture in their calendar. Very little food and drink was imported as people were much more self-sufficient than they are today. They made do with what was available. Sheep, lambs, the odd pig, a kid and perhaps even a heifer, were slaughtered and the various components transformed into dainties.



Deer often provided the few luxuries at the New Year.

Where men worked among deer various well-known perquisites came their way. One was the deer's stomach called the poca-buidhe - Gaelic, the yellow bag - which was washed and boiled and became tripe. There are four chambers in a deer's stomach; the rumen, reticulum, omasum and the abomasum. The reticulum was the favourite and was called in Gaelic 'Currac and righ' or, in some places, 'Curraichd an righ' - the king's hood. Neil Shaw of Jura, a composer of fine songs and leading figure in the contemporary Gaelic speaking community who laid the foundations of the Gaelic movement of today, recorded in 1917, 'many stalkers and deer forest ghillies today can't be bothered to take the deer's stomach home, but leave it for the ravens and the crows. 'It shouldn't be like this. Our fathers made many a good dinner from the king's hood, long cabbage and good potatoes. Many a thing from the deer hunt could come to the house of the poor man if the ghillies were as economical as they used to be, but Lowland cuisine has reached the edge of the deer forest, even to the most remote bothan in the corrie'. On the subject of deer I must, in closing, commiserate with fellow Oban Times columnist Robert Robertson, author of the Glasgow Letter and award-winning singer with world-famous band Skipinnish who, according to a fine piece of filming shown on BBC Alba on New Year's Day, was less successful with the Invergarry stags in his native Lochaber last year than he ought to have been. We were left none the wiser as to the reason; could it have been that John Cameron, the Kingie Estate head stalker, was too fit for him and tired him out before he reached the firing point, did he confuse his guitar with his trigger finger or was he overcome by the beauty of the hills leaving the muckle hart of Glengarry to kick its heels in the air and canter off into the heather to live another day? Whatever happened, his fellow bandsmen had to be content not with the king's hood for their supper back at the lodge that evening but an old broiler. I feel a new song on its way!

Iain Thornber  
[iain.thornber@btinternet.com](mailto:iain.thornber@btinternet.com)



**Lochaline residents' exercise fun**

Lochaline residents enjoyed a festive evening of exercise, followed by drinks and nibbles, to celebrate three months of Highland Hustle with Kirsty. The class is a workout based around Highland and ceilidh dancing, set to upbeat music. No dance experience is necessary and there are two levels making the routines suitable for everyone. Classes are held weekly during school term time on Monday and Wednesday evenings in the village hall.



HAPPY TIMES: mothers and babies enjoyed a Christmas party in Stornoway, organised by breastfeeding support group Bosom Buddies.

**Tarbert**

CHRISTMAS wouldn't be Christmas without a Nativity play and the children of Tarbert recently put on a charming example. Reverend Stanley Hood took the service, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, at Tarbert Parish Church, emphasising the true meaning of Christmas. The children performed with enthusiasm and every one was a star including Ellie Stuart who played the Star of Bethlehem. Mary was played by Charlie MacKenzie, King Herod was played by Robbie McNair, Alana Duncan was a shepherd and Jack Stuart played a wise man. The stellar performances by all of the children were greeted with well-deserved applause from the congregation before the actors left the stage for refreshments.

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# More people than ever bank on Fort charity for Christmas food

EMMA CRICHTON  
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

THE NUMBER of people relying on Lochaber Food Bank this Christmas almost doubled compared to last year.

The Fort William-based charity dished out 1,062 meals to 118 people during December, compared to 68 people in the same month of 2014.

These are the highest figures since the food bank opened in December 2013.

Volunteers also managed to include extras and gifts with food parcels, thanks to the 'unbelievable generosity' of those who donated.

Food bank manager Alex MacConnachie said: 'We fed a lot more people this year. I think it's a mixture of more people needing help and also people being more aware of what we do.'

'We wouldn't be able to do it without the people of



We fed a lot more people this year

Alex MacConnachie  
Food bank manager

Lochaber and the generosity people have shown has been unbelievable. We were able to include chocolate and biscuits, as well as presents for kids. I could really see the thought people had put into donating. One woman even brought in a bag full of presents, all wrapped already. I can't thank everyone enough.'

Alex went on to describe the desperate situation some people

in the area found themselves in, saying: 'The Tuesday before Christmas I had a phonecall from the Fishermen's Mission in Mallaig. They had met people who had absolutely nothing to eat so we loaded up a van and sent it to them first thing the next morning.'

'I hate to think about anyone having nothing to eat, especially at Christmas when most people have loads of food.'

Thanks to donations over Christmas the food bank has plenty of food but Alex encouraged people not to become complacent with donating. He said: 'We still have a lot of food but donations tend to slow down in January. I don't like to get too relaxed and say we don't need anything because we never know when we're going to get a burst of people coming in.'

Lochaber Food Bank is open between noon and 2pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



GENEROUS: Food bank volunteers praised the kindness of Lochaber people as they donated more than 1,000 meals in December. 21\_f02foodbank01

## TIMESLINE

### Body recovered from Skye croft

A BODY has been discovered following a fire in north Skye.

Emergency services attended a croft house in Kilmuir after a blaze broke out on Boxing Day, but the damage was so severe that police and fire officers were unable to enter the building until it could be confirmed as structurally safe.

The identity of the deceased had not been identified when *The Oban Times* went to press.

A police spokesman said: 'An examination of the premises has since taken place and police can confirm that sadly the remains of a person were discovered within the house. Enquiries remain ongoing at this time to confirm the identity of the deceased.'

'The incident is not being treated as suspicious. A report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.'

### Inn one of the best for post walk pint

A WEST Highland pub has been named one of the best in Britain for a post walk pint.

The Clachaig Inn in Glencoe was the only place in Scotland to make the top five and took third overall in the list by Mountain Warehouse.

The inn's rural location has been popular with walkers and climbers for hundreds of years.

### Tenants asked for rent spend views

TENANTS of Highland Council properties are being asked for their views on how their rent should be spent.

A survey on the local authority's plans for next year can be found on the Highland Council Facebook page or at service points. A paper survey can be posted by calling 01463 702889.

The consultation is open until January 22.



## Queen's Honours List celebrations

A LOCHABER musician has been awarded a prestigious award in the Queen's New Year Honours List for dedicating his life to music.

Peter Rose, director of Lochaber Music School, was named as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), for services to musical education and conservation in the UK and abroad.

The award recognises the teacher's work with Anne Conlon, who also received an MBE. The pair have been writing choral music for more than 30 years, including the world's first ecological musical, Yanomamo, in 1983, highlighting the threats posed to the world's rainforests.

Peter, who lives in Upper Inverroy, Roy Bridge, was a grad-



MBE: Peter Rose.

uate of the Royal Manchester College of Music before being appointed head of expressive arts at St Augustine's RC High School in Lancashire.

He said: 'We would like to thank all of those who have offered congratulations and expressed such great pleasure at our being awarded MBEs

in the New Year Honours List. The award came as a total but lovely surprise. We do have to say that the award's citation 'for services to music education and conservation, in the UK and abroad' surely has to embrace everyone who has been involved in our environmental choral works, whether as performer, colleague, parent, helper and not least, close friend and family.'

Anne has now retired from teaching but the pair continue to write together and plan to publish new work this year.

Also credited on the Honours List was Calina MacDonald of Carbost, Skye, who was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to business and horticulture in Skye and Lochalsh.



A' toirt Gàidhlig thugaibh

## Cuiribh ur taic airson an tuilleadh sheilbheachd airson BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal ann an sgrùdadh Urras a' BhBC

Support increased resources for BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal in BBC Trust review

### Tha BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal soirbheachail agus tha sinne aig MG ALBA ag iarraidh gum bi iad nas fheàrr buileach dhuibh.

San Dàmhair, tron cho-chomhairle mu ùrachadh Cairt Rioghail a' BhBC, thuir sinn gu bheil sinne ag iarraidh gun tèid 10 uair a thìde de phrògraman ùra a chur gu ruige BBC ALBA gach seachdain leis a' BhBC. Cheadaicheadh seo seirbheis nas coileanta a thabhann airson ar prìomh luchd-amhairc.

Tha Urras a' BhBC a-nis a' dèanamh sgrùdadh air BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal. Feumaidh sinn ar n-argamaid a dhèanamh a-rithist agus bhiodh sinn fada nur comainn nam b' urrainn dhuibh ar cuideachadh a-rithist. Tha fios a-nis nach fhaighear an £1m bho Riaghaltas na RA agus tha sin a' dèanamh ar freagairt nas cudromaiche buileach.

Nach gabh sibh an cothrom fios a chur gu Urras a' BhBC gus innse dhaibh gu bheil sibhse, mar ar luchd-amhairc, airidh air seirbheis nas coileanta agus mar sin gu bheil an tuilleadh sheilbheachd a dhith bhon BhBC airson BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal.

Faodar ceisteachan Urras a' BhBC a lionadh a-steach aig:

[www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

No cuiribh ur freagairt ann an sgrìobhadh gu:

**BBC Trust Nations Review Consultation**

ICM Unlimited, Creston House, 10 Great Pulteney Street, London, W1F 9NB

Tha sgrùdadh Urras a' BhBC a' dùnadh air 17 Faoilleach 2016.

Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, cuiribh fios thugainn:

Fòn: 01851 705550 P-dealain: [fios@mgalba.com](mailto:fios@mgalba.com)

### BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal are successful and we at MG ALBA want them to be even better for you.

In October, during the UK Government's consultation on the BBC's charter, we said we would like the BBC to provide 10 hours of new programming weekly for BBC ALBA, which would help to provide a more comprehensive service for the channel's core audience.

The BBC Trust is now reviewing BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal. We need to make that same case again, and we would once again be grateful for your help. The recent news that MG ALBA will no longer receive £1m from the UK Government makes your response even more important.

Please participate in the BBC Trust review and ensure the desire for a more complete service is expressed, and that more investment is therefore required from the BBC for BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal.

You can complete the BBC Trust's questionnaire here:

[www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

Or send your response in writing to:

**BBC Trust Nations Review Consultation**

ICM Unlimited, Creston House, 10 Great Pulteney Street, London, W1F 9NB

The BBC Trust's review closes on 17 January 2016.

If you would like more information, please do contact us at:

Tel: 01851 705550 Email: [fios@mgalba.com](mailto:fios@mgalba.com)



## Viewpoint

PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB  
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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 8216

It was with delight that we heard one of our own had been awarded a BEM in The Queen's New Year's Honours List.

The Oban Times' David Buchanan is to receive the award for all his hard work for Oban Saints Football Club.

Davie has been involved with the club for nearly 50 years as a player, coach, manager, secretary/treasurer

– and he still washes the strips after the games. To all the Argyll and Bute recipients in this year's honours, we wish you very well-deserved congratulations.

We recognise that many of our clubs and organisations would not be what they are without people such as Davie working tirelessly and enthusiastically week in week out, year after year.

So to all, a big thank you!



## Days gone by – Scalpay islanders welcome royal visitors – July 1985

This week's flashback photograph comes from the files of The Oban Times. It was taken by our late Scalpay correspondent Donald Morrison and shows His Royal Highness Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana during their visit to the island in July 1985. Digital versions of flashback photos for *The Oban Times* can be sent to 'editor@obantimes.co.uk' or prints sent to the editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Anyone who wishes a print returned should include a stamped-addressed envelope.

## Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



## Countdown to Trail West's 'thank you' gig

TRAIL West's much-anticipated 'thank you' gig is this Friday, January 9, at 9.30pm in Glasgow University's Queen Margaret Union.

This one-off evening is a 'thank you' from the boys to everyone who donated to their fundraising campaign after their van was stolen from a street in the west end of Glasgow with all their PA gear and many of their instruments inside.

Anyone who donated will get in for free.

As I wrote two weeks ago, the way the highland and island community came together in the aftermath of the robbery to help the boys out was special.

Through the crowdfunding campaign, they managed to raise the money needed to cover their losses. It is for that reason I think this is going to be an extraordinary evening – and I am delighted to be involved in it.

Trail West's special guests on the night are: the Gillespie brothers from Skerryvore; Robert, Ross and Kyle from Skipinnish and Michael Steele from the Dùn Mòr Ceilidh Band. Over 18s only.

## Two big gigs for Ceòl 's Craic in January

JANUARY'S going to be a busy month for Ceòl 's Craic – an organ-

isation which stages Gaelic cultural events in Glasgow – as it has two big events to look forward to.

The first of these nights is a free-entry film night in the Centre for Contemporary Arts cinema on Sauchiehall Street on Tuesday January 12 at 6.30pm.

The film, entitled 'Am Braighe 's am Bayou', explores the themes and motivations that run through the music of Blair Douglas, founder member of Runrig, Mactalla, Clair and Tional.

The film takes the form of a travelogue, following Blair from his home in Braes of the Bayou of Louisiana in search of musical inspiration.

Ceòl 's Craic is also staging a concert with Gaels Le Chèile at Celtic Connections on Saturday January 16. The concert stars Tional, a band made up of Blair Douglas, Christine Primrose, Billy Ross, Arthur Cormack, Decker Forrest and Iain Smith.

They will be joined by Dominic Mac Giolla Brìde and Gràinne Brady, Ryan Murphy and Adam Brown.

It is a line-up full of phenomenal musicians and looks like it will be a cracker of a night. This is also being held in the CCA, on Sauchiehall Street, and will begin at 7.30pm.

## New OT columnist greatly entertaining

I AM DELIGHTED one of my Skipinnish partners-in-crime, Angus

Macphail, is now a fellow columnist in this paper.

'Macphail's Music' over the last couple of weeks has been greatly entertaining and has contained light-hearted poetry.

Still in the festive spirit, I thought I would take the opportunity this week to include a few lines of my own:

There once was a Tìree high-flyer  
With considerable literary desire  
His columnist's futility  
Showed little ability  
But it'll do for lighting the fire!

There once was a man from Tìree  
With a column in the OT  
It wasn't that good  
And, without being rude,  
We should now get the paper for free!

## What's on

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

**January 14 to January 31:** Celtic Connections festival throughout the city.

## Pub scene

**Park Bar:** Friday January 8 - Colin Garvin. Saturday January 9: Eriskay Lilt. Sunday January 10: Nicky McMichean.

**Islay Inn:** Friday January 8: The Keelies. Saturday January 9: Crowd-funding. Wednesday January 13: quiz night.

Crannog Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can

either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines. We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

## ACHA not to blame for housing 'setback'

Sir,  
I refer to the article on Coll housing project 'setback' in The Oban Times of December 31 2015.

The article implies the Development Coll application failed because of a lack of support for affordable housing from Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA).

ACHA advised Development Coll of the good news that we had secured funding to build two affordable homes at Arinagour. We hope to be on site in June 2016.

The association, having secured this resource, could not support another application for the simple reason we did not have the funding.

Development Coll was advised of this. Only Development Coll can clarify why it, in its application to the Scottish Land Fund, listed ACHA as a funding partner, which was clearly not the case for the reasons I have outlined.

ACHA wishes Development Coll all the best for future applications and as an organisation will continue to look at opportunities for housing need on the island in the future if required.

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive, ACHA.

## SNP dragging its feet over broadband

Sir,  
Of course it's an outrage that the Vodafone mast on Mull has failed again.

Last winter, as the local MP, I spent a great deal of time getting this mast repaired. I even arranged for Vodafone to be questioned in front of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee.

When questioned by myself at the hearing, Vodafone admitted its infrastructure is out of date, but said there was no point upgrading the infrastructure until the broadband infrastructure needed to transmit 4G signals is put in place.

They promised they would bring 4G mobile internet to the West Highlands and Islands once the Scottish Government has rolled out the necessary broadband infrastructure.

Responsibility for funding the necessary broadband infrastructure

lies with the SNP Government. It has failed Argyll and Bute on this. We lag behind other similar rural and island areas such as Highland, Orkney and Shetland.

Vodafone is at fault, but so is the SNP Government. It must get a move on. Lives depend on it. Our MSPs have let us down. They should be on their feet in Holyrood demanding action.

Also at fault are our SNP MPs who have shut down the inquiry into this that I had set up.

Alan Reid, Liberal Democrat candidate for Argyll and Bute, Dunoon.

## The Oban Times allows open debate

Sir,  
I write in response to Liam Griffin's letter in last week's Oban Times about suggested political bias in your columns.

While practically every media outlet in this country has a philosophy on the subject of politics, varying from bigoted to indifferent, it has been my experience over a considerable number of years, that your paper has tried to be fairly apolitical in its approach.

Of course, it is impossible for an outsider to know what submissions have been submitted to the inbox, and have been instantly deleted, or in the case of written submissions, consigned to the waste paper bin.

But, without inside knowledge, The Oban Times appears to allow open debate on political matters, without bias, and if such be the case, more power to your elbow.

Jim Cunningham, by email.

## No tears for hauliers over bridge closure

Sir,  
Scottish Labour's Jackie Baillie and her new friends in the haulage business bemoaned the closure of the Forth Road Bridge and demanded the SNP's Scottish Government reimburse them and their shareholders for the inconvenience of having to go a few miles out their way to their destinations.

Most of these heavy-hauled loads are heading south to the big cities in England, where many are based.

The failure of the bridge was down to a structural weakness, caused by a stress fracture.

Engineers also point out that the bridge was never intended to take the weight of some of these loads being hauled south by these hauliers. Many say the tolls might have saved the problem happening because the money would have been there to cover such problems, blaming the Scottish Government for removing them.

I wonder how many hauliers and shareholders, who would wish to save money, started using the bridge route once the tolls had been removed?

This would inevitably push weight and stress limits up.

Most of these companies are very capable of taking a 'hit' in the pocket every now and then, rather than use the public's money to reimburse them.

Scottish Labour and their Scottish Liberal friends in government before opposed bridge maintenance funding and the building of a second crossing so they are right ones to carp about recent events.

The 'bitter sweet victory' that some columns mention for an early opening of the bridge to light public and commercial traffic must stick in the craw of the hauliers and a vengeful Scottish Labour with Baillie at the helm. If hauliers were charged for the extra weight they carry over the Forth Road Bridge, they would soon be smarting. Crocodile tears are shed for them on this one I'm afraid.

After all, the price of fuel is now at its lowest for seven years and the route south remains the same for most via the M74 via Kincardine.

I do, however, feel sorry for those whose businesses sat on a knife edge as a result of the closure and the low-waged drivers of the haulage industry.

Bob Harper, Anstruther, Fife.

## Christmas ball in Oban was in 1950s

Sir,  
I have just been shown the photograph which appeared in last week's edition of your paper where Nan Clark told her very interesting story of her life through Fiona Campbell Smith.

My only comment is that the photo of the Christmas Ball in Oban was not circa 1930 as I can name many of the people in it who were in Oban High School with me and I would say it was taken in the 1950s.

Katie Boyd, by email.

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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Ailean Caimbeul

SAOILIDH mi gur e a' chiad chuimhne a th' agam air oidhche Bliadh' Uire dròbh de dhaoine cruinn san taigh ann an Caileabost agus cuideigin a' seinn Òran Camanachd Ghlaschu aig Màiri Mhòr nan Òran!

'S i seo a' Bhliadh' Ùr thug sòlas dhuinn! Bha na faclan sin mar gum biodh gan seinn le uimhir de dh'fhairachadh.

A' sealltainn air ais chun an fheasgair ud, theagamh 1951, 's dòcha gum bheil mi a' tuigsinn pàirt den adhbhar a bhiodh na faclan seo gan gabhail le sunnd àraid.

Chan eil cuimhne agam cò bha an làthair cuide rim athair 's mo mhàthair is mo phiuthar as sine, ach bhiodh nàbaidhean ann gun teagamh agus 's dòcha cuid de bhràithrean m' athair agus mo sheanair.

Cha robh ach beagan bhliadhnaichean bho chrìochnaich an dàrna cogadh agus bha mòran aca air a bhith troimhe agus gu fàbharach air am beatha a thoirt às.

'S iad gillean mo rùn a thogadh mo shunn!

Gu cinnteach bhiodh cuimhne ghoirt air an iomadh fear òg nach do

thill, ach bha saoghal ùr sìobhalta air a ghealltainn dhan fheadhainn a bha beò agus tha e furasta a thuigsinn mar a bhiodh iad uile an dòchas gun robh na leasachaidhean ann an cor na dùthcha, agus an t-saoghail, gu bhith air an coileanadh. Bliadhna ùr aig toiseach an dàrna leth den fhicheadainn linn, agus pàrantan a' guidhe gur sinne an ginealach ùr chloinne nach fhuingeadh uabhasan cogaidh.

Agus gu dearbh sin mar a thachair, oir cha deach mise na mo cho-aoisean riamh a ghairm a shabaid às leth ar dùthcha agus bha sinn dà-riribh fortanach anns an t-seadh sin!

