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Argyll mourns Hugo after tragedy on Loch Creran oyster farm

A DUNBEG businessman who died following an incident at Loch Creran on Sunday has been described as a 'great husband' by his widow.

Hugo Vajk, 62, who owned the award-winning Caledonian Oyster Co Ltd with his wife Judith, was working when a member of staff found him in the water.

The Frenchman, who moved to the area in 1995 with Judith to set up the farm, was subsequently airlifted

to the Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban, but later died.

Judith said: 'He was a great husband and he was a well respected oyster farmer. He knew his job inside out.'

'He wasn't Scottish, but he loved living up here and he loved spending time with his children. He loved sailing. He was a member of Oban Sailing Club. He raced on a boat called the Hot Toddy with Alison MacNab.'

The circumstances of the incident

are still unclear, but reports have been sent to the procurator fiscal and a post-mortem is to be carried out.

Judith added: 'He was just working at low tide. We are not really sure. He ended up in the water and [a colleague] could not get him out. We are all just shocked about it.'

A Police Scotland spokeswoman said today: 'At 4.40pm [Sunday] police were alerted to a report of a man in the water at Loch Creran,

near Benderloch. A 62-year-old man was airlifted to Oban hospital where he later died. Inquiries are ongoing to establish the circumstances of the incident.'

Oban RNLI, Oban's Coastguard Rescue Team and the Coastguard's Prestwick-based rescue helicopter also attended the incident. Oban lifeboat left her berth by 4.35pm.

As the lifeboat proceeded the UK Coastguard broadcast a mayday relay

to request the assistance of any other vessels also in the area.

The RNLI volunteer crew arrived on scene shortly after 5pm. Mr Vajk was quickly located and was recovered from the water by the lifeboat crew soon after.

The lifeboat then liaised with the rescue helicopter to drop a winchman onboard, who then lifted Mr Vajk on to the helicopter for transfer to hospital.

Public slam 'shambolic' and 'disgraceful' roads

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'SHAMBOLIC' and 'disgraceful' are just two of the words used to describe the road through Connel.

This section of the A85 is littered with potholes and has been referred to as a 'farm track'.

BEAR Scotland, which is responsible for the trunk road, says resurfacing is scheduled to start in February, but it is keen to bring this forward.

In a Facebook post highlighting the issue, Bob Gibson said: 'Connel road is like a farm track. Drivers are all over the road trying to avoid the potholes, dangerous or what.'

Aidan MacDougall said: 'Going through Connel is like off-roading at the moment.'

Neil Munro stated: 'Connel is a shambles cracked windscreen from stones thrown up from passing van.'

Pamela Cumming added: 'We were visiting Taynuilt from Aberdeenshire for a week and couldn't get over the state of the temporary surface at Connel - a disgrace.'

Cars being damaged. Imagine if there were more motorbikes on the road with the potholes filled with water that you don't see until you're in them - that could be serious accident.'

However, this isn't the only area that has been criticised.

Charlie Jack suffered a buckled wheel after hitting a 'six-inch deep' pothole near Barcaldine.

Charlie said: 'The roads are in a poor condition and they are not being sorted. I was driving and I saw what looked like a broken verge, and it was too late to avoid it - there was a really big bang when I hit it. And by the time I got to the road end the tire was flat. I went to the garage and they tried to put air into it, but it was too badly buckled.'

'It does not look bad, but I stopped to take a photograph and it has to be a six-inch drop - it's like a cliff edge at the far end.'

Charlie, who drives a bus for a living, added: 'I have never known the roads the way they are at Connel. That never used to happen - the way they break apart.'

Speaking about the trunk roads, a spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'We're aware of the defects on the A828 near Culcharan and A85 near Connel

Glencruitten Road, and Longdale Terrace, all Oban, as well as Dalavich were also highlighted as problem areas.

Oban Community Council chairwoman Marri Malloy said:

'In the 32 years I've lived in Orchy Gardens there has never been an update [and] the road is a disgrace.'

'Also the bottom of Lonan Drive there's a big hole - enough to drown a large animal. This has been reported for years to the council but nothing has been done. If your car went into this hole, it would cause serious damage. Time something was done about the roads in Oban.'

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'We carried out repairs to Argyll Square and other areas around Oban last week. Areas across the network which have deteriorated will be repaired as soon as possible as part of our ongoing maintenance programme.'

Speaking about the trunk roads, a spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'We're aware of the defects on the A828 near Culcharan and A85 near Connel

and have been monitoring various sections on the routes, with teams working to carry out temporary repairs to the locations. We will be working to permanently repair any defects as quickly as possible.'

'Resurfacing is programmed in February near Connel. However, we will try to bring this forward. In order to complete these resurfacing works safely, we will require a road closure.'

'We'll need to consult with stakeholders and residents before doing so, and in the meantime we'll keep monitoring the route. Where required we will install signs to alert and slow down motorists until these permanent repairs are completed.'

'We also constantly review our programmes of larger planned maintenance works so that, where possible, and subject to budget, resurfacing projects may be brought forward to target areas showing significant deterioration.'

Members of the public can report problems on trunk roads through Transport Scotland on 0800 028 1414, which will then pass the issue on to the appropriate contractor.

Life's a beach for happy couple



Fiona and Tam married in Hope Kitchen. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

TWO Oban volunteers tied the knot on Friday after meeting on a beach clean last year.

Fiona Campbell-Smith and Thomas Ferris were joined by friends and family in Hope Kitchen, where the couple married.

Fiona and 'Tam' met last April while taking part in the charity's monthly tidy-up.

Speaking about the ceremony, Hope's manager, Lorraine MacCormick, said: 'It has been absolutely beautiful. It's the nicest wedding I have ever been to. The atmosphere was brilliant. I am blown away at how nice it was. They were two lost souls until they met each other.'

Fiona spotted Tam and asked him to accompany her to her daughter's wedding.

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

Fiona wore the same dress to her wedding as she did on their first date as 'Thomas took a step back when he first saw it'.

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237 people oppose home demolition

A PLANNING application to demolish a house in Taynuilt has received more than 235 public objections.

The Josephine Marshall Trust submitted an application to knock down Barr Bheag in Glen Lonan, near Taynuilt, in November of last year.

However, in the past week, Nick Charlton, who has been a Barr Bheag tenant for 13 years, and his partner Claire De Mortimer, have created a website asking for support. They say that if this action goes ahead, they will lose their home and business premises, as Nick runs The Rusty Cycle Shed - a bike hire and repair shop - from an

adjacent tin hut. So far 237 people have publicly backed the pair and objected to the demolition.

'If the house is demolished, we will lose the business as well,' Nick and Claire said. 'We will have to move out and start from scratch.'

'It's a [business] lease that's dependent on the tenancy of the house.'

'What we are trying to do is get objections to the demolition because the case for refusing is not particularly strong.'

'But the support has been great. People have been really supportive on a one-to-one level.'

Claire is also concerned about losing her vegetable garden: 'You

have to put work in - it's not easy. I have spent a lot of time doing this, [the landlord] is not getting my soil.'

Speaking about the impact this has had on their lives, the couple said: 'It warps everything. It's extremely stressful. It's like a full-time job. We have to generate our own work, so it comes out of time we would spend working.'

They added: 'The support has been great and Argyll and Bute's planning department has been really helpful and supportive.'

People have said: 'I object to the application on the following grounds: Barr Bheag does not need to be demolished. The demolition has been proposed

by the applicant to avoid compliance with the Court Repairing Order and to evict tenants from their home and business. The council should not give sanction to a demolition which flouts the court order. Any decision must protect the tenant's human right to his home.'

A spokesperson for the Josephine Marshall Trust said: 'The situation is a very unhappy and unfortunate family one. We can't comment at the moment as everything is so sensitive.'

Claire and Nick said the planning department has extended the application's expiry date due to 'the complexity, high volume of complaints and the holidays.'

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Ulva buy-out wins vote support

MARTIN LAING
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A VOTE on the possible buy-out of Ulva has been backed by the community.

The announcement of the result of a postal ballot among voters in north-west Mull showed a total of 63.6 per cent of eligible ballots were received by the deadline of noon on Monday January 8, of which 63.9 per cent were in favour.