Cha tuirt sin air chor sam bith gun deachaidh na gealltanasan air sith mhaireann a thoirt gu buil, agus chaidh iomadach cogadh a ghairm 's a chur thar nam bliadhnaichean bhon àm ud, agus ann an cuid a dhòighean tha suidheachadh an t-saoghail nas cunnartaiche an-diugh na bha 's dòcha riamh na eachdraidh.

Tha ionnsaighean cheannair an aghaidh dhùthchannan a taobh an iar a' fàs nas bitheanta, agus tha dùbhlann dìon a sìor fhàs nas dorra

dha seirbheisean tèarainteachd is iad a' cogadh ri nàimhdean neo-fhaic-sinneach.

'S docha gur e chuid as draghaile den t-suidheachadh an ìre gum bheil daoine òga air am breugadh agus a dhol an sàs ann an aithreir air a bhonntachadh air creideamh. Bu mhath dhaibh sin comhairle an t-seanfhaicil, gur draghaile caraid amaideach na nàmhaidh gli!

Gun dhealaich na sunn, mar thàinig iad cruinn, le cridheachan coibhneil, 's b' òrdail iad. Nach bu mhath an t-amas sin airson 2016!

MY FIRST memory of a New Year, probably 1951, and I recall folk singing Mary Macpherson's song to Glasgow Camanachd and the line 'this New Year brings joy' seemed to be sung with special enthusiasm!

Looking back, I can now understand the hope of people who had survived the Second World War and were hoping for peace and prosperity.

That is still a goal.  
Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)  
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## Press policy

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If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times,

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The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and

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**oban INDEX 2016**  
The Oban Index lists telephone numbers, trades, businesses and services within the Oban area.

**COMING SOON**  
**THE OBAN AND LOCHABER**  
**2016 INDEXES**

**lochaber INDEX 2016**  
The Lochaber Index lists telephone numbers, trades, businesses and services within the Lochaber area.

# Significant haul of 'legal highs' seized in Highlands crackdown

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

SUBSTANCES worth more than £9,000, described as 'legal highs', have been seized from the Highlands.

Almost 400 products capable of causing 'long-term mental health problems' were taken from two premises in a crackdown by Highland Council, Police Scotland, NHS Highland and the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership. This comes after the new psychoactive substances (NPS) were found to be unsafe and in breach of the General Product Safety Regulations, despite being controversially known as 'legal' highs.

A Highland Council spokesperson would not disclose where the premises supplying the substances were,



**DANGER:** 'Legal high' substances were seized from two Highland premises.

but said one was in a retail outlet while the other was an online business operating from a 'domestic premises'.

Brian Mackay, temporary Chief Inspector of South Highland Command, Highland and Islands Division, Police Scotland said: 'Together with Highland Council Trading Standards and NHS Highland we are delighted to work in collaboration to tackle the threat, risk and harm NPS cause to our local communities. The advice of Police Scotland is again straightforward - don't take these substances. Just because they are referred to as 'legal' doesn't mean they are safe. There is no 'safe' way to take NPS, there is always a risk. The only way of staying safe is to avoid NPS altogether.'

Hugo Van Woerden,

Director of Public Health at NHS Highland, explained how dangerous NPS can be: 'We were very pleased to play our part in this. We are extremely concerned about the risk that some individuals will consume such substances and come to harm. A small but significant proportion of individuals who take psychoactive substances go on to experience short term or long term mental health problems. The NHS regularly sees people whose lives have been ruined by these products.'

So-called legal highs can't be sold for human consumption so are often labelled as incense, salts or plant food. Drug advice charity, Frank, describes many ingredients found in them as being linked to poisoning, emergency hospital visits and, in some cases, death. It states: 'Just because a

drug is called a 'legal high' doesn't mean that it's safe. It is becoming increasingly clear that they are far from harmless and can have similar health risks to drugs like cocaine, ecstasy and speed (amphetamine).

'Risks of legal highs can include a wide range of effects depending on whether they are stimulants like cocaine, depressant drugs like cannabis, or hallucinogenic drugs like magic mushrooms. These include agitated and paranoid states, reduced inhibitions, drowsiness, coma, seizures, and death. The risks are usually increased if they are used with alcohol or other drugs.'

Anyone with information regarding the supply of NPS is urged to contact Trading Standards.

## TIMESLINE

### Police appeal for information

POLICE in Lochaber are appealing for information about the following incidents in the area:

A man was seen acting suspiciously near Inverloch Castle during the early evening of January 2. He is described as being of Asian appearance, wearing a dark hat and red coat.

Sometime between 10.30am on January 2 and 11.30am the following day, damage was caused to the paintwork of a Ford Focus car parked in Marine Place, Mallaig.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

### Man killed in River Garry is named

**A MAN** who died after falling into a Lochaber river while canoeing on Hogmanay has been named.

Petrus Janse Van Rensburg, from Buckinghamshire, got into difficulty after falling out of the boat into the River Garry, near Invergarry, at around 12.30pm.

The 36-year-old was pulled downstream and had to be airlifted to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness by the Royal Navy Search and Rescue.

His canoeing partner, an 18-year-old man, managed to guide himself to shore. He was taken by ambulance to Raigmore and was discharged the same day.

### Drunk fined £100 at sheriff court

SHOUTING at police officers after falling asleep drunk at a bus stop has earned a Fort William man a £100 fine.

Stuart Grant, of 7 Mamore Crescent in the town, appeared at Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday and admitted behaving in a threatening and abusive manner.

The 35-year-old had been waiting for the last bus back to town from Kilmallie Road in Caol on the night of September 14 last year but fell asleep until he was woken by police at 12.30am.

Sheriff Richard Davidson gave Grant a £100 fine and said: 'How disappointing it must be for police officers with better things to do to come to your assistance and be abused.'

## Fort man facing jail term after hospital outburst

PRISON appears the likely destination for a man who caused a disruption in Fort William's Belford Hospital.

Appearing at Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday, Craig Cook of 8 Brown Court in the town admitted shouting and swearing at accident and emergency staff on the night of June 11 last year, after drinking so much he needed medical attention.

The court heard the 24-year-old was behaving aggressively and shouting in front of other patients, including children, and was at the hospital due to 'extreme levels of intoxication'.

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose said the night is a 'blur' to his client but he realises he should not have drank as much as he did.

Sheriff Richard Davidson deferred sentencing until February 2 for background reports, but said he was only doing so because he was 'bound by the law'.

He added: 'Instead of being grateful to the staff who were trying to treat you, you were abusive to them and caused fear and alarm to other patients.'

'Unless I find something exceptional in the report you will be going to prison.'

'I will not tolerate this behaviour.'



**HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES:** Performers at the Fort William Cameron Square Hogmanay street party, organised by Lochaber Pipe Band.



**Ceilidh legend Fergie MacDonald** performed with his family at the Nevis Centre Hogmanay party. From left: Sean MacEachan, John MacDonald, Ciara MacDonald, Morven MacDonald and Fergie MacDonald.



**CELEBRATIONS:** Cara MacLachlan and Cara MacMillan helped make lanterns for the Ballachulish Hogmanay parade.

## Hitting all the right notes for Hogmanay

LOCHABER brought in 2016 in style with street parties, parades and ceilidhs.

As usual, the Nevis Centre in Fort William hosted the biggest Hogmanay party in the area, while a street party was held in Cameron Square.

Ballachulish residents enjoyed a parade through the village with handmade lanterns.

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Eleanor Gillon, front centre, from Kinlochleven, celebrated her 100th birthday with her children, from left, Sheena Slater, Eleanor Mellors, Marjorie Brown, Robert Gillon and Christine Ganston, seated.

## Eleanor celebrates 100th birthday

THE DAUGHTER of one of the first families to live in Kinlochleven has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Eleanor Gillon, nee Campbell, became a centenarian on December 23, surrounded by 40 friends and family, including her sister, Jean Logue, five children, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Born in Kinlochleven, Eleanor married James Gillon in 1938 after meeting him while working as a children's nurse in Edinburgh. The pair then moved back to Kinlochleven where she lived and raised her children until 1971. Her parents, Richard and Christine Campbell, were one of the first families to live in Kinlochleven when the village was developed in the early 1900s.

Now living in Corby, Northamptonshire, Eleanor is an active member of St Ninian's Church of Scotland, where she celebrated her birthday with a lunch before travelling in style aboard a pullman coach on the Great Central Railway.

The centenarian's oldest child, Christine Ganson, said: 'We had a wonderful day. It was great that so many family members from all over the country were able to get together to celebrate my mother's birthday. She enjoyed the train ride.'

## Row over dog's taxi fare lands women in jail for three nights

A DOG in a taxi caused its owner to spend three nights in jail.

On New Year's Day Sharon Kenna broke bail conditions for a previous offence by contacting her former partner and leaving abusive messages on her answering machine.

When lodging his client's guilty plea in Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday, defending solicitor Hamish Melrose explained the former couple share the dog and the 46-year-old contacted her

ex-girlfriend because she sent the pet in a taxi to her home address of Conaglen on Fort William's Achintore Road, but had not paid the taxi fare. Fiscal deputy Ross Carvel said one of the messages stated 'you're paying for the taxi you cow'. Kenna was arrested on January 2 and remained in custody until Tuesday (January 5). Sheriff Richard Davidson admonished Kenna saying the three nights in jail was punishment enough.

## Remanded in custody after shouting in Fort courtroom

A WOMAN was remanded in custody on Tuesday after interrupting the sheriff and her solicitor while in the dock of Fort William Sheriff Court.

Margaret Gemmill, known by her middle name, Sandra, didn't arrive in the court until after 2pm on Tuesday, despite being ordered to arrive at 10am, to explain absences from her unpaid work order.

The 35-year-old, of Flat 4, 33 High Street, Fort William, continuously interrupted Sheriff Richard Da-

vidson and her defending solicitor, Clare Russell, shouting 'just listen to me I'll tell you the truth' and 'I had reasons'. When warned by Sheriff Davidson she would face prison if she continued, Gemmill began waving her arms and said: 'Put me in jail, I don't really care. I don't care about going to jail or anything else.'

Gemmill was remanded in custody and could be heard continuing to shout at police officers and security staff outside the courtroom.



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## Celebrating 25 years of

# Ballet West

BALLET West celebrates the 25th anniversary of its first Oban Nutcracker performance with the opening performance of a new touring production. Ballet West's exciting young company opens its tour of a largely new production of The Nutcracker at the Corran Halls, Oban on January 22 and 23. Two of the original cast, Sara-Maria Barton and Jonathan Barton, will be dancing starring roles, and leading a company of more than 60 dancers, in these performances. At the time of the first performance, Ballet West was a fledgling local dance school. Now there are more than 70 students from all parts of the world studying for HND and BA Hons degrees at

the highly acclaimed professional training school in Taynuilt, Argyll. The Nutcracker is a largely new production by Ballet West's Choreographer and Artistic Adviser, Daniel F Job, with new costumes and sets. The company will number up to 100 in the larger venues, with Ballet West's Associates in Edinburgh and Glasgow taking part. The star roles of the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Prince will be danced by Guest Principals, Sara-Maria Barton and Andreas Battaglia. Sara-Maria is also Ballet West's Creative Director and Assistant Director of the performing company. Italian-born dancer, Andreas Battaglia, danced the role of Paris

opposite Sara-Maria in Ballet West's *Romeo and Juliet* in 2015. He trained at La Scala in Milan and currently dances with Ballet Cymru. The Snow King and Queen will be danced by Ballet West Senior Principal Dancer and Vice Principal, Jonathan Barton and Ballet West graduate Natasha Watson, an award-winning dancer and actress, who achieved her Royal Academy of Dance Solo Seal this year and is now a performer with the company and lecturer/teacher on the HND courses. Uyu Hiromoto, a Japanese 2015 Genée finalist, will be joining the school in January and is to dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy in four performances, and the Dew Drop Fairy

in the remaining performances. Clara and the Nutcracker will be danced by second year students, Emily Corbitt and Oscar Ward. Third year student, Owen Morris takes the role of the Rat King, with Joey Wright as Drosselmeyer, Clara's eccentric uncle. After Oban The Nutcracker will tour to nine venues across Scotland in the New Year, including debut performances at the Tower Digital Arts Centre, Helensburgh on 30 January and the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on February 20. The company returns to the Clyde Auditorium at Glasgow's Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC). Other tour venues include: Paisley, Livingston, Stirling, Inverness and Greenock.

## FESTIVE FUN



Banavie Primary School pupils in their Lawfully Good Christmas production.



Seven-year-old Neo Boomer, left, and Jack Watson, nine, meet Santa at the Greenfingers Winter Magic Festival. 21\_f01christmas17



The Ballachulish Santa Dash raised money for the village play park and local running group. The group warmed up with a taster session from Highland Hustle Lochaber dance class.



The new Lundavra Primary School's first Christmas show.

## Island Homecoming for Mull's Aspiring Cabaret Diva

Fresh from a five-star run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Scotland's aspiring diva Cat Loud takes her debut one-woman cabaret *Big Night In* on tour in February 2016, sharing the *Big Night In Double Bill* with award-winning musician and composer Finn Anderson who debuts music from his new EP *Uncharted Lands*. *Big Night In* sees Cat make the move from her childhood home on a Scottish island to the big city, seeking love, excitement and fame. When nothing goes according to plan, she wonders if maybe she should have just stayed at home. Cat Loud is the cabaret creation of Mull native Catriona MacLeod, a writer and singer currently based in Glasgow whose own uprooting from Mull to the mainland to study for a Masters degree in

Theatre inspired her work. *Big Night In*, her debut solo show, charts the peaks and troughs of swapping an island lifestyle for an urban one, and features classic songs from her musical influences, ranging from icons Shirley Bassey, Nina Simone, Doris Day and Billie Holiday to the likes of Queen, Ms Dynamite and Adele thrown in for good measure. Cat shares the bill with Fife native Finn Anderson, a self-taught pianist and accordionist who has spent the last two years composing for performance and film projects across the UK, picking up several award nominations including the Off West End and BroadwayWorld.com Awards for Best New Musical. Most recently, Finn wrote and directed *Alba: A New Scottish Musical*, which ran at

the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August 2014. The Double Bill tour sees him premiere his new EP *Uncharted Lands*, released January 2016. This is his third release, the prolific musician released his first EP, *Seeing Double*, when he was just 14. Recorded in Newburgh with musicians David Ford, David Macfarlane and Ivan Sveda, *Uncharted Lands* has been shaped by his love of storytelling and his penchant for the theatrical. Straddling jazz, folk and pop, Finn's music and poetic lyrics have drawn comparisons with artists such as Rufus Wainwright, Joni Mitchell and Antony and the Johnsons. No stranger to being on the road, Anderson has just completed a series of house concerts that have taken him around Scotland, England and Wales, but both MacLe-

od and Anderson return to their respective hometowns of Tobermory and Newburgh before dates in St Andrews, Birmingham and London to name a few. MacLeod's childhood was spent performing at renowned venue An Tobar, and returning with her own work has been a long-held ambition. Anderson's talents were similarly nurtured at The Steeple in Newburgh, as well as St Andrew's The Byre Theatre, the town where MacLeod also completed her undergraduate degree, so the tour is something of a homecoming for both of them. Cat Loud & Finn Anderson: The *Big Night In Double Bill* will be at An Tobar on Saturday February 13, 8.30pm, £10/£8 (Box Office: 01688 302211). For full tour dates, visit [www.catloud.tumblr.com/dates](http://www.catloud.tumblr.com/dates)



Little stars take to the stage alongside Mary and Joseph (Ellie Maclellan and Lachlann MacKinnon) for Lochside RC's 'Holy Joe the Unsung Hero'.



Duror Primary School's Christmas show 'Shine Star Shine' went down a treat with the audience.



Poor weather didn't dampen the spirits of the runners and walkers taking part in the Mallaig and District Swimming Pool Santa Dash, raising £130 for the pool.



Primary sevens from Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar had the opportunity to see Christmas cards printed as part of the design a card competition. The winning card came from Francisco Narvaez.



More than 35 people enjoyed the Nether Lochaber senior citizens Christmas lunch at the Loch Leven Hotel on December 9.



Ardnamurchan High School's 'Jack and His Amazing Multi-Coloured Beanstalk' was well-attended on both nights.

## History talk on land ownership kicks off new season

THE FIRST Local History Society meeting of 2016 sees the return of Richard Sidgwick to speak on Land Ownership in Lochaber. This is the fifth presentation of his research into successive land ownerships which have shaped the landscape and the people of Lochaber. Richard's lifelong role at the centre of Estate Management in

Lochaber places him in a unique position to share his experiences - and his preservation and recording of past land ownership which will be a great resource to local historians in the future. The talk will cover Morvern, the Small Isles and parts of Appin and Glencoe. All welcome at the Ben Nevis Hotel at 8pm on Thursday January 7 at 8pm.

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- Across**
- 7 Rotten (6)
  - 8 Representative (6)
  - 9 Food counter (4)
  - 10 Skin infection (8)
  - 11 Structure of wording (7)
  - 13 Main body (5)
  - 15 Andean animal (5)
  - 17 Run in small amounts (7)
  - 20 Fashion industry (3,5)
  - 21 Hand warmer (4)
  - 23 Nearly (6)
  - 24 Barely make (3,3)
- Down**
- 1 Alike (4)
  - 2 A separation between to groups in a larger group (6)
  - 3 Senior commander (7)
  - 4 Cheeky (5)
  - 5 Straw hat (6)
  - 6 Slash (8)
  - 12 Steady (8)
  - 14 Large box for cooling dramatically (7)
  - 16 Falling star (6)
  - 18 Tilting of the road (6)
  - 19 Ray (5)
  - 22 Both animal and human found in the countryside (4)

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION**

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# Dalmally rocks to the sound of Skerryvore

DALMALLY residents enjoyed an early Hogmanay bash when Celtic rock band Skerryvore played a sell-out gig in the village on December 30.

The band, who were joined on the bill by TrailWest, celebrated 10 years together in 2015 and the Dalmally show, which was followed by a Hogmanay bash in Fort William, rounded off what has been a hugely significant year for the band.

A spokesperson for the band said: "For the last few years we've embarked on a winter tour called the Small Halls Tour, which saw us playing at several smaller venues throughout Scotland. The idea was to take the same show that people might see us play at a larger festival-type gig and bring it to smaller and more remote areas. When we first started as a band we would play a lot of town halls on the West Coast and islands and it was great fun to go back and do a tour in the same way we did when we were younger."

"Dalmally was one of the dates on those tours and even though we're not doing the full Small Halls Tour this year, it was such good fun [at Dalmally] that we decided to go back."



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8th January - 14th January

**In the Heart of the Sea (12A) 142mins**  
Sat, Tue, Thu: 19:30, Sun: 18:00

3D Version: Fri, Mon, Wed: 19:30, Sat: 13:45  
In the winter of 1820, the New England whaling ship Essex was assaulted by something no one could believe: a whale of mammoth size and will, and an almost human sense of vengeance. The real-life maritime disaster would inspire Herman Melville's Moby-Dick. But that told only half the story. "In the Heart of the Sea" reveals the encounter's harrowing aftermath, as the ship's surviving crew is pushed to their limits and forced to do the unthinkable to stay alive.

**Kids Club: Ice Age (U) 78mins**  
Sat: 12:00

Children's Classic. Set during the Ice Age, a sabertooth tiger, a sloth, and a woolly mammoth find a lost human infant, and they try to return him to his tribe. Kids £4 - Adults free!

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

Daily Except Sat, Sun: 18:30, Sat: 14:45, Sun: 12:30  
Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the rest of the beloved "Peanuts" gang make their big-screen debut, like they've never been seen before, in state-of-the-art 3D animation. Snoopy, the world's most lovable beagle and flying ace embarks upon his greatest mission as he takes to the skies to pursue his arch-nemesis The Red Baron, while his best pal, Charlie Brown, begins his own epic quest.

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

Fri, Mon, Wed: 16:30, Sat: 16:30, 19:45, Sun: 17:45  
3D Version: Sun: 12:00, Tue, Thu: 16:30  
Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens - 156mins - A continuation of the saga created by George Lucas set thirty years after Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi (1983).

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

Daily Except Sat, Sun: 20:45, Sat: 17:00  
Parent & Baby 'Parents only' Thu: 11:30  
Silver Screening - Over 60s £2.50!  
The remarkable love story inspired by the lives of artists Lili Elbe and Gerda Wegener. Lili and Gerda's marriage and work evolve as they navigate Lili's groundbreaking journey as a transgender pioneer.

SUNDAY - Silver Screening 'Concessions (age 60+) entry just £2.50! Includes complimentary tea and cake.'  
THURSDAY - Parent & Baby Screening! Lights will be left on at a dimmed level and baby changing available.

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

Daily Except Sat, Sun: 16:15, Sat: 12:30, Sun: 14:45  
"The Good Dinosaur" asks the question: What if the asteroid that forever changed life on Earth missed the planet completely and giant dinosaurs never became extinct? In this epic journey into the world of dinosaurs, an Apatosaurus named Arlo makes an unlikely human friend.