The ballot was ordered by the Scottish Government and organised by Electoral Reform Services.

On the basis of the result and the business plan submitted by North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWM-CWC), the Cabinet Secretary for Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham, will now decide whether to trigger the right to buy.

This would give NWM-CWC a green light to put together a funding package to complete the purchase in June.

John Addy, a director of NWM-CWC, said: 'It is self-evident to anyone just walking on Ulva that the existing housing stock and other buildings, including

the historic Telford church, are in a poor state of repair.'

'Also, the present tenants have no security of tenure as their leases expired in November last year and the lease on the Boathouse restaurant expires in June 2018.'

'A new owner would be free to make his or her own decisions on what happens to the island, who and how many people can live there, and whether or not to encourage visitors or even whether to continue to allow operation of the ferry and access to the pier by fishermen.'

'Community ownership, however, will bring certainty that repopulation of the island and its social and economic development for the common good will always be the top priorities.'

'This goes to the heart of the land reform process which is about who makes the decisions and has control over the destiny of communities - landlords or the communities themselves. We strongly believe it should be the latter.'

NWM-CWC said a study carried out by independent consultants concluded that a community buy-out of the Isle of Ulva is feasible and represents a



A postal ballot has shown backing for the community buy-out of Ulva.

unique opportunity to increase Ulva's population and enhance the sustainable development of the island, Ulva Ferry and north-west Mull as a whole'.

An independent valuation ordered by the Scottish Government set the price at £4.2 million. This will now need to be raised by NWM-CWC over the next five months and it is

hoped the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) will be able to contribute the major part. SLF funding is normally capped at £1 million and 95 per cent of the total, though ministers have the power to exceed this.

NWM-CWC said it plans to raise significantly more than the minimum five per cent contribution from sources other than

SLF and discussions are already in hand with a number of potential partner organisations with a view to raising the capital and to provide development funding.

Last week, Ulva's current owners criticised the 'biased and ill-informed' ballot and said they sought to give 'correct and accurate facts' before the vote. The Howard family also

claimed Mull islanders had expressed concern at the ability of NWM-CWC to properly manage the 12km-long island, which is home to six residents.

On January 3, the Howard family stated on the Isle of Ulva website that 'voters should be aware that much of this information provided with the ballot papers is extremely biased and ill-informed.'

'It is only fair that those with a vote are given the correct and accurate facts and figures before making their final decision.'

'We only want the best for Ulva and its future.'

'Jamie Howard recently met Mull councillor Mary-Jean Devon to discuss with her the number of people on Mull, in particular north Mull, who had approached him to express their concern at the ability of NWM-CWC Ltd to properly manage Ulva should they be successful in their buy-out bid.'

'It was felt that they would struggle to find suitable funding both for the purchase and development of the island, running into many millions of pounds. Mary-Jean Devon has passed on these concerns to Mike Russell MSP.'

Windfall for Islay Gaelic Centre

A GAELIC education and cultural heritage centre has been awarded £97,000 funding from the Gaelic Capital Fund.

Funding will enable the Islay Gaelic Centre to upgrade its early years and youth room, create new ancestry and heritage areas in the centre, and make improvements to its facilities, including the installation of a new energy-saving heating system.

The investment will also fund new digital learning technology, with Gaelic-enabled software and apps, to benefit Islay-based students of all ages and distance-learning students throughout Argyll and the University of the Highlands and Islands network.

Deputy First Minister and Education Secretary John Swinney said: 'We are committed to growing a new generation of users of the Gaelic language. Increasing access to Gaelic-medium education, from early years onwards, is key to achieving that ambition.'

'I am pleased to announce this funding, which will allow this successful and popular community hub to continue to flourish. It will bring educational and economic benefits to the area and help the centre to meet the demand for Gaelic language and cultural education in Argyll and Bute.'

The centre, which opened in 2002, is a place for people of all ages from the Islay community and beyond to engage with Gaelic language, heritage and culture through classes, courses, activities and exhibitions.