**Coming Soon**

**Kids Club: Ice Age - The Meltdown (U) 16/01/2016**  
Children's Classic. Manny, Sid, and Diego discover that the ice age is coming to an end, and join everybody for a journey to higher ground. Kids £4 - Adults free!

**The Revenant (15) 15/01/2016**

Inspired by true events, THE REVENANT captures one man's epic adventure of survival and the extraordinary power of the human spirit. In an expedition of the uncharted American wilderness, legendary explorer Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) is brutally attacked by a bear and left for dead by members of his own hunting team



## MacPhail's MUSIC

The month of January traditionally looms on the horizon of the western world like an annually recurring dark dog of doom. Over the preceding month building to the decadent double climax of Christmas and New Year, bank balances, credit cards, liver endurance and abuse of bathroom scales are all hammered to extremes. The third or fourth of January brings a brutal day of

reckoning. This, combined with the lack of sunlight, the chore of dismantling the now drab decorations, and the vacuum left by departing guests, creates the predictable post mid-winter gloom. Well, not if a man from Taynuilt has anything to do with it. Celtic Connections has changed this seasonal pattern of January blues for anyone with an interest in music! This otherwise

## Celtic Connections blows away January blues!

dreaded month is now the high point of the year for any traditional music fan. Donald Shaw of Capercaille has been at the helm as Artistic Director for nine years and has given the Glasgow-based festival an injection of energy and credibility that only a man with his talent, drive and track-record could. From humble beginnings in 1994 this festival has grown to hosting more than 300 acts attracting over 100,000 visitors annually and is now one of the biggest events of its kind in the world.

Stretching from the 14-31 January, the festival provides eighteen days and nights of the very best Celtic and related music from around the globe. Among the many world-renowned acts on offer is a solid representation from the West Coast. Highland highlights include recently-crowned Folk Band of the Year, Daimh, decade-celebrating superstars Skerryvore, fiddling and singing royalty, The Iain MacFarlane and Margaret Stewart Trio, laid-back, super-talented

and very hilarious city Gaels The Urban Teuchters, fusion heroes, The Peatbog Faeries, Herald Album of the Year winners, Lau, the eclectic cross-ocean Transatlantic Sessions, the unstoppable Blazin' Fiddles, the incomparable Karen Matheson and a very questionable shower called Skipinnish. Donald Shaw and team may be risking their hitherto unscathed reputation in giving this motley crew a headline slot in the Main Auditorium of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall! In seriousness, this is a

huge honour and engenders excitement and pure terror in equal measure! As Parahandy might say, "By-chove, Dougie, it's a big hall to fill!" Whatever your musical taste, there will something in the program to attract and rouse you. Following the concerts and late into the night, you can go wild in the Festival Club, hearing a fine selection of acts from the earlier evening's entertainment. Keep your eyes on The Oban Times for reviews! www.celticconnections.com

Burns Club of Oban  
Admission to this year's

# BURNS SUPPER

On Friday 22nd January  
Will be by ticket only.  
Tickets may be purchased at the Regent Hotel on 11th, 12th, and 18th January between 6-30 and 8pm.  
Tickets should be purchased on these dates unless totally unavoidable.  
Contact John MacLean 01631 565519 or Ken Oxland 01631 566010

## Screen Machine Scotland's Mobile Cinema

Fort William Fri 8 - Sun 10 Jan  
Lochaline Mon 11 - Tue 12 Jan  
Craignure Wed 13 Jan  
Tobermory Thu 14 - Sat 16 Jan  
Lochgilhead Mon 18 - Wed 20 Jan

**The Good Dinosaur (PG) 100 mins**  
08/01 at 5.30pm, 09/01 at 2pm, 11/01 at 5.30pm, 13/01 at 5.30pm, 15/01 at 5.30pm, 16/01 at 2pm, 18/01 at 5.30pm, 20/01 at 5.30pm "... *aww-inspiring.*" Telegraph

**Spectre (12A) 147 mins**  
08/01 at 8.30pm, 09/01 at 8.30pm, 11/01 at 8.30pm, 13/01 at 8.30pm, 15/01 at 8.30pm, 18/01 at 8.30pm, 19/01 at 5.30pm "... *a swaggering show of confidence.*" Telegraph

**Sunset Song (15) 133 mins**  
10/01 at 2pm, 12/01 at 5.30pm, 16/01 at 8.30pm, 20/01 at 8.30pm "*a lyrical triumph.*" Guardian

**The Lady in the Van (12A) 104 mins**  
09/01 at 5.30pm, 12/01 at 8.30pm, 16/01 at 5.30pm, 19/01 at 8.30pm "*brilliant portrayal of a truly odd couple.*" The Independent

**National Theatre: Jane Eyre (tbc) 200 mins £14/£12**  
An encore screening of the bold and dynamic production. 10/01 at 7pm, 14/01 at 7pm "*Enchanting. Magnificent. Theatre at its most imaginative.*" Daily Mail

Book now at [www.screenmachine.co.uk](http://www.screenmachine.co.uk). Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings: Cash only, no cards. £7.50 Adults and £5.50 Concessions (except for NT: Jane Eyre - £14/£12)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

To advertise in our community noticeboard call 01631 568000

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Friday 8th January 2016 in Lorn Resource Centre Soroba Road, Oban 7.30 to 9.30pm Visitors welcome
- Oban and Lorn Lions Club Old New Year Ceilidh in aid of CHAS**  
January 16th 2016 Royal Hotel, Oban tickets available from Wool and Needlecraft Centre, Oban 7.30 for 8.00 £5.00 including stovies
- Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club**  
Inveraray Inn Wednesday 13th January At 8.00pm Guest Artists From Acharacle Robert Nairn Trio Supporting players most welcome
- Comunn Gaidhealach an Obain Old New Year Buffet Ceilidh**  
Masonic Hall, Oban Sat 9th January 2016 at 7pm Mary Catherine MacNeill, Morag MacNeill, Freddie MacKenzie, Alasdair MacDonald, Alasdair MacLean, Fear an Taighe: Danny MacRae Admission £10
- Advertise in the Community Noticeboard for just £16.21 (plus VAT)  
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**Agenda:**  
● the people  
● the issues  
● the back story

**THIS WEEK Mike MacKenzie**  
There is something about the people who are able to afford money in a country like Scotland which is worth an article.

**Macaulay Cup match report and photos from the 2015 final**

**Nicola's a class act**  
say pupils as school visit leaves them on a high

**TIMELINE**  
Annual review on the cards for NHS

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WHAT IS your New Year's resolution for 2016? Find a more fulfilling career, learn new skills or even start a new business? Receive counselling for an ongoing personal issue? What about that old chestnut that everyone seems to resolve after the holiday season – lose weight or get fitter?

As C.S. Lewis said: 'You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.' And while it can seem like an impossible task to keep fit, happy and healthy amidst today's hectic schedules, as we usher in the New Year changes – big or small – can have a positive impact on our outlook.

Countless studies indicate that anywhere between 75 to 95 per cent of people fail to achieve their resolutions. According to experts, one of the main reasons people fail is because they set resolutions about what they 'should' do, rather than what they really want to do. You have a better chance of fulfilling your New Year's resolution if you look at gaining something fabulous rather than 'giving up something' – particularly if it's something you enjoy. For example, rather than looking at 'giving up' food to lose weight, focus on how fit, healthy and confident you will feel when you achieve your goal.

New Year's resolutions don't have to be something to dread. Becom-

ing an apprentice or taking college courses are a fun and interesting way to improve your earning potential or start a new career. If you're guilty of using your spare time to do housework, shopping or other tasks, make this year the year you resolve to set aside some time each week just for you. Ideally, remove yourself from distractions at home and ensure other family members know that this time out is non-negotiable. Why not use this time to try something new? Learning a new skill or rediscovering your love for something is good for the soul, and can boost self-esteem. Lose yourself in something creative – jewellery making, flower arranging, cake decorating or drawing, for example.

Weight loss and improved fitness are usually at the top of resolutions lists, but are often the most difficult to achieve. Don't make the mistake of thinking exercise has to be full-throttle and that you have to be pounding the treadmill until you hurt all over. Aim to fit in just 30 minutes a day of some kind of physical activity. There are a range of exercise classes in Argyll – how about trying Zumba, Pilates or yoga, for example? Or you could look at ways to make exercise more integral to the whole family's lifestyle, by taking up walking or

cycling. A new haircut and colour-and-beauty regime can make you feel and look better in no time at all. Many of us shy away from changing our look, but just a subtle revamp – say, cutting a wispy fringe into your hair, or swapping poker-straight locks for gently tousled – can 're-energise' your look. Consult with your hair stylist about a cut or colour that flatters and is easy to care for. And once you see how great your new look is, you just might be more motivated to start an exercise routine.

Resolving to get counselling for an ongoing personal issue is the best way to really make a difference in your life. Whether it's the desire to quit smoking, stop destructive habits or create more harmony within the family unit, counsellors can help in ways we can't help ourselves.

There is no shortcut to happiness, but the good news is that making even the smallest adjustments can help us attain that elusive state to which we all aspire in 2016.



## New Year Business Gateway workshops...

### Business Start-up

A one and a half day workshop incorporating: business planning, finance, marketing and market research.  
January - 13-14 - Lochgilphead; February - 2-3 - Mull

### Pricing for Profit - 10am-3pm

Help businesses identify working capital requirements, understand different pricing strategies and pricing for profit, identify break-even point and manage profitability.  
January - 27, Inveraray

### Practical Basic Book-keeping - 9.30am-12.30pm

A half day workshop shows how book-keeping is used to generate the financial information needed for Income Tax, VAT, Corporation Tax, PAYE and National Insurance contributions.  
January - 28, Lochgilphead; February - Mull

### Developing your Business Skills - 10am-1pm

Develop skills needed to successfully run a business: time management, planning, communication, networking and collaboration.  
February - 2 - Oban

### Marketing your Business - 10am-4pm

Help businesses review existing marketing activity and develop a realistic marketing plan to meet business objectives and budget.  
February - 4, Oban; March - 1, Inveraray

### Introduction to Social Media - 1-5pm

Are you very new to or still sceptical about the idea of using social media for your business? Gain a basic understanding of what social media is, how to start using it and what benefits there may be in using it for business.  
February - 9 - Oban;

### Doing more with Social Media - 9.30am-1.30pm

Are you already using social media for your business? Do you want to use it more effectively and find out how to link to your marketing strategy to promote and grow your business?  
February - 10 - Oban;

### Funding your Business - 10am-1pm

Identify what the funding needs of the business are, what potential sources of funding are available and what the business needs to provide to access these sources.  
February - 11, Oban

### Introduction to Trading Online - 10am-4pm

A workshop that will focus on some of the basics required for trading online, and will look at the various tools, platforms and payment options available to everyone and will include some information of the legal requirements.  
February - 16, Oban

### Get your Business Noticed (PR on a Budget) - 10am-4pm

This workshop will help businesses understand how to create their own advertising, generate publicity themselves with minimum spend and understand how to plan and deliver their own PR and advertising campaigns to meet their business objectives.  
February - 17, Ardrishaig

### Becoming an Employer - 10am-1.30pm

Help small businesses create a structured plan for taking on staff and understand the process of employing people, covering legal obligations and good practice recruitment.  
February - 18, Oban

### Better Business Websites - 10am-3pm

What makes a good website? What does your design say about your business? Is your website content appropriate for your audience? And can people even find it on the first place? Some of the questions covered for businesses already live online. Businesses will examine how to make their existing website better through its' design, content, usability and Search Engine Optimisation.  
February - 23, Inveraray

### Is the Public Sector Right for You? - 9.30am-1.00pm

Are you ready to tender? This workshop will help you determine if your business is ready to start bidding and sets you on the first steps of the journey. This event is suitable for you if you are new to bidding; you are unsure if your business is ready to work with the public sector  
February - 24, Lochgilphead

### Build your own Business Website - 10am-4pm

For small businesses who don't have their own website yet, or for those who do that want to take control of managing it, how to develop their own business website and maintain it, using a free content management tool.  
February - 25, Oban

To find out more or to book a place please contact Business Gateway on 01546 604555 or email [business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

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## 2016 COURSES

### Kick Start Your New Year Here

We are now accepting applications for the following short full-time and work-based courses starting January 2016.

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- NC Business
- Maritime Skills
- Working in the Community
- Access to Health and Social Care
- SVQ Levels 2 and 3 Social Services and Healthcare
- PDA Administration of Medicine
- PDA Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice
- PDA Mental Health Peer Support
  
- PGDE Primary Teaching UCAS application deadline 15th January for entry September 2016

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Prince Charles shares a joke with Ardbeg production staff. 16\_t27hrhard1

All smiles as Prince Charles visits Islay

PRINCE Charles made an appearance in The Oban Times in July, after he visited Islay on June 26.

Despite heavy rainfall, spirits weren't dampened at two Islay distilleries, as the prince paid a special visit to

commemorate 200 years of whisky production at the sites. Using his official Scottish titles of Duke of Rothesay and Lord of the Isles, he visited Ardbeg and Laphroaig distilleries. The heir to the throne's third engagement was

a trip to the Finlaggan visitor centre and burial site, by which time the sun had come out allowing Prince Charles the chance to ditch his umbrella and take in the stunning Islay scenery and give the centre the royal seal of approval.



Nicci searches for 'Mr Right'

A WOMAN who sold everything she owned to embark on a mission to find 'Mr Right' arrived in the West Highlands in July in her quest for the ideal partner.

Merseysider Nicci Taylor, 49, arrived in Oban before heading to Fort William in the £4,000 campervan she bought as she toured Scotland in search of 'true love'.

Nicci, who was made redundant from her job, decided to leave her home in The Wirral, near Liverpool, and undertake her amorous adventure, with dog Milo. 16\_1310nicci

July and August



The 30,000 tonne cruise vessel Adonia docked in Fort William on the morning of Thursday August 13. 16\_f34boat01

Fort William welcomes cruise liner

MORE than 1,000 people arrived in Fort William when a 30,000 tonne cruise ship stopped off in the town.

'Adonia' docked at the edge of Loch Linnhe as part of a 13-day tour of the British Isles. The vessel brought more than 800 people and almost 400 crew members to Lochaber last Thursday (August 13).

Highland councillor and Lochaber area leader Thomas MacLennan welcomed the visit.

Celebrating 70 years of marriage

AN OBAN couple celebrated an incredible 70 years of marriage on July 5.

Obanite Jim Hill met wife Mary when she was in Oban for a day trip while Jim was home on leave from the navy.

The couple fell in love after Jim travelled to Mary's native Maryhill, where she was working in a munitions factory, to visit her.

Mary, 93, joked that 92-year-old Jim was her 'toy boy'.

With three children - Jim, Ruth and Moira, four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren - their platinum wedding day was a celebration for all the family. 16\_t28platinum01



Tiree Music Festival revellers weather the storm

AS THE words from the famous song from the musical Annie go: 'The sun will come out tomorrow'.

Despite a full evacuation of the Tiree Music Festival site on Friday July 17, spirits couldn't be dampened as revellers weathered the storm and enjoyed a full-on, Hebridean hootenanny on the Saturday and Sunday.

The sun broke through the clouds and spirits were high on Saturday morning, as the multi-award winning festival kicked off with a stellar line-up featuring We Banjo 3, Manran and Skerryvore. Set on the white sandbanks of Crossapol beach, the 1,700 capacity, family-friendly festival was a huge success, with campers enjoying a mixture of music.



Right: headline act Skerryvore.



Firefighters outside the climbing centre.

Fire closes Ice Factor activity centre

AN ACTIVITY centre was closed following a fire that caused tens of thousands of pounds worth of damage.

The blaze broke out in the sauna room of the Ice Factor climbing centre and it is thought the damage will cost more than £60,000 to repair.

The £4.3million centre is the biggest indoor facility in the world and so far work to be done in-

cludes the restructure of 125 routes, replacement of the sauna and resetting of 9,000 climbing holes.

A spokesperson for the centre in Kinlochleven said: 'The facility will be closed for at least a month.'

'Fortunately the fire was contained to one area, but the smoke has caused more damage than the fire.'



Members of Fort William's town team and community council united for the award ceremony.

Pride as Fort town team win top award

A COMMUNITY group received an award for the 'uplifting' changes it has made to the town.

Fort William town team (FWTT) became the first group in the town to receive the citizen of the year award.

During a ceremony last Monday, the award was given to members from the accolade's creators Fort William community council (FWCC).

On behalf of FWCC, chairman Neil Clarke said: 'The group has uplifted the town with

hanging baskets, by painting chairs and planting near the bypass.

'We thought it was particularly deserving of the award this year.'

A spokesperson for FWTT said: 'Thank you to everyone who helped us achieve our award, supported us along the way, unananimously decided to give it to the town team and came to celebrate with us.'

'We could not be more proud.'



Delight in Plantation as new £250,000 playpark opens

A playpark costing almost £250,000 was officially opened in Fort William on July 11. The park, in the Plantation area of the town, which also features outdoor fitness equipment, a mountain bike track and walking route, was created by Plantation Community Association and is the result of four years' hard work and fundraising, boosted by £247,000 from the Big Lottery. 21\_f29plantation01



July and August

**Thieves target St Conan's Kirk again**

THIEVES struck again at one of Argyll's architectural gems when they stripped £35,000 worth of lead from a lochside church roof.

St Conan's Kirk, Loch Awe, was targeted by the thieves for the second time in a year sometime between July 17 and 19.

Volunteers trying to raise £1 million to restore the exquisite church were hit with an additional eye-watering £70,000 to cover the cost of the thefts and subsequent damage to the building.

**Oban golfer wins amateur title**

LEFT-handed Oban teenager Robert MacIntyre made golfing history when he was crowned Scottish amateur champion at Muirfield on August 1.

The Glencruitten player celebrated his 19th birthday two days after his triumph.

He is the only Oban player to have won the tournament and is reckoned to be the first 'leftie' in living memory to get his hands on the trophy.

**Heart-stopping climb for charity**

AN ARDCHATTAN woman and 15 of her friends embarked on a heart-stopping 500-metre climb on August 7, raising £4,220 for the persecuted Yazidi refugees in the Middle East.

Fiona Bennett and friends climbed the Via Ferrata, a mountain route equipped with fixed points, at Vertical Descents in Kinlochleven.

Mother of two Fiona, a former psychiatric nurse, said: 'It was an incredible experience and the staff were excellent.'

**Oban Raft Race boosts charities**

A DOZEN teams took to the less-than-warm-waters of Oban Bay on August 8 for the Oban Bay Raft Race.

Organised by the Oban and Lorn Lions Club, the day raised more than £2,000 for local causes.

**School praised by First Minister**

SCOTLAND'S First Minister praised Oban high when she visited the school on August 24.

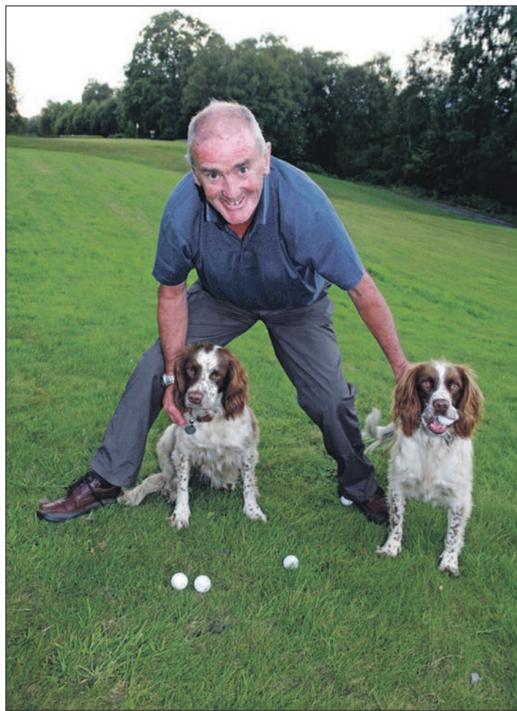
In an exclusive interview with The Oban Times, Nicola Sturgeon said she had visited many schools in Scotland, but in Oban she was particularly impressed with the young people's enthusiastic attitude towards education.

Ms Sturgeon posed for a photograph with the senior pupils' leadership team before visiting Oban Phoenix Cinema, a housing association estate and the offices of The Oban Times.



**Taynuilt toddler climbs peak to raise church cash**

A three-year-old from Taynuilt raised £1,222.55 by climbing a 368-metre peak to raise money for St Conan's Kirk, Loch Awe, after lead was stolen from the church roof in July. Laila Lopez, who gave £11.50 from her own piggy bank, climbed Beinn Lora in two hours. Laila decided to do the sponsored climb after her mum told her about the £35,000-worth of lead that was stripped by thieves in July. Laila was made an honorary member of Friends of St Conan's Kirk on September 1, and is the charity's youngest advocate.



Colin Davidson with his Springer spaniels, Linnhe and Palla, who have collected thousands of balls from Spean Bridge golf club.

**Springer spaniels are on the ball**

TWO FURRY volunteers have been helping to fund-raise for a Lochaber golf club by collecting thousands of balls from the outskirts of the course.

Springer spaniels Linnhe and Palla spend their daily walks at the Spean Bridge green hunting for lost balls and bringing them to owners Pat and Colin Davidson, who then clean them and return them to the golf club to be sold for club funds.

The two-year-old dogs collected more than 3,000 balls when they were puppies and Colin, who is president of the golf club, thinks they have found thousands more since.



**Lorraine steps out in Oban for appeal**

An early morning visit to Oban from one of Scotland's favourite TV personalities saw an impromptu ceilidh raise funds for charity. Lorraine Kelly, presenter of the popular 'Lorraine' show on ITV, met BID4Oban staff in their offices at 3.30am on September 12 for the STV appeal, to help Scottish children living in poverty.

**Underdogs Lovat lift shinty's top prize**

SHINTY fever was in the air on September 19 as more than 3,000 travelling supporters descended on Oban's Mossfield stadium for shinty's showpiece occasion - the Camanachd Cup final.

Underdogs Lovat eventually triumphed over the much-fancied Kyles 2-1 in a compelling, dramatic encounter.

There were a few sore heads on Sunday morning as Lovat fans celebrated the team's first cup win since 1953.

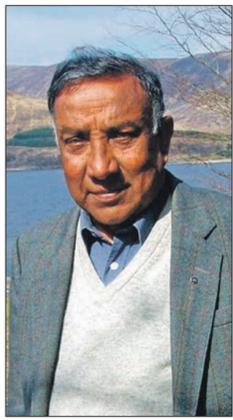
Left: Lovat captain Dan Grieve with the Camanachd Cup. t39grieve01



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# Review of the Year 2015



The Oban Times  
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

## October and November

### Captain retires after 50 years

AN OBAN ship's captain said 'bon voyage' to more than 50 years at sea after retiring from his career with CalMac in November.

Norman Martin, 68, moved to Oban in 1976 to work with the ferry operator, being promoted to ship master in 1984.

To mark his retirement, shore staff at Port Ellen on Islay held a celebration during his last sailing to the destination, which had been Norman's main route for the past five years.

Norman is pictured with the Merchant Navy Medal he was presented with in 2014.



Tributes were paid to former GP Dr Su Sen.

### Lochaber mourns respected doctor

TRIBUTES flooded in for a 'much-loved' and respected Lochaber GP and community activist who passed away.

Dr Sukumar 'Su' Sen MBE died just months after stepping down from his many charitable roles. He had devoted his life to the health and well-being of the people of Fort William and beyond.

Dr Sen, who arrived in Fort William from Hartfordshire in the early 1960s, was awarded an MBE in 1997 for his work in the community and in July this year the long-serving rotarian was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by the Rotary Club of Lochaber - one of less than a dozen to receive the accolade in the club's 65 years of existence.

### Land secured for new Fort hospital

LAND has been secured for a new hospital in Fort William, following the sale of Tesco's site.

Highland council has bought the £2 million shovel-ready ground on the Blar Mor estate, next to the medical centre and new ambulance and police stations, to replace the 50-year-old Belford hospital in the town centre. This follows Tesco's announcement last year that they would not be building a supermarket after years of delays.

Once funding is in place, NHS Highland will buy the site from the local authority and when the new hospital is built, sell the current Belford Road building to Highland council. This will be combined with the neighbouring Fort William RC school (St Mary's) to be turned in to affordable housing.



A £2 million site has been bought for a replacement Belford Hospital.

### Pupils make the grade at debate

TWO ARDNAMURCHAN high school pupils made it to the final of a national Gaelic speaking debate.

Rona Nicolson and Charlie-Anne Fleming, both fifth years, achieved the highest marks of the 20 teams competing in the Stornoway qualifiers of the National Gàidhlig Debate and travelled to Edinburgh for the finals at the Scottish Parliament.



Ardnamurchan fifth years Rona Nicolson, left, and Charlie-Anne Fleming made it to the final of a national Gaelic debating competition.



### Appin man flies the flag

AN APPIN man turned the Scottish football team's dismal failure over the years to qualify for major tournaments into an unusual hobby.

David Dunlop, 46, who is employed by Aggregate Industries, started his unusual hobby as a 'bit of good-natured banter' with English fans, when he put up the English national team's opponents' flags during the 2002 World Cup.

David now regularly flies a variety of national flags when the home nations are playing sports, as well as the Saltire when Andy Murray is playing.

He branched out into flying One Direction flags for his three young daughters, including Isla and Iona, pictured.



### Cameron enjoys TV role

AN APPIN teenager made a television appearance on November 1 when he took part in a special episode of Countryfile Ramble.

Cameron Allen, 14, was asked to appear on the BBC show, which was produced in conjunction with Children in Need.

Cameron was born with the rare condition osteogenesis imperfecta, commonly known

as brittle bone disease, which means he is prone to fractures and uses a wheelchair.

The show filmed five different people on rambles in the UK, all representing a charity. Cameron, who attends Oban High School, has done a lot of work with the Dundee-based charity, and immediately agreed to be on the show. He is pictured with John Craven.



Cheryl, right, with her friend Philis Knox, left, a retired nurse from the Belford Hospital, and Angela MacDonald, the Queen's district nurse visitor for Inverness and Rosshire. The long-service award is awarded to community nurses completing 21 years of service.



### Belford Hospital marks 150th anniversary

The 150th anniversary of Fort William's Belford Hospital was marked with a four-day international rural medical conference and a birthday party in the Nevis Centre, Fort William. Cutting the cake at the celebration are, left to right, retired receptionists Helen Blackmore, Margaret Robertson and Katherine McManus and Dr Brian Tregaskis.

### Nurse gets award for long service

A LOCHABER woman has received an award for long service in the nursing profession.

The Queen's Long Service Certificate and Badge was presented to Cheryl MacIntosh in a ceremony in Edinburgh by the Queen's Nursing Institute for Scotland.

During her career, Cheryl was the Queen's district nurse in Argyll, Lorn and Lochaber.

Angela said: 'Cheryl very notably spent her working life in the nursing profession, having been superintendent in Fort William, latterly in her career. In June 2009, she received the MBE from the Queen for voluntary services for Lochaber.'

### Best festival prize for Tیره

TIREE Music Festival blew away the opposition to win a major tourism award in November.

The festival, which attracted a sell-out 1,700 audience - more than three times the island population - was voted Best Cultural Event or Festival at the prestigious annual Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards.



Oban High School pipe band led the march at the torchlight parade on October 9 as the Royal National Mod got under way in the town.

### Fairytale end to Royal National Mod

OBAN Gaelic choir's conductor Sileas Sinclair, left, triumphantly lifted the Lovat and Tullibardine shield on October 17.

The win was a fairytale end to the Royal National Mòd in Oban, which was hailed a huge success, with the home choir winning the most prestigious choral event in its own backyard.

The crowd erupted and some were in tears as the winners were announced.

With the Mòd generating an estimated £3 million for the town, the staging of the event has been a massive achievement for Oban - the birthplace of the competition.



### Fifty years at Oban Times

AN OBAN Times stalwart celebrated an incredible 50 years with the company in October.

David Buchanan, 67, started with the newspaper in 1965 as an eager 17-year-old apprentice, eventually working his way up to production manager and into his current position of studio manager.

David said: 'I've loved every minute of it.' He is pictured on the right, receiving a gift from managing director Alister Bennett.

### Pauline's nurse of the year

OBAN's Pauline Jespersen was named nurse of the year on November 4.

Modest Pauline said the award was not for her, but for the team of people she has worked with during her 26 years at Lorn Medical Centre in Oban. Her award, presented at a ceremony in Edinburgh, recognised her work to redesign services for patients and for running a high-performing medical practice.





December



Lorne Bar back in local ownership

The Lorne Bar in Stevenson Street, Oban, came back into local ownership in December after a long period of time in the hands of national operators. Island businessman Calum MacLachlann is backing Declan Curran and Lindsay MacDonald, who both run or own premises in the town in the venture. The trio announced the purchase on December 10. Pictured are Calum MacLachlann and Declan Curran sealing the deal for the purchase of the Lorne Bar. 7\_151bar1



From left: Stuart Markland, Liam Browning, James Kendall and James Timbs-Harrison.

Fort man sets sail on mammoth row across Atlantic

A FORT William man has packed his bags and left the country in preparation for a mammoth 3,000-mile row across the Atlantic Ocean.

Liam Browning, 30, and his three friends from his days in Newcastle University Boat Club, are undergoing final training in the Canary Islands before setting off on the

journey of a lifetime on December 15 - a journey completed by just 500 people.

The team of four, rowing under the name All Beans No Monkeys, have allocated 50 days for the trip as part of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge but hope to arrive in Antigua in 39 days to beat the current record.

They also hope to raise £30,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and Royal National Lifeboat Institution through donations for their efforts, which include rowing in pairs for two hours on and two off, 24 hours a day.

To track Liam's journey or donate see [www.allbeansnomonkeys.com](http://www.allbeansnomonkeys.com).



HRH The Princess Royal chats with maintenance staff during her tour of the Oban operational base. t50princess1

Northern Lighthouse Board welcomes royal patron

NORTHERN Lighthouse Board (NLB) welcomed its patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to its operational base in Oban on December 3. Princess Anne spent time on board NLV Pharos, meeting the crew and senior management team, followed by a tour of NLV Pole Star and the operational base.



Sean wins playpark name competition

Oban's Sean Drummond was all smiles at the start of December after winning The Oban Times competition to name the boat in the new community play park outside Atlantis Leisure Centre.

His suggested name, The Scallywag, went out to the public vote, along with four others, and received 700 votes. Sean, nine, is pictured with Lyndsay Elliot, centre, chairperson of Friends of Oban Community Playpark, and Jade Manning, left, and Nicola Wood of Scottish Sea Farms. t49atlantis



Retired employees of Invernevis House were thanked for a combined 92 years of service.

Decades of dedicated care

FORMER staff of Fort William care home Invernevis House were brought together for a joint retirement celebration.

The employees, who have more than 92 years of service between them, retired at different times over the last few months and enjoyed a party at Fort William Golf Club to celebrate.

Cook Sandra Kaskonas was the longest serving employee with 36 years' service, followed by carers Maggie O'Rourke with 18 and a half years, Yvonne Crighton who clocked up 14 years, Fiona Craik with 13 and Mary Campbell, who dedicated 11 years.



Generous firm answers church's prayers

ST CONAN'S Kirk members had their prayers answered thanks to the generosity of an Argyll electrical engineering company and Friends of St Conan's Kirk action group.

Following reports in The Oban Times about thefts from the building, Kenneth Ferguson from Connel decided to step in and help by fitting CCTV cameras, which were match funded by the Friends of St Conan's Kirk, and outside lights on the building.

Last year, in three separate incidents, ornate and unique locally-styled lead from the cloister area of the church, valued at £45,000, was stolen.

A Police Scotland spokesman said they were following a definite line of enquiry into the theft of the lead. 26\_t51stco-nans2

# Farming

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## Breathing new life into Mid Argyll Young Farmers Club



Jenny Baillie will be there to explain the benefits of joining Young Farmers – and you don't even need to be a farmer. 06\_a02jennybaillie01

THERE will be something fresh and different at next Monday's AGM of NFU Scotland's Mid Argyll branch.

Development manager for the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs, Jenny Baillie, will be there to promote the cause of Young Farmers in Mid Argyll.

Jenny said: 'I'll be attending to speak to the NFU committee about the Young Farmers movement. The idea came about initially from their last NFU branch meeting where the members present decided that they would like to do all they can to encourage young people in the area to become more active with farming and to try to get the Young Farmers Club in Mid Argyll up and running again.'

NFUS branch chairman, John Semple, said: 'We would like to invite along any local young people who may be interested in joining the Young Farmers to hear a bit more about the organisation. We are also

going to ask some past Young Farmer members to speak about their experiences of being a member in the past.'

He added: 'We certainly want to support the formation of a Mid Argyll Young Farmers club, and not least because there's none of our committee getting any younger; we need youngsters involved in farming. But apart from that, there is a lot to be gained from being in the Young Farmers. There were some great clubs in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and elsewhere in the 1970s and 80s. Now, there is renewed interest in places like North Argyll and Arran, which is great to see.'

Whether involved in farming or not, everyone is invited, and there will be a buffet to enjoy as well.

It all takes place at the Kilmartin Hotel at 7.30pm next Monday, January 11.

And look out for a Mid Argyll 'New Members Games and Info Night' coming up soon.

## Stockjudging fun set for Oban mart

NORTH Argyll Young Farmers Club will hold its annual stockjudging on Friday January 22 – and plenty of prizes are on offer.

The club welcomes people of all ages and you don't need to be from a farming background to attend or to

take part in the fun of judging sheep and cattle.

The event will be held at the Caledonian Mart, Oban, starting at 7.30pm.

For further information, or to join the club, contact Mhairi on 07480 131876 or email jenny@sayfc.org



Members and friends at last year's stockjudging, with judge Raymond Kennedy.

## Market reports

### STIRLING

**Almost 5,000 sold through Stirling mart**

LAST THURSDAY saw United Auctions sell 4,989 prime sheep, including 2,581 lambs along with 2408 ewes

and rams. Lambs at the sale, held at Stirling on December 29, sold to an average of 161.72p/kg.

#### Leading prices

Lambs (per head) Berrydyke (Btex) £91.50; Errol Enterprises (Tex) £90; South Flan-

ders (Suff) £88; South Flanders (Char) £85.50; Victoria (Chev) £72.50; Leyden (Mule) £75; East Bracklinn (BF) £68.50. Lambs (per kilo) Luckenburn (Btex) 201p; Errol Enterprises (Tex) 190p; Cluneberg (Suff) 170p; South

Flanders (Char) 158p; Victoria (Chev) 177p; Leyden (Mule) 165p; Errol Enterprises (BF) 160p. Ewes (per head) Nethermill (Tex) £133; Humeston (Cont) £128.50; Easter Gairden (TexX) £107; Bonnytown Cottage (Btex) £104.50; Kirkton of Kingoldrum (Suff) £90.50; Easter Middleton (HB) £78.50; Linkshedd (Cross) £74.50; West Mains (Mule) £73.50; Quixwood (Zwart) £73.50; Coulshill (Chev) £72; Plains (BF) £58.50.

## Criminals look out as authorities beef up focus on farm crime

SCOTLAND'S top public prosecutor has promised a fresh approach to tackling farm and rural crime.

In a new Crown Office policy, a hard line will be taken in relation to crimes such as the theft of farm vehicles, machinery, equipment, fuel and livestock; vandalism and fire-raising committed against farm property; and the worrying of livestock.

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) staff who deal with these cases will now be given training in the significant financial and emotional impact that agricultural offences can have on

rural businesses, communities and individuals.

The Crown Office also plans to ensure that this information is recorded by police from the earliest stages of an investigation and presented to the sheriff or judge in order that they can decide on the appropriate sentence. In addition, whenever offences involve organised criminality, they will be dealt with by specialist prosecutors within COPFS Serious and Organised Crime Division, who will use Proceeds of Crime legislation to maximise the recovery of money and assets.

Solicitor General, Lesley

Thomson QC, said: 'All too often, the public focus of crime is on cities and built-up areas. 'But of course we know that offending is not limited to the urban environment, and as prosecutors it is our duty to ensure agricultural communities are protected, listened to and their concerns addressed. 'We know, too, that farms can be subject to particular types of crime, which in turn can have a particularly profound effect both in reinforcing a sense of vulnerability and causing lasting damage to agricultural businesses. 'We are committed to a continuing relationship with

Police Scotland, the National Farmers Union for Scotland, Scottish Land and Estates and the Scottish Government in order to ensure that victims are fully represented throughout the criminal process and those who commit these crimes are brought to face the full force of the law.'

Allan Bowie, NFU Scotland President, said: 'NFUS would like to thank the Crown Office for the opportunity to participate in the working group which was set up to examine policy in this area. NFU Scotland members who have engaged with us have allowed the union to provide real life

examples of the true impacts of agricultural crime. 'The outcome of the work will provide reassurance to our members that agricultural crime will be treated seriously, and also that policy in this area is up to date and fit for purpose. We look forward to continuing to work with COPFS and partners to ensure that those who commit these crimes are brought to face the full force of the law.'

Chief Superintendent Gavin Robertson added: 'Police Scotland was pleased to be part of the review group and very much welcomes the new approach announced by the

Solicitor General. As members of the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime, we are working hard to prevent and reduce rural crime affecting Scotland, driving and supporting work at local level across the country. 'Where a crime occurs, the investigating officer will ensure the full emotional and financial impact felt by people and businesses affected is contained in any police report for consideration by prosecutors. 'We will also seek every opportunity to identify and recover money and assets from the criminals involved and disrupt their activities.'

## Sticky land values ahead, says report

MORE farmland is likely to enter the market in 2016, leading to depressed prices, according to a new report.

Record levels of farm debt and weak commodity prices, combined with reduced subsidies will have an impact in the year to come, according to the report by land agent Savills.

Supply in Scotland was up by 23 per cent in the 12 months to the end of September 2015, to 37,000 acres compared with the same period the year before.

Despite a good harvest in terms of yield, changes to the support system and poor commodity prices have created a tougher market, the report points out, and units are taking longer to sell as more due diligence is undertaken and funding arranged.

'With UK farm debt at a record high, and prospects for improved commodity prices looking gloomy, more farms are likely to appear on the market in 2016 and this may have an impact on land values,' said Luke French of Savills.

'However, with farmland supply at record lows, the fundamentals for why land is a good long-term investment remain the same. 'What is very evident is the resulting regional variation in average land values across all land types. Best in class continues to sell and sell well,' he added.

According to Savills, buyers of Scottish farms continue to be predominantly farmers, many with funds from renewable projects and development land, in contrast to the English market where lifestyle buyers returned to the list of active purchasers in 2015.

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# West coast recruitment

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The ability to deputise for the editor and organise the newsroom is essential, as is the ability to work well under deadline pressure.

Candidates will have excellent communication skills, both verbal and written. They will be responsible for managing daily workflow, working with reporters to get the best content possible, providing clear briefings and feedback on content requirements.

They must be self-motivated, highly organised and able to take instruction as well as manage own workload efficiently.

An understanding of digital would be an advantage as the right candidate will be required to liaise with the editor on the digital strategy and ensure that content is promoted via an effective social media presence.

Above all, the new member of the team will be hard working, passionate about the role and have a positive attitude.

A full driving licence is essential. The position is based in Oban.

In return, we offer a good, competitive salary, private health care, enhanced pension, life assurance, as well as excellent benefits. A relocation package may be offered.

Please apply with full CV and contact details to Alison Arden - [ali@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:ali@obantimes.co.uk)

**The Oban Times** & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES | Senior Reporter

**The Oban Times has an opportunity for a bright, passionate and hungry reporter to join our busy team in Oban.**

The person we are looking for will be fully qualified with shorthand, multi-media literate and be unafraid of hard work.

They will be bursting with ideas on where to look for stories, understand the importance of fostering great contacts and knowing their patch and be capable of working on their own initiative as well as part of a team.

They should also hold a full driving licence.

As well as writing for the newspaper of record for the West Highlands, they will be expected to take pictures on the job, as well as contribute to our social media channels.

In return for all this we offer a competitive salary, great experience and training, as well as private health care and an enhanced pension.

Please apply by email, sending your CV, plus a covering letter and some examples of your work to: Alison Arden - [ali@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:ali@obantimes.co.uk)

**Scottish Canals**

Scottish Canals are hiring seasonal staff for **The Crinan Canal!**

If you have a passion for customer service and team work, view our vacancies online at <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/corporate/join-our-team/>

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## public notices

**WATER ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003  
WATER ENVIRONMENT (CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2011  
APPLICATION FOR AUTHORISATION  
GLEN NOE HYDRO SCHEME**

An application has been made to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) by RWE Innogy UK Ltd for authorisation to carry on controlled activities at, near or in connection with Glen Noe Hydro Scheme, namely:

Description of controlled activity	Waters affected	National grid reference
Construction and/or operation of impounding works 1.8m in height	River Noe	NN 0747 3333
Construction and/or operation of impounding works 1.6m in height	Allt Garbh	NN 0733 3326
Construction and/or operation of impounding works 1.0m in height	Allt a' Bhrait	NN 0622 3347
Abstraction of 91,730 m3 per day of water	River Noe	NN 0747 3333
Abstraction of 31,375 m3 per day of water	Allt Garbh	NN 0733 3326
Abstraction of 16,192 m3 per day of water	Allt a' Bhrait	NN 0622 3347
Return of abstracted water	River Noe	NN 0485 3412

SEPA considers that the above controlled activities may have an impact on the water environment.

A copy of the application and any accompanying information may be inspected free of charge, at the SEPA Registry below, between 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (except local and national holidays). Alternatively, the application may be viewed on SEPA's website at: <http://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/consultations/advised-applications-under-car/>

Any person affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the application may make representations to SEPA in writing within 28 days beginning with the date of this advertisement, at the following address, quoting reference number: CAR/L1142723: **Registry Department, SEPA, Dingwall Office, Graesser House, Fodderty Way, Dingwall Business Park, Dingwall, IV15 9XB**

Written representation received by SEPA within 28 days of this advertisement will be taken into consideration in determining whether or not to grant the application.