Islay Gaelic Centre chairwoman Cathie Johnston added: 'On behalf of Islay Gaelic Centre, I wish to express my gratitude for this most welcome award. It will make a huge difference to our centre to have such a major upgrade in our facilities and in our ability to deliver Gaelic courses to people of all ages throughout Argyll.'

The Islay Gaelic Centre, Iona Chalum Chille Ille, is a registered Scottish charity and a not-for-profit social enterprise with no shareholders and all surplus funds are reinvested in the charity.



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Islay cheers for Faslane sailors and marines

SAILORS and marines from the naval base at Faslane have travelled to the Island of Islay to collect their very own branded whisky.

The private collection of 10-year-old bourbon cask-matured Bruichladdich single malt whisky was bought as a leaving gift to 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines by previous Commanding Officer, Colonel Paul Denning OBE. He left the unit in 2007 and, 10 years on, the dram has now matured, ready for bottling.

The 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group will enjoy the whisky at a reunion of those who formerly served in the unit. Colonel Denning, along with some of his colleagues from 2007, will be welcomed back to 43 Commando for a formal dinner, which will be hosted at Faslane in April 2018.

The Comacchio Dinner will commemorate the battle of Lake Comacchio during the Second World War, when Corporal Thomas Peck Hunter VC, serving in 'C' Troop of 43 Commando, won his posthumous Victoria Cross.

The unique leaving present was distilled, matured and bottled at the Bruichladdich distillery near Port Charlotte on Islay. Bruichladdich is proud of its traditions and history, continuing to use most of their original machinery dating back to 1881.

43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines is a 440-strong specialist nuclear security unit based at HM Naval Base Clyde in Scotland.

Its primary mission is to prevent unauthorised access to the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent



Lieutenant Quinn and Major Lawley inspect the 43 Commando whisky, inset.

through the provision of specialist military capability within a complex urban, maritime, industrial environment around the Clyde and throughout the UK.

The unit is made up of two groups (O and R Squadrons) plus logistics and command squadrons.

They work within a multi-agency environment

primarily supporting the Ministry of Defence police. 43 Commando is part of 3 Commando Brigade, the UK's high readiness expeditionary amphibious force.

Tiree man is fined and banned from the road for 12 months

AN ESTRANGED member of a Tiree man's family telephoned the police and told them he was over the drink-drive limit and behind the wheel, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Wednesday.

As a result, officers traced Allan MacCallum, 46, of 5 Club Farm, Balmartine, and stopped him on the B8065 near Bough on August 16 last year.

An initial breath test proved positive and a blood sample later showed a level of 149 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, when the legal limit in Scotland is 50.

His defence agent said that MacCallum fully accepted his guilt. He worked as a joiner and also was employed in agriculture and had recently bought a tractor but would now have to put agricultural work on hold as the ban would have an impact upon him.

On the day in question, he had met up with a friend 'for a dram and a chat'.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes fined him £400 and banned him from driving for 12 months but this ban can be reduced by three months if MacCallum completes a driver rehabilitation course successfully.

Hugh Smith's letter from Islay

Welcoming the new year with fireworks

ALL were delighted that Storm Dylan had become a spent force when Bowmore welcomed 2018 with an impressive fireworks display at the village harbour.

The large number of well-wishers in party mood enjoyed a festive display of pyrotechnics providing illuminations above Lochindaal in what is now an annual event financed by a generous group of civic-minded and public-spirited local business people.

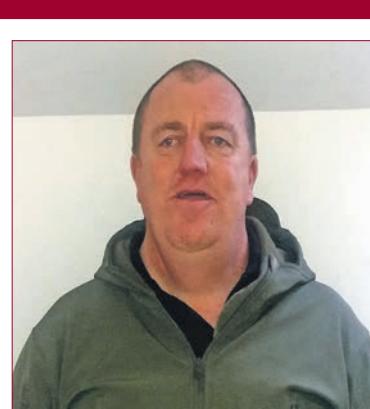
At the stroke of midnight, the bells of the floodlit Round Church heralded the arrival of the new year and piper Linsey MacArthur, accompanied by her drum-playing sister Rona, provided the ne'erday music prior to 'rockets galore' streaking through the night sky.

Following the display, the revellers headed for the village hall where seasonal entertainment and a measure or two of the island's most famous product ensured further celebrations went on into the wee sma' hours.