Before determining the application, SEPA will:

- assess the risk to the water environment posed by the carrying on of the activity or activities;
- assess the indirect effects of that impact on any other aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected;
- consider any likely adverse social and economic effects of that impact and of any indirect environmental effects that have been identified;
- consider the likely environmental, social and economic benefits of the activity;
- assess the impact of the controlled activity or activities on the interests of other users of the water environment;
- assess what steps may be taken to ensure efficient and sustainable water use; and,
- apply and have regard to relevant legislation.

SEPA will then either grant or refuse to grant the application.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)

**Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES: EDUCATION**  
REGISTRATION OF INFANT BEGINNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
SESSION 2016/2017

Children who attain the age of five years between 1 March 2016 and 28 February 2017 should be registered for education during the week commencing 18 January 2016.

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; 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 Don McAllister, Education Officer, [donaidd.mcallister@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:donaidd.mcallister@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

If your child is not registered to attend preschool education within Argyll & Bute Council area you should produce your child's birth certificate when registering for Education. 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).

**CLELAND SNEEDON, Executive Director: Community Services**

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)

**Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid**

**COUNCILLOR'S SURGERY**  
Councillor Roddy McCuish (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles)  
Councillor Roddy McCuish can be contacted by email - [Roderick.McCuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Roderick.McCuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or by telephone 01631 567854  
Councillor McCuish will be happy to arrange meetings to suit constituents.

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

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

**Lodge St. Modan No 985**  
The Installation Meeting of RWM Elect Br Kenneth Ferguson and Office Bearers will be held on Saturday 9th January 2016 at 4pm in the Masonic Hall, Tainuil.  
Installing Masters  
Iain Alexander PM 985  
Peter Barr PM 985  
Alistair Colthart PM 985  
Harmony to follow.  
The Regular Meeting will be held on Wednesday 20th January 2016 at 7.45pm.  
Annual Business Meeting (no degree being worked)  
AOCB  
Test Fees Due.

**First Registration of a Croft**  
Mrs Helen Catherine McDonnell has registered the croft 8 Bracora & Part Glasnacardoch (Share), Glenelg, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 22 September, 2016. Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The crofting registration number is C2099.

**CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD PUBLIC HEARING**  
A Public Hearing will be held by the Crofting Commission into the application by Sheila Cameron to decroft part of the croft at 70 & 71 Camaghael, Kilmallie advised as extending to 0.1 ha in order to provide the site for a dwellinghouse. The Hearing will take place in the Kilmallie Hall, Corpach, Fort William on Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 7.00 pm and anyone interested may attend. A statement of the facts and relevant issues may be obtained by writing to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW by 20 January 2016 quoting the case number: 4.86.49082

**The Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

**TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

**THE A82 TRUNK ROAD (GLEN ETIVE) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON USE OF ROAD) ORDER 2015**

The Scottish Ministers give notice that they have made the above Order, under section 62(1) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, temporarily prohibiting traffic from using the following length of road when indicated by the appropriate signs:

That length of the A82 Dalnotter - Inverness Trunk Road from its junction with the unclassified road leading to Glen Etive westwards to its junction with the Old Glencoe Road, Glencoe (Clachaig junction), a distance of 12.2 kilometres or thereby.

The Scottish Ministers are of the opinion that considerations of public safety and convenience require this order in consequence of filming work which is planned to take place on or near the said length of road. The order has effect on 8th January 2016 but will only operate in relation to the road where indicated by the appropriate traffic signs. It is proposed the prohibition will be in operation for three periods of up to 10 minutes per hour between 9am and 4pm to allow the filming to take place. There are no alternative routes required for traffic due to the short duration of the closures. Police will be in attendance to manage traffic. For information about roadworks on motorways and trunk roads visit [www.trafficscotland.org.uk](http://www.trafficscotland.org.uk)

A copy of the Order and this Notice will be available on the Transport Scotland website at <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/road/road-and-traffic-orders/south-west-traffic-orders>

**J J MORAN**  
A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers,  
Transport Scotland, Buchanan House,  
58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

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**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk> and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development	Address	Proposal Description
15/04408/FUL	NW of Ardentigh Bay, Loch Nevis		Expansion of marine fish farm from 9 to 12 cages, each 80m circumference, plus replacement of feed barge with larger capacity unit
15/04489/FUL	22A Carnoch, Glencoe, Ballachulish		Erection of a small outbuilding to display, store and sell artwork
15/04530/FUL	Plot 15, Ach Na Mara, Lochaline, Morvern, Oban		Erection of dwelling house and storage shed
15/04671/LBC	Ardtornish House, Ardtornish, Morvern, Oban		Proposed upgrading to Category A listed house to comprise of fire safety improvement works and works to sustain the long term use of the house
15/04690/FUL	Land 50m NE of Craigar, Ormsaigbeg, Kilchoan		Erection of dwelling
15/04716/FUL	Land 760m South of 1 Glen Cottages, Glenachulish, Ballachulish		A run-of-river hydro scheme of up to 700kW capacity located upon Abhainn Greadhain with Glèann a' Chaolais

**Time period for comments is 14 days. Application 15/04671/LBC is 21 days.**  
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX  
Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2011  
PROPOSED EXPANSION OF MARINE FISH FARM, NW OF ARDINTIGH BAY, LOCH NEVIS**

The Council has received an application from Scottish Sea Farms Ltd for expansion of the finfish farm at the above location. The proposal is to add 3 new cages to the existing 9 (each 80m circumference) and to replace the automated feed barge with a higher capacity (170 tonnes) model. The application is supported by an Environmental Statement.

The application and its supporting information is available for public inspection between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday at the following locations -

- Planning and Building Standards Office, Highland Council HQ, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX
- Service Point, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6EL (9.30am - 4.30pm)
- Knoydart Post Office, Knoydart, Mallaig, PH41 4PL
- Mallaig Post Office, Mallaig, PH41 4PU

They can also be accessed online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> (search using the application reference number 15/04408/FUL).

Additional copies of the application and its supporting documents are available on CD, free of charge, from Sheena Warnock, Scottish Sea Farms, South Shian, Connel, Argyll, PA37 1SB (Tel: 01631-574000) Printed copies can be purchased from the same address at a cost of £120. Copies of the ROV seabed video footage on a USB pen drive are £45.

Any person who wishes to make a representation on the application and/or its supporting information can do so online by visiting <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> or by writing to The Head of Planning and Building Standards, ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX. The deadline for receipt of comments is 28 days from the date of publication of this notice.

The Council will acknowledge receipt of comments but is unable to respond individually to points or questions raised. Please note that your comments will be published online. Please quote the application reference number in your correspondence.

J. Stuart Black  
Director of Development and Infrastructure

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**BIRTHS**

**COLLINS** - Niamh and Brian are delighted to announce the birth of Elsie May on December 30. A wee sister for Joseph, Lauren and Rachael and a granddaughter for May and Michael Collins and Maggie and Jeff Anderson.

**ENGAGEMENTS**

**DICKIE - MUNRO** - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Ally, youngest son of Alastair and Fiona, Musdale, to Gayle, youngest daughter of Calum and Susan, Fernende, North Connell.

**NICHOLSON - BRANDON** - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement on Christmas Day of Lucy, Barranrioch Farm, Oban to Chris of Oparau, New Zealand.

**DEATHS**

**CAMERON** (Fort William) - On Friday January 1, 2016, peacefully, at home, surrounded by his family, Angus Cameron (Angie), aged 88 years. Dearly loved husband of Christine, much loved dad of Jennifer and a devoted grandfather. Funeral Service will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2016 at 1pm in Duncansburgh-MacIntosh Parish Church, thereafter to Glen Nevis Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired to Ward CAU Belford Hospital and Glen Mor Sugery can be given at the service or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

**CAMERON** - Suddenly at Grantham Hospital on December 28, 2015, Donnie, beloved husband of Lovaine. Late of Cademuir Drive, Peebles, and Ballachulish Ferry. A much loved brother of Fiona and Peter.

**GALBRAITH** - Peacefully, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, on December 30, 2015, Colin Mitchell Galbraith, aged 66 years, of 7 Caledonia Court, Ardrishaig, and formerly of 7 Hillview Terrace, Ardrishaig, beloved son of the late Sandy and Rita Galbraith, a much loved brother of Doreen, loving uncle of Angie and dear brother-in-law of Jackie. A dear cousin to all the family and a good neighbour, dear friend and former work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held at Ardrishaig Parish Church, on Friday, January 8, 2016, at 12.00 noon, thereafter to Achnabreac Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired, to Chest, Heart and Stroke.

**MACCONNELL** - Peacefully at Raigmore Hospital on Friday, December 25, 2015, George MacConnell, Knapdale, 16 Heathfield, Croy, aged 78 years. Former Waterboard Engineer. Beloved husband of the late Anna Louise Munro, dearly loved father of Alasdair, Roddy and Kirsteen, dear grandfather, great-grandfather and a good friend. Funeral service on Friday, January 8 at 3:00pm in the Funeral Home of William T. Fraser and Son, Funeral Director, Culduel Road, Inverness. All welcome.

**MACDONALD** - Nancy (née Cameron), beloved wife of the late Lachlan MacDonald (ex St. Kilda) formerly of Glen Nevis and latterly Victoria Court, Fort William. Dear aunt of Ewan and Mary, great-aunt to their families. Last surviving member of the family of Hugh and Isabella Cameron, Glasgow and sister of the late Isobel, Violet and Donald. Funeral service to be arranged by Gunns of Appin - for details please call 01631 730279.

**MACKINNON** - Archibald Hector, peacefully at home in Seafield, Cornaigmore, Isle of Tiree on December 22, 2015 aged 88 years. Much loved husband of Annie, father of Gillesbuig, father-in-law of Sandra and grandfather of Lauren. Sadly missed.

**MCLEAN** - Suddenly at his home, Earadale, 6 Kilmory Road, Lochgilphead, on December 24, 2015, David McLean, aged 87 years (Retired Inspector, Argyll Police), beloved husband of the late Etta Ryans, much loved dad of Kenneth and Ian, dearly loved father-in-law and grandfather. A good neighbour, dear friend and former work colleague to many. Funeral service was held in Lochgilphead Parish Church, on Tuesday, January 5, 2016, followed by interment at Achnabreac Cemetery. Sadly missed.

**MORRISON** - Peacefully, in the loving care of Moss Park Nursing Home, on Monday, January 4, 2016, in her 96th year, Mary Ann Morrison, formerly of 2A Linnhe Buildings, Fort William. Funeral Service will be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 12 noon in Fort William Free Church; thereafter to Innis-Na-Birlinn Cemetery. Flowers welcome or donations, if desired to Cancer Research can be given at the Church door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

**RILEY** - Maud Georgina (Maudie Bell), on December 27, 2015 at home, peacefully after a long illness borne with unbelievable courage and with a good deal of laughter and tears. Much loved mother of Nik, special sister of Carol and sister-in-law of Neil, wonderful aunt and amazing great aunt. Will live in our hearts forever.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**MACÈ** - The Macè family would like to thank all relatives and friends for their kind words, thoughts and support following the sudden passing of their dearest wife, mother and grand mother Astrid, who died December 21, 2015. Thanks also to Fr James MacNeil for a touching service, the Flower Basket and Hamish Hoey & Son for their work at a difficult time of year. She will be forever remembered for her genuine caring.

**MACCOLL** - Mairi, Fiona and Calum would like to thank everyone who attended the funeral of Charlie, a dear husband, father and brother, and for the many cards, phone calls and kind expressions of sympathy. Also to Rev Morag Muirhead and Rev Donald MacQuarrie for the heartfelt service and to Allan Campbell for his personal tribute. Thanks to Mike McFall for his caring and efficient funeral arrangements, and to the management and staff of the West End Hotel for providing refreshments. The retiring collection of £2,487 goes to the Mod Youth Fund and Crohn's and Colitis (Highlands and Islands Group). Finally our thanks to staff on Ward GC, Raigmore Hospital and also the Belford Hospital for the kind care and attention given to Charlie during his illness.

**ROBERTSON** - June, Keith, Niall, Nina and Jane wish to thank most sincerely all family, friends and neighbours for the many lovely floral tributes, cards, telephone calls and visits they received following their sad loss of Andy. Special thanks to Dr P Strachan, Dr A Beggs, Dr M Finlayson, Montrose District Nurses and all of the community staff for their dedicated care and commitment. Grateful thanks to Rev Fiona Bullock for her kindness and most comforting services, to David Bell of Emslie S Collier Funeral Directors for his professionalism, compassion and efficiency with the arrangements and to all who paid their last respects at the church and crematorium and who donated so generously the sum of £675.00 to Cancer Research UK.

**MEMORIAMS**

**BRIGHTMORE** - In loving memory of my dear father Eric, who died January 8, 2009 and my dear mother Mary, who died January 21, 2000.

Loved and remembered every day.  
- Catherine, John, Clair and John, Corpach.

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

**CHILDS** - Cherished memories of our wonderful mum Margaret Anne Childs, who passed away on January 4, 2015.  
To us you were so special mum  
So good, so kind and true  
Precious are our memories  
We will always hold of you  
Love you always.  
- Catherine, John, Laurence and all the family xxx.

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

**MACCORQUODALE** - In loving memory of Muriel, our beloved mother, mother-in-law and nana, taken from us January 9, 2015.

They say there is a reason  
They say that time will heal  
But neither time nor reason  
Will change the way we feel  
For no-one knows the heartache  
That lies behind our smiles  
No-one knows how many times  
We have broken down and cried  
We want to tell you something  
So there won't be any doubt  
You're so wonderful to think of  
But so hard to be without  
Also remembered all our loved ones  
gone before  
Forever in our hearts.  
-Iain, Diane, Iain, Rowan and Katrina xxx

**MACCORQUODALE** - Dear nana, a year has passed although it still feels like yesterday. I love and miss you everyday.  
- All my love Ewan.

**MACDONALD** - Treasured memories of Eileen, dearly loved mother of Philip and precious daughter of Margaret, sister of Colin and Karen, taken from us on January 6, 2008, also loved ones gone before.  
To us you were so special  
What more is there to say  
We only wish with all our hearts  
That you were here today  
Sorely missed.  
- The family, Dunollie.

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

**MACKINNON** - Treasured memories of Jimmy, dear brother and uncle who passed away January 3, 2013.

Memories are a gift to treasure  
Ours of you will last forever  
No longer in our life to share  
But deep in our hearts you are  
always there.  
Very sadly missed.  
- Cathie and family, Coll and Blantyre.

**MACKINNON** - In loving memory of Lorna who passed away January 4, 2010.  
Loved and missed every day  
- Mum, Kirsteen, James, Rachael and Iona. xx

**MACLELLAN** - In loving memory of our dear grandson and nephew Christopher Allan, taken from us on January 1, 1991.  
Always in our hearts.  
- MacLellan family, Eriskay and Oban.

**MACPHERSON** - Precious memories of Ernie, who passed away on January 7, 2015, a loving husband, father and papa.  
No-one is truly dead who lives in the hearts of those they leave behind.  
- Irene and family.

**MACQUARIE** - In loving memory of Jessie, a dear sister, sister-in-law, aunt, grand-aunt, great grandaunt, who passed away on December 28, 2013.  
Always loved and remembered.  
Also loved ones gone before.  
- Donnie, Jeannie and family.

**McGILLIVRAY** - In loving memory of my dear mother May (née Wilson) who died January 10, 1995.  
Gone are the days we used to share  
But in our hearts you are always there  
The gates of memory will never close  
We miss you more than anyone knows  
With tender love and deep regret  
We who love you will never forget.  
- Inserted by her loving son Jim and Helen.

**MORRISON** - In loving memory of Johnny who sadly passed away on January 3, 2008. - Catherine, John, Karen, Alan and families.  
Forever in my thoughts.  
- Mum

**ROBERTSON** - In loving memory of the late Mary Robertson (née Simpson), wife of the late Iain MacKinnon Robertson of 5 Rockfield Road, Tobermory, who passed away on January 9, 2015.  
She is sadly missed and dearly loved by her daughter Marion and son Niall, sisters Annie(Capewell) and Katie (Weatherall) and all her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**ROBERTSON** - In loving memory of a dear husband and father George, who passed away on January 6, 2011.  
Precious are the memories we always hold of you.  
- Love Margaret, sons George and Lorne and daughter-in-law Helen.  
Remembering with love my dad Colin and mum Maggie, late of Clachan Farm.  
Never forgotten.  
- Daughter Margaret, grandsons George and Lorne.

**SIMPSON** - In loving memory of my beloved husband John, who died suddenly on January 6, 2011.  
Always in my thoughts,  
- With love from Fiona.

**STODDART** - In loving memory of our dear brother Malcolm Livingston, passed away 10th January 1972.  
Fondly remembered always  
- From his brothers and sisters, Glasgow.

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**GRADUATIONS**



**Mhairi Wren**  
Graduated BA degree in Business Management at UHI Argyll College.  
Mhairi is married to David and is daughter of Douglas and Kate Stewart, Creah Bhan Village, Oban.

**Obituary**

**MARGARET** Mary Cowling, or Margo as she was affectionately known, passed away on December 12, 2015 after a fall at home. Her ashes will be brought 'home' to Oban to be scattered.

Margo was born on January 19, 1947 to Hugh and Anastasia Carmichael, formerly of Dunstaffnage and Oban.

Margo was born seven weeks prematurely, being delivered at home in Dunstaffnage by her late beloved dad, Hugh, with the aid and guidance of her late mum, Anastasia, who was a midwife.

Hugh was the eldest son of Margo's paternal grandparents, Catherine and Hector Carmichael of Oban.

The family left Oban during 1960 to start a new life on the Earl Of Derby Estate at Knowsley Park.

Margo went on to marry and had two sons, Ian and Jeremy.

Tragically her eldest son, Ian, died in 2008, aged 42.

Margo undertook her nursing training at Knowsley and St Helens NHS Trust Teaching Hospital, famous for its Burns and Plastics Unit, on Merseyside.

Father Thomas Wynne, her former parish priest from childhood at St Columba's Cathedral, Oban, gave the family a great source of spiritual comfort over many years.

For her funeral, he wrote a lovely letter about Margo as a young child, which was read out by her sister Jean at her requiem mass.

Margo is survived by her youngest son, Jeremy, sister Jean, and brother-in-law Will.

Also her special nephew, David Carmichael, whom Margo looked after as an infant when his mother took very ill. He was like a third son to her.



Margaret Mary Cowling who has passed away after a fall at home.

**LIFE lines**  
**Guilt**

Well, I have broken my resolutions already. I am not slimmer, healthier or indeed any younger looking. But I am older and wiser and becoming more cynical about fad diets.

I have been visiting the dietician at Oban hospital and she is a wonderful woman. So far in our sessions together I have told her about my absolute need to have sweet things at the end of a meal and the fact that I like to have a little drawer of sweet things at work to get me through the day.

While I thought she might give me a 'row' about this, but she didn't, she said: 'Stop feeling guilty about food.'

She also asked me to trial doing some things in my life - like introducing breakfast. I have been getting up earlier and enjoying a lovely cup of tea, cornflakes, and toast.

This seems counter intuitive to me that to eat more at breakfast allows you to eat less at the end of the day.

But so far it seems to be working. I don't think I've lost any weight - but I have more energy at work in the mornings and I am even up for forgoing sweets at lunchtime.

M.M.

**MSP calls for tighter controls over deer numbers**

A GROUP of environmental charities have backed the call by Michael Russell MSP, a member of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, for deer management in Scotland to be tightened up through the Land Reform Bill.

Mr Russell has called for the changes due to damage being caused to internationally important habitats, ancient woodlands and peat bogs by high numbers of deer in some areas of Scotland. Under the current system the management of deer numbers by landowners is mainly voluntary.

The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee believes this system is not tackling the issue and has urged the Scottish Government to consider strengthening the approach to deer management.

The move has the backing of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, RSPB Scotland, Cairngorms Campaign, Ramblers Scotland, John Muir Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland.

The amendments call for giving Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) more powers to ensure that deer populations are better controlled by deer management groups to protect the public interest.

Mr Russell said: 'Recent information from SNH confirms that the voluntary system of deer management is not working. It requires considerable legislative strengthening if it is to be an effective way of controlling the ever increasing number of deer across Scotland, which in some places is threatening biodiversity and the existence of commercial forestry.'

'In some cases the decision to allow that to happen is taken by owners for entirely selfish purposes, but in others it is the result of many years of failed management by competing interests. The Land Reform Bill contains some

provisions on deer management but they do not, in my view, go far enough and I am therefore grateful for the help of Scottish Wildlife Trust, RSPB Scotland and others in formulating some initial amendments to start to find an effective way to tackle this serious and growing problem.'