The Bowmore fireworks display is also a charity event and those who benefited from the spectators' generosity were the Islay Hospital and the Fire Brigade Benevolent Fund.

The island was particularly busy during the ne'erday holiday period although the almost deserted village streets over the two-day holiday would suggest otherwise.

Nevertheless, a large number of visitors arrived on the island in the hope of enjoying the traditional



David MacArthur, Islay gathering chairman.



The fireworks explode over Bowmore harbour.

David will be accompanied by his wife Fiona, whom he married last year, at An Comunn Ileach's 156th annual get-together.

Concert bill toppers will be local vocalist Alasdair Currie, winner of the men's gold medal at the Royal National Lochaber Mòd last year, and Robert Robertson, who enjoyed similar gold success at the Royal National Mòd in Paisley in 2013.

Robert also fronts the popular group Tide Lines, and was acclaimed as the Gaelic Singer of the Year at the 2017 Scots Trad Music Awards last month. And he still finds time to pen the Glasgow Letter in this newspaper.

Sharing the platform with the gold medallists will be Connell singer, musician and composer Clare Jordan, and Lochaber accordionist Martin Skene, who is also a cellist and pianist of no mean ability.

Amply filling the students' union stage and raising the roof in the process will be the Kilchoman Dis-

tillery-sponsored Islay Pipe Band, with their Pipe Major Nigel Morris at the helm.

Kirsteen Grant will provide the piano accompaniments and the programme will also feature the association's Pipe Major Andrew McCowan Jnr.

In charge of the proceedings will be the group's new president, Katherine McNaughton, suffering a little from wedding fever as she prepares for her June nuptials, and she will be assisted and encouraged by the bright-eyed and bushy-tailed additions to the gathering organising committee.

And, while all this is going on, Trail West will be preparing to entertain the young at heart and fleet of foot heading to the ensuing gathering in the same venue.

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IT HAS just been announced that one of island's best known personalities will be the guest chairman at the Glasgow Islay Association 2018 annual gathering.

Lifeboat mechanic David MacArthur will preside at the event, which takes place in the Glasgow University Students' Union on Friday March 2, beginning at 7.30pm.

The popular Ileach has been the mechanic on the Port Askaig lifeboat Helmut Schroder II of Dunrossit for the past 12 years and has been part of the volunteer crew since 1969.

Duo jailed after stealing from vulnerable pensioner

A MAN and woman from Oban were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment each for breaking into the home of a vulnerable pensioner who had been given only months to live.

'I see no reason in differentiating between you,' said Sheriff Patrick Hughes when he jailed Sharon Isobell MacAllister, of 4b Sinclair Drive, and Russell MacLennan, of 18a Dalintart Drive, on Friday.

Both had admitted breaking into the flat then occupied by the victim, now deceased, at 2 Sinclair Drive, and stealing a cash box containing £180, two wallets, a bank card and a Tesco clubcard. This happened on August 31 or September 1, 2016.

Thirty-year-old MacAllister, a neighbour who had volunteered to shop for the man on occasions, sobbed as she was led from the dock. She and MacLennan, an Afghan war veteran, had each told the police that the other had entered the pensioner's flat while they kept watch outside.

'Housebreaking is one of

the most serious offences this court can deal with. People are entitled to feel safe within their homes,' said Sheriff Hughes. 'This vulnerable man had four months left to live,' he added, saying that for those last four months he did not feel safe.

Sheriff Hughes said he had listened carefully to the good and thorough social work reports and submissions from the defence agents for both of the accused, but in this case there was no alternative but custody.

Procurator fiscal deputy Emma Thomson told the court that the 79-year-old, who suffered from dementia, had carers who visited daily. He kept a small black-coloured cash box with money to pay for day-to-day living expenses, which was kept in the same place in his flat. On August 31, a carer reported this being in its usual place.

When interviewed, MacAllister told police: 'Basically, I was the eyes and ears and Russell climbed in the window because I was too short. He climbed in the window and got whatever he got.'

When interviewed by police, MacLennan admitted he was involved but did not go in because he didn't know where the box had been. He had no previous contact with the complainant.'