Head of policy for Scottish Wildlife Trust, Dr Maggie Keegan, said: 'The Scottish Wildlife Trust wholeheartedly backs Mike Russell's suggested amendments because in some areas of Scotland, high deer numbers are wreaking havoc on internationally important habitats, such as rare Atlantic oak woodland.'

'The lack of progress towards sustainable deer management under the present voluntary system is frustrating and puts at risk Scottish Government ambitions regarding climate change, peatland restoration and woodland expansion targets.'

'For the sake of protecting Scotland's natural capital, we hope the Scottish Government will support Mr Russell's suggested amendments, which are part of the step change needed to help deliver sustainable deer management.'

Head of Species and Land Management at RSPB Scotland, Duncan Orr-Ewing, said: 'In the absence of natural predators, the sustainable management of deer is a key issue if we are to prevent further deterioration to some of our most important wildlife sites.'

'We support the provision of new deer management powers to SNH to help deliver our 2020 biodiversity targets, as well peatland restoration, and native woodland expansion.'

'We encourage the Scottish Government to support these proposals for legislative change.'

**Oban Times**  
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS  
**Oban Times**  
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS  
**Oban Times**  
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

**Thought for the week**

43:1 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. Isaiah 43:1-7

The Christmas tree is down, the cards binned, the fairy lights are out, the candles snuffed, the decorations tucked away for another year. Twelfth Night is past and the Three Wise Men have gone home by another way...

Are you like me - do you feel that a little colour has gone out of life after the whole razz-matazz of Christmas?

Maybe you like to take the Christ out of Christmas - make it an unknown quantity, Xmas or a politically correct 'Winter Festival' - and just enjoy a moment of colour, good cheer and a fine family blow out at the dark of the year.

But maybe, for a moment, among the stress of shopping for food, decorating the house, fighting crowds to buy presents, cooking the turkey,

laying in the booze, you caught a glimpse of the mystery, the wonder and the great hope of Christmas: that God is with us, that 'Low within a manger lies He who made the stary skies', that the whole of creation kneels before the Child of Bethlehem.

Would it not be wonderful if we were able to carry that feeling through the frosts of February and the winds of March: able to feel that, with the angels of Heaven, we could give glory to God and that each one of us could spread out peace and goodwill towards all whom we meet: to the immigrant, to the sick and lonely, and to those who are in need? Who knows where a movement like that would end.

John MacFarlane, Taynuilt

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# MARTIAL ARTS

## WITH IAIN RODGER

### Kyokushinkai Karate

THE CALEDONIA Kyokushinkai club held two grading tests in Oban this month, one on December 12 and another on December 19.

During the process, the clubs gained new high grades. On December 12 Paul MacKay moved up to 1st kyu and Drew MacKinnon moved to 2nd kyu while on December 19 Andrew Smart gained his 1st dan black belt. After the technical part of the test, Andrew had to complete 20 two-minute fights against fresh opponents.

### Martial Arts

IT'S BEEN a busy year for martial arts in Oban, with all the clubs competing at various national and international events.

It takes a lot of bottle just to compete at these tournaments and I take my hat off to all those that have done so. Win or lose, the experience is invaluable.

To experience the adrenaline rush then control it and channel it takes a special kind of person.

One of my personal, if not slightly biased, highlights of the past year was Mark Welsh taking the international title in Edinburgh in May against much heavier opposition.

This was a huge confidence boost for Mark who was fighting way out of his comfort zone.

Elsewhere, the BJJ team has done extremely well taking medals at every event they attended.

### Future

Coach Coogie Potter deserves a special mention for the hard work he puts in week after week to get the team in top shape for these events, and with the recent addition of a kids BJJ class, the future looks bright for Oban BJJ.

Senshi Do Kickboxing's chief instructor Wullie Rodger has been struggling with back problems for the last couple of years and is at last getting a long-awaited operation in February.

We wish him good luck and a speedy recovery.

Despite the back issues, Wullie has steered his club members to

many successes over the year at international and local events.

Argyll Martial Arts instructor Kenny Gray has had a good year too, from dan grade promotions within the organisation to Kenny himself taking first place in a kata tournament in November showing there is life in the old dog yet!

The Argyll Martial Arts and the Kyokushinkai clubs closed for the Christmas break but the kickboxing and BJJ clubs had a few sessions planned throughout.

Contact details for the local clubs are:

BJJ: coogiepots@gmail.com  
Kickboxing: shihanwill@gmail.com

Argyll Martial Arts (Shukokai Karate): kenni.gray@btinternet.com

Kyokushinkai Karate: iain@ikku.co.uk

As my particular art (Kyokushinkai karate) originated in Japan I will wish you all a good New Year in that Language; Yoï otoshi o omukae kudasai.



SUCCESS: Andrew Smart, Niamh Brady, Alix Nelson, Darryl McLaughlin and Rodaidh Hanlin during the Kyokushinkai Karate Club's grading tests in Oban on December 19.



FUNDRAISER: Tuesday December 29 saw the annual Achalarig Christmas Show where riders took part in fancy dress, gymkhana games and show jumping to raise money for a new riding arena and surface for the local Pony Club and Riding for the Disabled groups which rely on Achalarig Stables as their base. A total of £300 was raised. Photo: Wullie Rodger.

## Oban Camanachd prepares for the new shinty season

OBAN Camanachd start the build-up to season 2016 in the Marine Harvest Premiership with its traditional New Year game against a Camanachd veterans team.

The veterans team will be made up of some of the players who won the Scottish Cup 20 years ago on that memorable day in Inverness, defeating the all-conquering Kingussie team of that era 3-2 bringing the coveted trophy back to Oban for the first time since the successful Oban Celtic team of the 1960s. The game will take place at Mossfield Stadium, Oban, on Saturday January 9 with a 1pm throw-up.

The game gives team manager Ian Hay the opportunity to field new signing Willie Neilson as well as welcoming back long-term injured players Andrew 'Papa'

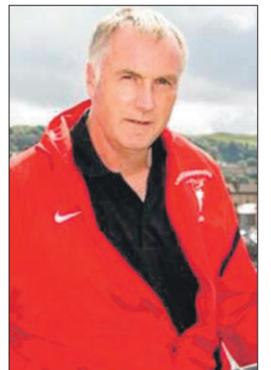
McCuish, Craig MacMillan and Keith MacMillan.

The veterans team will be managed by Lochside Rovers team manager Gareth Evans in what promises to be an entertaining game to be refereed by Billy Wotherspoon. After the match both teams will retire to Coasters for hospitality.

Oban Camanachd under 14 team coaches Stephen Sloss and Brian Logan are hopeful the long-awaited South Under 14 play-off game against Bute, scheduled for January, will finally take place and end season 2015.

Oban Camanachd Club congratulates Oban Saints' club secretary David Buchanan on his recent award of the British Empire Medal for services to football in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

### Shinty



MAN IN CHARGE: Oban Camanachd manager Iain Hay.

## Kenny walks on water in fifth Slog in the Sand win



Winner Kenny Campbell.



Women's winner Jennifer Reid.

A COOL south-east wind gave Kintyre runners a tailwind on the return leg as they slogged through sand, stones and salt water last Sunday.

The sixth running of the popular winter warmer 'Slog in the Sand' on Westport beach near Campbeltown saw 20 juniors head away, into bright sunshine, on their three-kilometre race at 10.30am.

### No surprises

There were no surprises in the 10K senior race with Kenny Campbell taking his fifth victory in 36.56. At one stage, as he surged through the surf, he appeared to be running on the water.

His time was outside his record breaking 36.05 set in 2014, but was three minutes 43 seconds

### Athletics

faster than the second placed runner Daniel Sheldrick in 40.39.

Third-placed Stuart McGeachy looked in agony as he neared the line. He said he had pulled something in his back and was a further three minutes behind in 43.47.

Women's winner Jennifer Reid's time of 46.33 was 3.06 quicker than second placed Natalie Sharp in 49.39 but there was then nearly a 10-minute wait until Emma Moran appeared through the surf in 59.10.

A spokesperson said the weather probably made it the best ever running of the event, combined with firm sand at the sea's edge.

## Cairndow marksman is the big shot at Christmas shoot

WITH continuing unsettled weather, it was no surprise Dunoon and District Clay Target Club's (DDCTC) Christmas Shoot was subject to gusty winds and squally showers.

Once again there was a good turnout of 35 guns equalling last year's competition.

Coping with a fickle wind is something Scottish shooters have to master.

The top guns did just that, with the first three places returning a score of 140 or better out of a maximum possible of 150 points.

The winner with a score of 142 was Ross Speirs, of Cairndow, who received a handsome Macallan gift set. One point behind on 141 was Alan Brown of Bute who won a litre of whisky. In third place, on 140, was Derek Street of Glendaruel who also won a bottle of whisky. Local club member George Lynn, Dunoon, was in fourth place and received

a case of beer provided by Innis and Gunn Brewers of Edinburgh which kindly continues to sponsor the club.

Gayle Shaw, Cairndow, was the only lady in the competition and was well to the top of the leader board with a score of 136. The

### Shooting

two juniors were only split by one point with Neil Lamont, Dunoon, on 100 ahead of Dylan McLaughlin, Bute, on 99. The Pool Trap was won by Ronnie Robertson, Bute, who won the £40 in the pot.



Three prizewinners at the DDCTC Christmas Shoot, left to right, George Lynn, Derek Street and Alan Brown.

## SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

### THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1750

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



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.

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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.

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## Saints prepare for vital Scottish Cup game

'We know it is going to be a very difficult tie, but I'm sure the boys will be up for it'

WITH the dust only just settled on the Christmas and New Year celebrations, Oban Saints could be forgiven for looking for a gentle return to action after the festive break.

Alas, no such luxury for Alex Craik and his men as they are thrown straight in at the deep end with their biggest fixture of the season so far.

Saturday's visitors for the crunch Scottish Amateur Cup fifth round tie are last season's beaten finalists Craigshill Thistle. The 'Jags' hail from Livingston and ply their trade in the Lothian and Edinburgh Amateur Football Association where they currently occupy second place in the Lothian West League, four points behind leaders Redhall

Star but with three games in hand.

Craigshill won last season's Edinburgh West League with maximum points and have continued that impressive winning streak this season collecting all 24 league points available to them.

The only blot on the Jags' copy book so far this season came in the Lothian and Edinburgh Amateur Football Association Champions Cup semi-final on August 5 when they lost out on penalties to eventual cup winners Shotts Victoria.

Since that dramatic penalty shoot-out defeat, Craigshill remain unbeaten in all competitions netting an incredible 101 goals in a 16-match run.



Oban Saints and some young supporters after the team won the Royal National Mod Cup in October last year.

Craigshill's march to the Scottish Amateur Cup Final last season included the scalps of Saints Argyll rivals Campbeltown Pupils, whom they defeated 5 - 0 in Livingston at the fourth round stage, and eventual Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division and Jimmy Marshall Trophy winners St Joseph's FP.

The former pupils of St Joseph's fared better in Livingston than those from Campbeltown Grammar taking the Jags to a seventh round replay in Duntocher. However the Livingston men eventually prevailed by two goals to one leaving St Joe's to concentrate on their league and league cup campaigns.

Craigshill's bid for Scottish Amateur Cup glory fell agonisingly short when they lost 3 - 1 in the final at Rugby Park, Kilmarnock, to Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division Champions Harestanes.

Saints fans will recall that their favourites were unfortunate to exit last season's West of Scotland Amateur Cup at the fourth round stage by an identical score line at the hands of the all-conquering Hares.

### Victories

Craigshill Thistle's bid to go one better in this season's Scottish Amateur Cup includes resounding victories over Maddisontown the Stirling and District Amateur Football Association Premier Division and Auchtermuchty Bellevue of the Fife Amateur Football Association Championship.

The Jags have also seen off more serious competition in the form of Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division side Drumchapel United whom they knocked out after extra time in a third round

replay following a 3 - 3 draw in Drumchapel.

Saints are also on a good run recovering from a distinctly shaky start to the season where they picked up just one point from their opening three league fixtures to embark upon a ten match unbeaten run in all competitions.

This return to form has seen Saints steadily climb the Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division table as well as landing the prestigious Royal National Mod Cup with a 3 - 1 victory over Glasgow Island of the Glasgow Colleges Football Association Premier Division.

Saints opened their account in this season's Scottish Amateur Cup with a convincing second round win against Millbeg Villa of the Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division Two on October 3. The 9 - 1 home win included five goals from Craig MacEwan, two from Donnie Campbell and one each from Dean Smith and Allan Mackay.

Having previously benefited from a first round bye, Saints were also spared a third round tie when their scheduled opponents Condorrat Club folded a few days before the tie was due to be played. Saints fourth round opponents were old friends and rivals Postal United who had left the Scottish Amateur Football League at the end of the 2012-13 season to join the Central Scot-

### Football

ish Amateur Football League. Saints edged out their old rivals by a single Donnie Campbell first half goal and had to withstand a late Postal onslaught before booking their place in the fifth round against Craigshill Thistle.

Saturday's match will see Saints player/assistant manager Donnie Campbell line up against two of his colleagues from the Scottish Amateur Football Association Select. Craigshill's Shaun Martin and David Swan both featured alongside Donnie in the friendly match against Airdrie in November and, like their Saints counterpart, will be looking forward to joining up with the national select squad later this month.

Saturday's match which kicks off at 2pm at Glencruitten will be refereed by highly rated Dunbartonshire whistler James Gallacher. It promises to be a cracker with Saints pitting their wits against one of the country's top amateur sides.

Manager Alex Craik is looking forward to the match. He said: 'We know it is going to be a very difficult tie, but I know the boys will be up for it. I'm sure Craigshill won't be relishing their long trip to Oban so it's up to us to make home advantage pay. We are hoping for a good crowd to cheer the boys on.'

### SAFL fixtures resume after festive break

#### Football

SCOTTISH Amateur Football League fixtures resume on Saturday after the Christmas and New Year break with the following games taking place. Scottish Amateur Cup, fifth round - Dunoon v Leven United; Oban Saints v Craigshill Thistle; Hall Cup, second round - Carlton YM v Dunoon Athletic; Premier Division - East Kilbride RR v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division One - Lochgilphead Red Star v Kings Park Rangers. Premier Division Two - Tarbert v Dumbarton Wanderers.

### Curling on BBC Alba for the first time

#### Curling

BBC ALBA is to broadcast live curling for the first time, with exclusive UK coverage of the 2016 Mercure City of Perth Masters to be screened on the channel.

The tournament, at the Dewars Centre, Perth, sees world class curlers from 12 countries, including Scotland's David Murdoch compete for the prestigious title in the 40th year of the tournament.

BBC ALBA will provide live coverage across each day of the Perth Masters, starting on Thursday January 7 at 4.15pm and culminating in coverage from the final on Sunday January 10 at 3pm.

### Green Machine back in action

#### Rugby

OBAN Lorne will be hoping the weather relents so it can get back in action on Saturday when the players travel to play Lenzie.

The Green Machine is presently lying in fifth place in BT West Division one with Lenzie in eighth.

Argyll and Bute take on Shawlands in an away BT West Division 4 match on Saturday. Shawlands sit second in the league with Argyll and Bute fifth.

Oban Lorne Ladies are also on their travels when Watsonians Women are the opponents on Sunday.

Lorne are sixth in BT National League Division One with Watsonians one place below.

### Oban Saints

#### Youths - fixtures

OBAN Saints youth teams get back in action after the festive break with the following fixtures: Under 13s no game; Under 14s v Campbeltown Pupils; Under 15s no game; Under 16s no game; Under 19s no game.

### Donald plays against Rangers

#### Football

DONALD McCallum from Campbeltown turned out for Dumbarton against Rangers last Saturday.

Unfortunately for Donald the Sons were on the wrong end of a 6-0 defeat at the hands of the Ibrox side.

## Triumph for Argyll-bred horse and rider

FOR THE second year running, Sefra's Blue Jewel, known as Sunny, has won the Scottish Arab

Group Endurance Points Trophy. Sunny was born and bred at Scammadale Farm, Kilniver, by



Hazel McCorkindale riding Sunny during the Scottish Arab Group Endurance Points Trophy.

### Horse riding

Hazel McCorkindale, who also trained and rode him this year.

The combination rode just under 500 miles in competitions around Scotland and Wales where they competed in the Scottish Team in the Home Internationals at Bulth Wells finishing third individually in the two day, 75-mile class helping Scotland win the silver medal for the second year running.

Sunny also achieved gold thistle status in the Scottish Endurance grading system at the Scottish Championships, where he was the highest placed Arab, and best condition in the 50-mile class at the inaugural running of the Cairngorm 100 event which involved riding from Braemar in the Cairngorms to Glen Clova over some of the most remote and challenging mountain routes.

## Camanachd Association looking to recruit new referees

THE CAMANACHD Association is appealing for more volunteers to become referees.

It is particularly keen for ex-players to become referees in North and South Division 2.

A comprehensive package of training and support is provided, plus kit and equipment. All volunteers need to provide is boots, a watch and a whistle.

Referees provide a vital service to the sport and refereeing offers a great opportunity to maintain an active involvement in the game.

Refereeing requires skill and is both physically and mentally challenging.

In allocating games, the association takes into account whether a referee wants to only officiate locally and/or the number of games to be undertaken in a month.

Referees receive reimburse-

ment for travel expenses and a match fee.

All new referees are required to successfully complete a short training programme (Grade 3), after which they will be allocated games at an appropriate level.

Mentors will be on hand at matches in the early stages to provide advice and support and, once established at Grade 3, there is the opportunity over time to progress to Grade 2 and Grade 1. Training courses for new referees will be held at various venues in mid-January.

A series of workshops will take place across the country on Saturday January 16 to bring all existing match officials together prior to the start of the new season. These workshops form an important part of a wider programme of training and development being supported by the Camanachd Association in 2016

in line with the agreed Strategic Plan for Shinty.

The pre-season workshop will run from 11am until 1pm and take place simultaneously in Glasgow, Inveraray, Fort William and Inverness. The workshop will provide an opportunity for officials to address a range of topics, including rule clarification and interpretation, payments and administration, dealing with dissent, communication, training and development.

It is important that as many active officials - referees, goal judges and match assessors - as possible attend their nearest workshop. Travel expenses will be reimbursed and lunch will be provided. The final agenda and venue details will be circulated in early January.

An additional workshop specifically for match assessors will also be organised in February 2016.

### Shinty

Anyone interested in refereeing should contact Astie Cameron, CA Operations and Events Manager, at the earliest opportunity. Telephone 01463 715931; mobile 07912 731295 or email Astie.Cameron@shinty.com

Following a vote by members at the recent AGM, the Camanachd Association is pleased to confirm an increase in match fee (referees) and mileage rate for officials in 2016, rising from £30 to £35 and 40p to 45p respectively.

As discussed on the night of the AGM, the Camanachd Association is currently reviewing the administration of payments to referees on behalf of clubs. There are likely to be some changes to this process in 2016 and further/ final information will be issued to all clubs and officials early in the New Year.



Santa Claus hopes the Camanachd Association can recruit new referees for the coming season.

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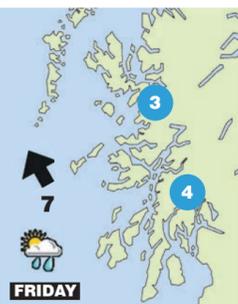
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**WEATHER**

**Thursday** Light rain  
Winds light west south westerly  
Temperatures 1°C to 5°C.

**Friday** Light rain showers  
Winds light south easterly  
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

**Weekend Outlook** Light rain on Saturday  
Cloudy on Sunday  
Winds moderate easterly  
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.



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

**TIDAL INFORMATION**  
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday January 7, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	03.55	3.4	09.47	1.6	16.10	3.5	22.31	1.4
Fri	04.36	3.6	10.36	1.4	16.51	3.7	23.07	1.2
Sat	05.15	3.8	11.20	1.2	17.29	3.8	23.43	1.0
Sun	05.52	4.0	12.02	1.0	18.04	3.9	***	**
Mon	00.19	0.9	06.28	4.0	12.43	0.9	18.37	3.9
Tues	00.58	0.8	07.03	4.1	13.24	0.8	19.12	3.9
Wed	01.37	0.7	07.41	4.0	14.06	0.9	19.51	3.8

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

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

**Ferry Crossings/Sea States**

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



**Significant haul of 'legal highs' seized in Highlands crackdown**  
- full story on page 3

**Celtic Connections blows away January blues!**



# More people than ever bank on Fort charity for Christmas food

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

THE NUMBER of people relying on Lochaber Food Bank this Christmas almost doubled compared to last year.

The Fort William-based charity dished out 1,062 meals to 118 people during December, compared to 68 people in the same month of 2014.

These are the highest figures since the food bank opened in December 2013.

Volunteers also managed to include extras and gifts with food parcels, thanks to the 'unbelievable generosity' of those who donated.

Food bank manager Alex MacConnachie said: 'We fed a lot more people this year. I think it's a mixture of more people needing help and also people being more aware of what we do.'

'We wouldn't be able to do it without the people of

**“ We fed a lot more people this year ”**

**Alex MacConnachie**  
Food bank manager

Lochaber and the generosity people have shown has been unbelievable. We were able to include chocolate and biscuits, as well as presents for kids. I could really see the thought people had put into donating. One woman even brought in a bag full of presents, all wrapped already. I can't thank everyone enough.'

Alex went on to describe the desperate situation some people in the area found themselves in,

saying: 'The Tuesday before Christmas I had a phonenumber from the Fishermen's Mission in Mallaig. They had met people who had absolutely nothing to eat so we loaded up a van and sent it to them first thing the next morning.'

'I hate to think about anyone having nothing to eat, especially at Christmas when most people have loads of food.'

Thanks to donations over Christmas the food bank has plenty of food but Alex encouraged people not to become complacent with donating. He said: 'We still have a lot of food but donations tend to slow down in January. I don't like to get too relaxed and say we don't need anything because we never know when we're going to get a burst of people coming in.'

Lochaber Food Bank is open between noon and 2pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



**GENEROUS:** Food bank volunteers praised the kindness of Lochaber people as they donated more than 1,000 meals in December. 21\_f02foodbank01

### TIMESLINE

#### Body recovered from Skye croft

A BODY has been discovered following a fire in north Skye.

Emergency services attended a croft house in Kilmuir after a blaze broke out on Boxing Day, but the damage was so severe that police and fire officers were unable to enter the building until it could be confirmed as structurally safe.

The identity of the deceased had not been identified when *The Oban Times* went to press.

A police spokesman said: 'An examination of the premises has since taken place and police can confirm that sadly the remains of a person were discovered within the house. Enquiries remain ongoing at this time to confirm the identity of the deceased.'

'The incident is not being treated as suspicious. A report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.'

#### Inn one of the best for post walk pint

A WEST Highland pub has been named one of the best in Britain for a post walk pint. The Clachaig Inn in Glencoe was the only place in Scotland to make the top five and took third overall in the list by Mountain Warehouse.

The inn's rural location has been popular with walkers and climbers for hundreds of years.

#### Tenants asked for rent spend views

TENANTS of Highland Council properties are being asked for their views on how their rent should be spent.

A survey on the local authority's plans for next year can be found on the Highland Council Facebook page or at service points. A paper survey can be posted by calling 01463 702889.

The consultation is open until January 22.



## Queen's Honours List celebrations

A LOCHABER musician has been awarded a prestigious award in the Queen's New Year Honours List for dedicating his life to music.

Peter Rose, director of Lochaber Music School, was named as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), for services to musical education and conservation in the UK and abroad.

The award recognises the teacher's work with Anne Conlon, who also received an MBE. The pair have been writing choral music for more than 30 years, including the world's first ecological musical, *Yanomamo*, in 1983, highlighting the threats posed to the world's rainforests.

Peter, who lives in Upper Inverroy, Roy Bridge, was a grad-



**MBE: Peter Rose.**

uate of the Royal Manchester College of Music before being appointed head of expressive arts at St Augustine's RC High School in Lancashire.

He said: 'We would like to thank all of those who have offered congratulations and expressed such great pleasure at our being awarded MBEs

in the New Year Honours List. The award came as a total but lovely surprise. We do have to say that the award's citation 'for services to music education and conservation, in the UK and abroad' surely has to embrace everyone who has been involved in our environmental choral works, whether as performer, colleague, parent, helper and not least, close friend and family.'

Anne has now retired from teaching but the pair continue to write together and plan to publish new work this year.

Also credited on the Honours List was Calina MacDonald of Carbost, Skye, who was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to business and horticulture in Skye and Lochalsh.

## Man sparked major police search

A MAN has admitted causing a 'man hunt' after spending hours hiding from police.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard on Tuesday that Scott Goldwyre, of 1 Lower Polish, Lochailort, ran for the hills when police tried to check his welfare, following a phonenumber from his partner who feared he may commit suicide.

Fiscal Depute Ross Carvel told the court that when officers approached the 37-year-old on the afternoon of February 16, at the edge of the A830 road between Lochailort and Glenfinnan, he became abusive and threatening before running towards the nearby hills.

Police began to hunt for him and called for back up, which led to numerous officers with dogs searching the area, as well as a search helicopter taking to the

air. When located, Goldwyre was again threatening towards police. One officer brought out his CS spray but Goldwyre managed to turn it on the constable and sprayed him in the face.

Mr Carvel said: 'Two officers wrestled him to the ground and then six officers were required to restrain him. Handcuffs had to be applied and he was required to be placed in a leg restraint.'

The Fiscal Depute added Goldwyre was taken to New Craigs psychiatric hospital in Inverness but was discharged without treatment.

Goldwyre pled guilty at an earlier hearing but also admitted a separate charge of growing cannabis on his property when he appeared in court on Tuesday. Defending solicitor Clare Russell said that in hindsight her client

knows running was the wrong thing to do, but at the time thought he was being 'chased in a man hunt'.

She added: 'He [Goldwyre] was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the offence. He did previously self medicate symptoms of depression and low moods with cannabis but does not consume the drug any more.'

Sheriff Richard Davidson said it was 'strange' that a mental health or addiction issue had not been found to explain what he called 'extraordinary behaviour'. He called for a psychiatric report and said: 'I cannot make a decision on how to deal with you until these reports look for an explanation into your behaviour.'

Sentencing for both charges was deferred until February 2 for reports.

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# Significant haul of 'legal highs' seized in Highlands crackdown

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

SUBSTANCES worth more than £9,000, described as 'legal highs', have been seized from the Highlands.

Almost 400 products capable of causing 'long-term mental health problems' were taken from two premises in a crackdown by Highland Council, Police Scotland, NHS Highland and the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

This comes after the new psychoactive substances (NPS) were found to be unsafe and in breach of the General Product Safety Regulations, despite being controversially known as 'legal' highs.

A Highland Council spokesperson would not disclose where the premises supplying the substances were,



**DANGER:** 'Legal high' substances were seized from two Highland premises.

but said one was in a retail outlet while the other was an online business operating from a 'domestic premises'.

Brian Mackay, temporary Chief Inspector of South Highland Command, Highland and Islands Division, Police Scotland said: 'Together with Highland Council Trading Standards and NHS Highland we are delighted to work in collaboration to tackle the threat, risk and harm NPS cause to our local communities. The advice of Police Scotland is again straightforward - don't take these substances. Just because they are referred to as 'legal' doesn't mean they are safe. There is no 'safe' way to take NPS, there is always a risk. The only way of staying safe is to avoid NPS altogether.'

Hugo Van Woerden,

Director of Public Health at NHS Highland, explained how dangerous NPS can be: 'We were very pleased to play our part in this. We are extremely concerned about the risk that some individuals will consume such substances and come to harm. A small but significant proportion of individuals who take psychoactive substances go on to experience short term or long term mental health problems. The NHS regularly sees people whose lives have been ruined by these products.'

So-called legal highs can't be sold for human consumption so are often labelled as incense, salts or plant food. Drug advice charity, Frank, describes many ingredients found in them as being linked to poisoning, emergency hospital visits and, in some cases, death. It states: 'Just because a

drug is called a 'legal high' doesn't mean that it's safe. It is becoming increasingly clear that they are far from harmless and can have similar health risks to drugs like cocaine, ecstasy and speed (amphetamine).

'Risks of legal highs can include a wide range of effects depending on whether they are stimulants like cocaine, depressant drugs like cannabis, or hallucinogenic drugs like magic mushrooms. These include agitated and paranoid states, reduced inhibitions, drowsiness, coma, seizures, and death. The risks are usually increased if they are used with alcohol or other drugs.'

Anyone with information regarding the supply of NPS is urged to contact Trading Standards.

## TIMESLINE

### Police appeal for information

POLICE in Lochaber are appealing for information about the following incidents in the area:

A man was seen acting suspiciously near Inverloch Castle during the early evening of January 2. He is described as being of Asian appearance, wearing a dark hat and red coat.

Sometime between 10.30am on January 2 and 11.30am the following day, damage was caused to the paintwork of a Ford Focus car parked in Marine Place, Mallaig.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

### Man killed in River Garry is named

**A MAN** who died after falling into a Lochaber river while canoeing on Hogmanay has been named.

Petrus Janse Van Rensburg, from Buckinghamshire, got into difficulty after falling out of the boat into the River Garry, near Invergarry, at around 12.30pm.

The 36-year-old was pulled downstream and had to be airlifted to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness by the Royal Navy Search and Rescue.

His canoeing partner, an 18-year-old man, managed to guide himself to shore. He was taken by ambulance to Raigmore and was discharged the same day.

### Drunk fined £100 at sheriff court

SHOUTING at police officers after falling asleep drunk at a bus stop has earned a Fort William man a £100 fine.

Stuart Grant, of 7 Mamore Crescent in the town, appeared at Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday and admitted behaving in a threatening and abusive manner.

The 35-year-old had been waiting for the last bus back to town from Kilmallie Road in Caol on the night of September 14 last year but fell asleep until he was woken by police at 12.30am.

Sheriff Richard Davidson gave Grant a £100 fine and said: 'How disappointing it must be for police officers with better things to do to come to your assistance and be abused.'

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## Fort man facing jail term after hospital outburst

PRISON appears the likely destination for a man who caused a disruption in Fort William's Belford Hospital.

Appearing at Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday, Craig Cook of 8 Brown Court in the town admitted shouting and swearing at accident and emergency staff on the night of June 11 last year, after drinking so much he needed medical attention.

The court heard the 24-year-old was behaving aggressively and shouting in front of other patients, including children, and was at the hospital due to 'extreme levels of intoxication'.

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose said the night is a 'blur' to his client but he realises he should not have drank as much as he did.

Sheriff Richard Davidson deferred sentencing until February 2 for background reports, but said he was only doing so because he was 'bound by the law'.

He added: 'Instead of being grateful to the staff who were trying to treat you, you were abusive to them and caused fear and alarm to other patients.'

'Unless I find something exceptional in the report you will be going to prison.'

'I will not tolerate this behaviour.'



**HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES:** Performers at the Fort William Cameron Square Hogmanay street party, organised by Lochaber Pipe Band.



**Ceilidh legend Fergie MacDonald** performed with his family at the Nevis Centre Hogmanay party. From left: Sean MacEachan, John MacDonald, Ciara MacDonald, Morven MacDonald and Fergie MacDonald.



**CELEBRATIONS:** Cara MacLachlan and Cara MacMillan helped make lanterns for the Ballachulish Hogmanay parade.

## Hitting all the right notes for Hogmanay

LOCHABER brought in 2016 in style with street parties, parades and ceilidhs.

As usual, the Nevis Centre in Fort William hosted the biggest Hogmanay party in the area, while a street party was held in Cameron Square.

Ballachulish residents enjoyed a parade through the village with handmade lanterns.



Eleanor Gillon, front centre, from Kinlochleven, celebrated her 100th birthday with her children, from left, Sheena Slater, Eleanor Mellors, Marjorie Brown, Robert Gillon and Christine Ganston, seated.

## Eleanor celebrates 100th birthday

THE DAUGHTER of one of the first families to live in Kinlochleven has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Eleanor Gillon, nee Campbell, became a centenarian on December 23, surrounded by 40 friends and family, including her sister, Jean Logue, five children, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Born in Kinlochleven, Eleanor married James Gillon in 1938 after meeting him while working as a children's nurse in Edinburgh. The pair then moved back to Kinlochleven where she lived and raised her children until 1971. Her parents, Richard and Christine Campbell, were one of the first families to live in Kinlochleven when the village was developed in the early 1900s.

Now living in Corby, Northamptonshire, Eleanor is an active member of St Ninian's Church of Scotland, where she celebrated her birthday with a lunch before travelling in style aboard a pullman coach on the Great Central Railway.

The centenarian's oldest child, Christine Ganson, said: 'We had a wonderful day. It was great that so many family members from all over the country were able to get together to celebrate my mother's birthday. She enjoyed the train ride.'

## Row over dog's taxi fare lands women in jail for three nights

A DOG in a taxi caused its owner to spend three nights in jail.

On New Year's Day Sharon Kenna broke bail conditions for a previous offence by contacting her former partner and leaving abusive messages on her answering machine.

When lodging his client's guilty plea in Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday, defending solicitor Hamish Melrose explained the former couple share the dog and the 46-year-old contacted her

ex-girlfriend because she sent the pet in a taxi to her home address of Conaglen on Fort William's Achintore Road, but had not paid the taxi fare. Fiscal deputy Ross Carvel said one of the messages stated 'you're paying for the taxi you cow'. Kenna was arrested on January 2 and remained in custody until Tuesday (January 5). Sheriff Richard Davidson admonished Kenna saying the three nights in jail was punishment enough.

## Remanded in custody after shouting in Fort courtroom

A WOMAN was remanded in custody on Tuesday after interrupting the sheriff and her solicitor while in the dock of Fort William Sheriff Court.

Margaret Gemmill, known by her middle name, Sandra, didn't arrive in the court until after 2pm on Tuesday, despite being ordered to arrive at 10am, to explain absences from her unpaid work order.

The 35-year-old, of Flat 4, 33 High Street, Fort William, continuously interrupted Sheriff Richard Da-

vidson and her defending solicitor, Clare Russell, shouting 'just listen to me I'll tell you the truth' and 'I had reasons'. When warned by Sheriff Davidson she would face prison if she continued, Gemmill began waving her arms and said: 'Put me in jail, I don't really care. I don't care about going to jail or anything else.'

Gemmill was remanded in custody and could be heard continuing to shout at police officers and security staff outside the courtroom.

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# Miracles do happen

Obanites rally to support family of baby born the size of a bag of sugar

LOUISE GLEN  
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Baby Ashton with his dad, Andy Matthews.

WHEN the community of Oban heard the baby of a popular Oban couple had been born more than three months early, they raised almost £7,000 to help the couple.

Outpourings of support for Ashton, the baby of Jemma Campbell and Andy Matthews have been 'overwhelming' and are allowing the family to spend all the time they need with their newborn, who was born weighing only 2lbs.

Mum Jemma, who works at Atlantis Community Leisure Centre told The Oban Times: 'Ashton is having good days and bad days in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It's what we have been told to expect for the next few months as he came 14 weeks early.

'Consultants have told us to aim for having him back home on his due date of March 21. 'I can't begin to tell you how touched and overwhelmed Andy and I have been to see the community come together in support for our little miracle baby.

'It's taken a huge amount of financial stress off our minds and we can shine our main focus on getting our little boy home now. We were thinking Andy [who works at Oban Electrics] would have to return to work in the New Year but neither of us wanted to be that far apart at a time like this. But maybe now it could be different for the three of us.

'It's just so lovely to see how a small town comes together and supports a family with so much generosity especially around Christmas time.

'I pretty much cried for the few days after I saw that my best friend Ashley [Bichard] had set up the Justgiving page for us.

'I couldn't read all the lovely messages and pledges through my tears. It's a tough time and all we can hope for is for our little boy to come home and start our family life in Oban.

'We really can't thank everyone enough for this support for Ashton. He's a very well thought of boy in the town already.

'Normally I would be embarrassed to receive money for anything from anyone but as a parent now you have to learn to accept

these kind offerings - as it's for your child.' But it wasn't just money that the couple were offered, as Jemma explains: 'A family friend has kindly given us a set of keys to her flat near by, which is an enormous support as I am now being discharged from hospital.'

On the fundraising Justgiving page, Ashley Bichard's said: 'We're raising £7,000 to transport mummy and daddy to visit baby Ashton because he came into the world three months early.

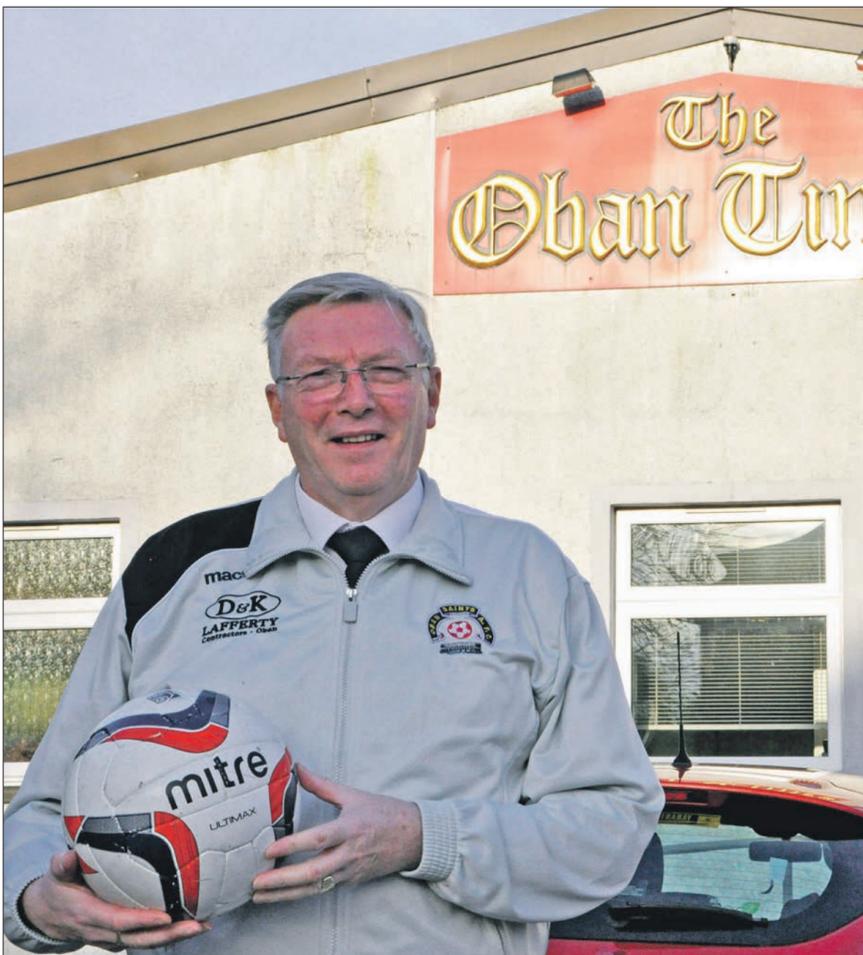
'He is a fighter and doing well in the NICU in the Princess Royal [in Glasgow], but this is far away from home.

'We all wish there was something we could do to help, so we have set up this page to raise funds to take some of the financial pressure from mummy and daddy.

'We all want to help make this time a little easier, just as they would do for us. At this time of year it makes it all the more important to care and look out for one another and make their first Christmas as a family as stress free as it can be in these circumstances.'

Support on the page has come from all over the world, including from many parents who have had similar experiences over the years, travelling to and from city hospitals and the huge burden of cost this can place on families.

## BEM for Oban Times' stalwart



OBAN Saints Football Club secretary David Buchanan has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for voluntary service to football.

Named in The Queen's New Year's Honour's List, Davie, 67, has been involved with the club for nearly 50 years as a player, coach, manager, secretary/treasurer - and he still washes the strips every week after the games.

Davie, who has worked at The Oban Times for 50 years, said: 'I received a letter at the end of November from the Cabinet Office in London asking

if I would accept the award, which I was delighted to do.

'The hardest part was keeping things quiet from my family and friends.

'I am deeply honoured to accept the award not only for myself and family, but for all members, past and present, of Oban Saints Football Club and other sports clubs in the town whose committee members work just as hard as I do to keep their clubs functioning in their particular sports.

'To think my work at the club is appreciated is reward enough, but

to get the BEM is beyond my wildest dreams.

'I would like to thank everyone who phoned and sent messages of congratulations, and to whoever nominated me for the honour.'

Davie was presented with the McDonald's/Sunday Mail Best Volunteer in Adult Football award in 2011.

Making the presentation at a dinner in Hampden Park that evening was former Scotland, Celtic and Liverpool legend Kenny Dalglish, along with former Scotland head coach, now Director of Football at Hearts, Craig Levein. **Turn to page 5.**

## TIMESLINE

### Senior dentist appointed

THE PUBLIC Dental Service, NHS Highland, has successfully recruited a full-time Senior Dental Officer in Special Care to the Oban Dental Centre.

It is hoped the successful candidate will take up their new job in early February.

A spokeswoman for NHS Highland said: 'Work is ongoing to get the independent NHS dental practice established within Oban Dental Centre, however in the meantime, the Public Dental Service will continue to provide care from the Dental Centre in Oban.

'Unfortunately the service remains at a reduced level but we are doing everything to give the best service we can.

'Thank you for your continued patience at this difficult time.'

### Students set for dance showcase

OBAN High School will be hosting its annual dance show next week, with three performances in the Corran Halls.

Dance groups from the school's gymnastics club, Highland Dancing, the Oban High School Pipe Band, Traditional Music Group, School of Dance, Ballet West, sports coaches and school staff will take to the stage for an eclectic showcase of dance.

Shows are on Wednesday January 13 at 7.30pm, and two on Thursday January 14 - one at 12.15pm, and one at 7.30pm.

Tickets will be on sale from Oban High School from Friday, or at the door if still available.



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A' toirt Gàidhlig thugaibh

## Cuiribh ur taic airson an tuilleadh sheilbheachd airson BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal ann an sgrùdadh Urras a' BhBC

Support increased resources for BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal in BBC Trust review

**Tha BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal soirbheachail agus tha sinne aig MG ALBA ag iarraidh gum bi iad nas fheàrr buileach dhuibh.**

San Dàmhair, tron cho-chomhairle mu ùrachadh Cairt Rìoghail a' BhBC, thuir sinn gu bheil sinne ag iarraidh gun tèid 10 uair a thìde de phrògraman ùra a chur gu ruige BBC ALBA gach seachdain leis a' BhBC. Cheadaicheadh seo seirbheis nas coileanta a thabhann airson ar prìomh luchd-amhairc.

Tha Urras a' BhBC a-nis a' dèanamh sgrùdadh air BBC ALBA agus BBC Radio nan Gàidheal. Feumaidh sinn ar n-argamaid a dhèanamh a-rithist agus bhiodh sinn fada nur comainn nam b' urrainn dhuibh ar cuideachadh a-rithist. Tha fios a-nis nach fhaighear an £1m bho Riaghaltas na RA agus tha sin a' dèanamh ar freagairt nas cudromaiche buileach.

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**Faodar ceisteachan Urras a' BhBC a lionadh a-steach aig:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

**No cuiribh ur freagairt ann an sgrìobhadh gu:**

**BBC Trust Nations Review Consultation**

ICM Unlimited, Creston House, 10 Great Pulteney Street, London, W1F 9NB

Tha sgrùdadh Urras a' BhBC a' dùnadh air 17 Faoilleach 2016.

**Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, cuiribh fios thugainn:**

**Fòn:** 01851 705550 **P-dealain:** fios@mgalba.com

**BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal are successful and we at MG ALBA want them to be even better for you.**

In October, during the UK Government's consultation on the BBC's charter, we said we would like the BBC to provide 10 hours of new programming weekly for BBC ALBA, which would help to provide a more comprehensive service for the channel's core audience.

The BBC Trust is now reviewing BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal. We need to make that same case again, and we would once again be grateful for your help. The recent news that MG ALBA will no longer receive £1m from the UK Government makes your response even more important.

Please participate in the BBC Trust review and ensure the desire for a more complete service is expressed, and that more investment is therefore required from the BBC for BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal.

**You can complete the BBC Trust's questionnaire here:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

**Or send your response in writing to:**

**BBC Trust Nations Review Consultation**

ICM Unlimited, Creston House, 10 Great Pulteney Street, London, W1F 9NB

The BBC Trust's review closes on 17 January 2016.

**If you would like more information, please do contact us at:**

**Tel:** 01851 705550 **Email:** fios@mgalba.com

# Argyll nurse who survived landslide 'lucky to be alive'

STEVEN RAE  
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AN ARGYLL woman has said she is 'lucky to be alive' after her car was hit by a landslide and left hanging at the edge of an embankment on the A83.

Jane Else, 50, from Lochgilphead, was travelling along the trunk road at the Rest and Be Thankful at around 7.30am on December 30 when more than 200 tonnes of debris washed down the hillside onto the road.

Jane, a mental health nurse, suffered injuries including a broken breast bone during the terrifying accident, while travelling to Glasgow Airport in her Nissan Micra.

She said: 'Obviously you're not expecting it. One minute the road was clear, the next all this debris was coming towards me.'

'It looked like kerb stones, huge plinths of concrete, rubble - the metal barriers didn't stand a chance.'

'It's only a small car and because of the conditions I was only going around 40 or 45 mph. I tried to swerve to avoid it but there was absolutely no way, it was terrifying.'

'When I saw the car from a different angle it was really quite scary as it was not the barrier stopping the car from sliding down the embankment on the other side, it was a snow pole.'

'If that hadn't been there I would have slid all the way down the embankment and could have been killed.'

Another car was also involved in the landslide. Remarkably, its driver was also not seriously injured.

Mrs Else continued: 'It wasn't



The two cars hit by the landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful.



Jane Else, who suffered a fractured sternum as a result of her car being hit by the landslide.

in the same direction. I came to a stop and it was probably only seconds, but it felt like forever.

'I've got extensive bruising from the seatbelt and a fractured sternum. But I'm very, very lucky to be alive and to have walked away from the car.'

Mrs Else was taken to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley and released on Hogmanay. She is now recovering at home.

The Rest and Be Thankful area is notorious for landslides, with a similar incident occurring on December 5. Then, 1,000 tonnes of debris were caught by specially-designed protection nets.

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said on December 5: 'This recent landslide has shown us that our investment has helped to keep the A83 open, as the netting at the Rest and Be Thankful has been successful in preventing approximately

1,000 tonnes of debris reaching the road, ensuring continuity of access to the region.'

However, Mrs Else said: 'Does someone have to die before something is done at this spot? It's not safe.'

A spokeswoman for Bear Scotland, which maintains the trunk road, said: 'Approximately 200 to 300 tonnes of material washed down the hillside, with two cars caught in the wash-out.'

The road was later reopened after debris was removed from the carriageway and the debris protection fences repaired and reinstated by geotechnical teams.

However, the A83 was again closed overnight on Monday following fears a 150 tonne boulder sitting 175m above the road was at risk of moving. The Old Military Road was also closed, with motorists diverted via Dalmally.

The Old Military Road was reopened on Tuesday morning around 9am as a local diversion route for road users of the A83 and the ground conditions supporting the boulder have been continually monitored by geotechnical specialists.

Efforts by BEAR Scotland to make safe the boulder have been ongoing since first light on Tuesday. A helicopter bringing materials to the site was delayed in reaching the area due to bad weather, but the specialist teams have now begun to install the anchors required to remove the boulder safely.

BEAR Scotland said good progress had been made and preparatory works were expected to be completed on Tuesday ready for safety work to take place on Wednesday morning.

# Business owners call for urgent action over Rest and Be Thankful

POLITICIANS and business owners in Argyll are calling for urgent action to be taken following the recent landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful, with some claiming lives will be lost if nothing is done.

Jane MacLeod, secretary of the Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce, has written to Transport Minister Derek Mackay urging that drastic measures be taken.

The organisation, which represents a group of businesses in the Mid Argyll area, is part of the A83 Taskforce.

The taskforce was set up in August 2012 to oversee improvements on the road, with landslide reductions one of the key issues. It periodically meets to discuss progress on improvements to the trunk road.

She notes in her letter that MSP for Argyll and Bute, Michael Russell, Councillor Dougie Philand and several Argyll business owners have contacted Mr Mackay regarding the two huge landslides which occurred in the space of 25 days in December.

In the letter she said: 'Can I ask that an urgent taskforce meeting be convened as soon as possible to discuss the way forward. We all appreciate that the interests of safety are paramount and, indeed, the recent photographs of a car dangling over the verge brings this acutely home.'

'In the interests of safety, commerce and our population, however, we must meet to decide on measures required to make the route safe and open permanently. Donald Clark refers to the A83 as being our M8. It is now becoming our Forth Road Bridge. The Scottish Government has had to spend money on a bridge which appears to have been poorly maintained in recent years. The same can be said of the A83 but not just in recent years, for very many years.'

Councillor Philand said in his letter to Mr Mackay: 'How long do we in Argyll have to continue to suffer before a permanent solution is established, or even more worryingly, a life is lost?'

'I do hope you will consider the seriousness of this situation and be able to assure the

residents of Argyll that you are committed to providing a permanent solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.'

Conservative MSP for the Highlands and Islands, Jamie McGrigor, said: 'The Old Military Route was deployed and while it is to be welcomed that we have this diversionary route option, it took 26 hours to bring it into use last week and it cannot be seen as an adequate, long-term solution to future landslides, as the closure of both it and the A83 demonstrated so clearly.'

'I am calling on ministers to look again at a flow over canopy option on the most dangerous section of the Rest and Be Thankful.'

'Having visited businesses in Inveraray in the hours after the road was closed I am only too aware of the devastating impact closure has on the whole local economy of Argyll and Bute.'

MSP Michael Russell said: 'I'm very concerned about local people and safety has to come first. Nevertheless, it is very important that local people and visitors continue to see progress with work on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful to guarantee continuous access.'

A Transport Scotland spokeswoman said: 'The recent landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful was the result of extreme conditions, which saw 90mm of rain falling at the Rest and Be Thankful in a 24-hour period. To put this in context, 25mm is the normal heightened alert level.'

'We are working tirelessly with our operating company and geotechnical experts to try to mitigate the effects of these events. More than £48 million has been invested in the A83 since 2007. This includes £9 million towards reducing the risk of impacts from landslides at the Rest and Be Thankful and the establishment of the local diversion route, which helps keep Argyll open for business.'

'As agreed at the last A83 Taskforce meeting, the group will reconvene in the coming weeks when the impact of Storm Frank, the continued work of the group and its next steps will be discussed.'

# 'Grow-your-own' cannabis couple fined

AN OBAN couple who bought a grow-your-own kit online from eBay ended up in Oban Court on Tuesday charged with possession of cannabis.

Police who raided 3a Millpark Terrace, the home of Eion Smith, 40, and his partner Melissa McLaughlin, 25, on November 20, 2015 found three cannabis plants in a tent in the couple's spare bedroom, complete with

lighting, electric fan and ventilation ducts. Both of them admitted producing cannabis, a controlled Class B drug, and McLaughlin also admitted possessing heroin.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty said the plants were in 'a reasonably advanced state of cultivation' and each plant had a potential yield with a street value of £500.

'Police had received intelli-

gence and obtained a search warrant for the premises,' he added.

Both Smith and McLaughlin were open with the police and Smith told them: 'There's heroin under the couch and a bit on a tooter.'

Mr Edward Thornton, defence agent for the couple, said that both had been casual users of cannabis but that McLaughlin

had begun 'for some months to develop a very heavy cannabis habit'.

The decision to buy the growing kit from eBay was to make themselves less vulnerable to dealers.

'How many times have I heard that over the years,' said Sheriff Anderson QC. 'They obviously spent a considerable amount of money setting this up in the spare bedroom.'

Mr Thornton said: 'Both were quite candid that this was for their own personal use.'

Since the time of their arrest McLaughlin had stopped drug use entirely, Mr Thornton added.

Sheriff Anderson fined Smith £600 and McLaughlin £500 for the cannabis production; McLaughlin was admonished for the possession of heroin.

## POLICE FILES with Sergeant Alan Moore

### New Year's Day tragedy

EXTENSIVE enquiries are ongoing after a 35-year-old man was found dead on New Year's Day in Oban.

Police officers were called to an address in the Soroba area of the town at around 5.20am. The death has been described as 'sudden and unexplained'.

### Woman arrested over alleged theft

A WOMAN was arrested after allegedly stealing items including jewellery from an Oban store last week.

Police were called and the 37-year-old was apprehended at around 3.45pm on December 30 at McCaig's Warehouse, after she allegedly stole six bracelets and three keyrings. A report will now be sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Dangerous driving charge

A 28-YEAR-OLD man has been charged with dangerous driving following a two-car collision on the Oban to Lochgilphead road.

The incident occurred at around 5.30pm on December 30, on the A816 near Kilniver.

A 56-year-old woman is currently in hospital in Glasgow after suffering serious injuries in the crash.

A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Reported to Procurator Fiscal

AN OBAN man has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal after allegedly being found in possession of a class-B drug on Hogmanay.

The 27-year-old was detained in the Sinclair Drive area of the town at around 6pm and searched by officers under the Misuse of Drugs Act, where he was alleged to be in possession of herbal cannabis.

### Disorderly conduct charge

A MAN visiting Oban from Glasgow on Hogmanay was arrested in a town hotel for alleged disorder offences.

Police attended after reports of the 50-year-old drunkenly shouting inside the town's Queen's Hotel at around midnight.

He was taken to Oban Police Station and charged with acting in a disorderly manner, and released when sober.

A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Police recorded speeding on A82

A MOTORIST alleged to have been travelling at 90mph in a 60mph zone on the A82 has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Officers from the Divisional Road Policing unit recorded the 50-year-old man's speed near the Bridge of Orchy, at around 10.30am on January 2.

# Council tax rise not on cards, but 'nothing off the table', says council

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PLANS to raise the council tax are not being considered by Argyll and Bute Council, the deputy leader of Argyll and Bute Council has said.

But Ellen Morton also told *The Oban Times* that 'nothing is off the table' as the budget decision deadline draws closer. Mrs Morton said that while difficult decisions lay ahead, an email sent out by former leader James Robb indicating the authority planned to raise the council tax were 'without foundation'.

In an email to *The Oban Times*, Councillor James Robb said: 'Argyll and Bute Council were favourably protected by Finance Secretary, John Swinney in his budget.'

'The savings required, in addition to the council's existing plans, amount to only 0.8 per cent of its total spending.'

'The actual reduction from target of around £2 million is more than offset by the additional funding on offer for the Council Tax freeze at £1.432 million and maintaining the number of teachers £895,000.'

'It seems that Argyll and Bute Council is one of the councils preparing to reject the offers of additional funding from the Scottish Government as part of the LibDem election strategy.'

'The cost of this will of course fall on those least able to deal with it - those just above the Council Tax Benefit threshold, children from poorer families in our education system, and the elderly.'

Councillor Robb believes that options under consideration by the LibDem/Tory/Independent Administration are:

■ Reject the SNP Government's offer of an extra £1.432m (equivalent to a 3.5 per cent Council Tax rise to freeze Council Tax). An increase of 10 per cent would raise a net £2.6m.

■ Reject the SNP Government's offer of an extra £0.895million to maintain teach-



er numbers in 2016-17 and cut teachers to the legal minimum levels to save a net £0.605million minus redundancy costs.

■ Reduce the council's contribution to the new Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership in light of its share of the £250million extra funding provided by the SNP Government to ensure its successful start-up and future sustainability.'

Mrs Morton said that Councillor Robb was not included in the administration's conversations about the budget and therefore his comments were 'completely free from any knowledge of current discussions'.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'The council has been and continues to plan for a reduced funding package from the Scottish Government and in light of last week's announcement we have begun the process of assessing the settlement for Argyll and Bute.'

'As part of this process we are conducting a major budget consultation with our communities.'

'Regarding the council tax, the council will notify the Scottish Government of its decision no later than January 22, in line with other local authorities.'

'Decisions in setting the budget will be made at the council meeting on February 11.'

## Water charges set to rise in Argyll

HOUSEHOLD water charges in Scotland will rise this year, but are still expected to remain among the lowest in Great Britain.

Scottish Water will be increasing its charges by £6 for the average house-

hold which will raise the average charge in 2016/17 to £351.

England and Wales haven't announced their future figures, but their current average household charge is £385.

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ON THE RUN: A 102-strong field made its way up Aonach Mor on New Year's Day, led by Finlay Wild, left.

## Finlay wins Aonach Mor New Year race

MORE than 100 hardy souls pulled on their running shoes for the annual Aonach Mor Uphill Race on New Year's Day in cold but dry conditions.

Finlay Wild of organisers Lochaber Athletic Club (LAC) took first place, finishing the four kilometre Nevis Range route in 21 minutes and 53 seconds. Fellow LAC member Ewan Thorburn was second in 23 minutes and 22 seconds, followed by James Espie of Deeside Runners in 24 minutes and 10 seconds.

It was a double whammy for Deeside as the club's Stephanie Provan was first lady home in 27 minutes and 52 seconds but Lochaber ladies weren't far behind as LAC's Diane Baum finished second in 31 minutes and 48 seconds, followed by Suzy Devey, also of LAC, in 32 minutes and four seconds.

**Registration**

The next club race will be the River Park Spodge at Glen Nevis on Sunday January 10. Registration will be held at the Lower

Falls car park from 10am with the field setting off at 11am.

Top 20 finishers (LAC unless otherwise stated): 1 Finlay Wild 21:53; 2 Ewan Thorburn 23:22; 3 James Espie (Deeside Runners) 24:10; 4 Andrew Barrington 24:29; 5 Peter Henry (Deeside Runners) 24:56; 6 Jon Gay 25:43; 7 Stuart Crutchfield 25:53; 8 Callum Fraser 26:27; 9 Steven Burns 26:32; 10 Manuel Gorman (Westerlands Cross Country Club) 26:35; 11 John Urquhart (Spey Runners) 27:00; 12 Alan

### Athletics

Smith (Deeside Runners) 27:19; 13 Andy Bryce (Hillingdon AC) 27:25; 14 Stephanie Provan (Deeside Runners) 27:52; 15 Stuart Malcolm (Highland Hill Runners) 28:11; 16 Steven Fallon (Carnethy Hill RC) 28:35; 17 Stewart Wilson (Inverness Harriers) 28:41; 18 Gavin MacMillan 28:56; 19 Felix Maddison (unattached) 29:00; 20 Geoff Simpson (Hunters Bog Trotters) 29:04.



WINNER: Finlay Wild storms to the finish line.



CHILLY: Swimmers braved the cold waters of Loch Shiel for the annual New Year's Day dip at Glenfinnan.



## Will you marry me?

ON BENDED KNEE: The New Year's race will forever hold a special place in the hearts of two runners who got engaged at the finish line. Simon Pryde of Tyne Bridge Harriers finished the Aonach Mor run in 29 minutes and 45 seconds but waited patiently at the top for his partner Helen Richardson, also of Tyne Bridge. When she arrived 16 minutes later, Simon went down on one knee to propose and she said 'yes'.

## Fort lose out to Buckie

### Football

Buckie Thistle	6
Fort William	2
Highland League	

IT WAS a poor start to 2016 for Fort William Football Club when they lost 6-2 to Buckie Thistle on Sunday.

The game, the first in three weeks for the Fort, was in doubt following rainfall over Moray but went ahead following a pitch inspection despite what were described as 'appalling' conditions.

Buckie took an early lead with a goal from Kevin Fraser in the 12th minute and continued with impressive football to give themselves a 5-1 lead at half time, with Scott Davidson scoring his first goal for Fort.

The second half was a closely-fought affair with a goal apiece in quick succession, from Iain MacLellan for Fort and Stuart Taylor scoring his second of the day for the home side.

Fort coach Kevin Munro said: 'The first half was a real struggle for us. We were struggling for players, as a lot of teams are for festive games, and we had a really strong wind against us. We ended up 5-1 down at half time which was really disappointing. The second half was much better for us. We scored again and only let in one goal, which we shouldn't have.'

Munro also praised newbies Conor MacPhee, Sean Leider and goal scorer Scott Davidson, for their performances on the day.

He said: 'These young boys are very promising and I look forward to seeing a lot more of them on the pitch.'

The Fort are back at home this Saturday, January 9, when they welcome Keith to Claggan Park. They hope to have a stronger squad, although they will be without captain Darren Quigg.

## New structure for Lochaber Jog Scotland Athletics

A NEW year means a new structure for Lochaber Jog Scotland as organisers hope to help all runners progress.

The athletic group has split into three groups: beginners, intermediate one and intermediate two, although all members will take part in a mix of training including hills, speed work and flat runs.

Beginners will be for new starts and returning joggers and will work towards three miles over the first part of the year, before moving up to six miles.

Runners in intermediate one will have successfully completed the beginners group and will work towards 10 kilometres in an hour.

Intermediate two will be the group for faster paced runners, working towards a two-hour half marathon.

## Cup win for Lovat Shinty

LOVAT defeated Bealy 3-2 to win the Lovat Cup on January 2. Scoring for Lovat were Lewis Tawse, Greg Matheson and Fraser Gallagher. On target for Bealy were Robbie Brindle and David MacLean.

**SPONSORS OF THE OBAN TIMES WEATHER AND TIDES**

**NORTH WEST MARINE**  
DIVING & MARINE SPECIALISTS

7 E Glengallan Road, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HG  
T: 01631 565740 F: 01631 565780 M: 07836 366419  
Em: enquiries@northwestmarine.co.uk Web: www.northwestmarine.co.uk

Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

**WEATHER**

**Thursday** Light rain  
Winds light west south westerly  
Temperatures 1°C to 5°C.

**Friday** Light rain showers  
Winds light south easterly  
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

**Weekend Outlook** Light rain on Saturday  
Cloudy on Sunday  
Winds moderate easterly  
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

**FRIDAY**

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

**TIDAL INFORMATION**  
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday January 7, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	03.55	3.4	09.47	1.6	16.10	3.5	22.31	1.4
Fri	04.36	3.6	10.36	1.4	16.51	3.7	23.07	1.2
Sat	05.15	3.8	11.20	1.2	17.29	3.8	23.43	1.0
Sun	05.52	4.0	12.02	1.0	18.04	3.9	***	**
Mon	00.19	0.9	06.28	4.0	12.43	0.9	18.37	3.9
Tues	00.58	0.8	07.03	4.1	13.24	0.8	19.12	3.9
Wed	01.37	0.7	07.41	4.0	14.06	0.9	19.51	3.8

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

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

**Ferry Crossings/Sea States**

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