The procurator fiscal deputy said: 'The cash was spent quickly on controlled drugs and the other items discarded in a nearby bin.'

MacAllister's defence agent, Edward Thornton, said: 'To her credit, the social work report shows she [MacAllister] accepts full responsibility and has shown substantial remorse. She is disgusted and humiliated by her actions.'

'She knew [the man] and when she came to her senses she felt what she had done was despicable. She was a good neighbour to him in the past, she had volunteered to do shopping for him. She accepts she betrayed the trust put in her.'

He added that her actions 'can only be put down to a relapse'. MacAllister had been using Valium and heroin.

Since September 2016, she had taken steps to deal with her addiction issues and taken professional help. MacAllister was on a methadone clinical reduction programme.

In MacLennan's defence, Mr Wright said the 29-year-old ex-serviceman had received treatment and medication for what had happened during his time in Afghanistan but that he had descended a 'spiral staircase' into addiction.

'Prior to joining the army, he got into trouble fairly regularly. Joining the army can be the making of a man but it can also damage a man. His social report mentions what happened to him while in Afghanistan. He went from prescription drugs and found himself in the company of people he would not want to be with.'

He added that MacLennan had since turned his life around, had a good job and had begun to help with youth work and anti-drug counselling. 'He has shown absolute remorse. He is in steady employment and deeply regrets his actions. His report said he was at low-risk of re-offending.'

But Sheriff Hughes said there was no alternative but custody.

Connel bridge to close for maintenance

CONNEL bridge is to close for essential maintenance. Work to improve lighting and traffic signals will be carried out on the A828 bridge later this month.

The repairs are scheduled to start on Sunday January 21 from midnight until 6am for five nights.

To ensure the safety of road workers and road users, the bridge will be closed each night to all traffic and pedestrians. The bridge will be open as normal outwith these working hours.

Traffic will be diverted northbound at Connel via the A85 and A82 and southbound at Ballachulish via the A82 and A85. Emergency services will be able to pass through the works at all times. Local access will also be maintained across the bridge at approximately hourly intervals, starting from 1am.

Real time journey information is available from Traffic Scotland on www.trafficscotland.org, [@trafficscotland](https://twitter.com/trafficscotland) or on the new Traffic Scotland mobile site m.trafficscotland.org.



Connel bridge will close over five nights from this month.

Sentence is deferred for sexual assault

A 20-YEAR-OLD Romanian man had difficulty appreciating different social and cultural attitudes between Scotland and his home country, Oban Sheriff Court heard last week.

Marcell Grigoreanu, now living at London Road, Glasgow, but who previously lived in the Barcaldine area, had sentence deferred until January 30 for an incident on November 12 last year, when he sexually assaulted a 15-year-old girl on Station Road in Oban by touching her on the body and seizing hold of her clothing.

His defence agent said the incident had arisen 'regarding the cultural differences' between the two countries, in the norms of conduct between males and young females.

'He particularly had difficulty in trying to accept this, particularly the sexual element of what happened,' the agent said.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes had deferred sentence previously for a report on Grigoreanu to see if he was a suitable case for a community payback order.

Grigoreanu's employer had written to the court saying he was willing to give him a job again and Sheriff Hughes was told that, as Grigoreanu would be working seven days a week, it could prove difficult for him to undertake a payback order of unpaid work in the community, but he would be able to pay a financial penalty.

Sheriff Hughes deferred sentence again for four weeks for Grigoreanu to resume work, but with the condition that he did not enter Oban.

'This is an extremely serious matter. I cannot suggest to you enough the seriousness,' said the sheriff.

Driver crashed car into fence

THE owner of a cottage in Taynuilt heard a loud noise, an engine revving and went outside to find a car in their hedge and fencing knocked over.

The car was driven by Richard Reid, 43, of Falconer Rise, Livingston, who also lives at Dalavich, who admitted drink-driving on December 16 last year on the B845.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes heard on Wednesday that the householder contacted police and, when officers arrived at the scene, they breathalysed Reid. The reading was 86 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath, when the limit is 22 in Scotland.

In Reid's defence, the court was told that he had attended a wedding in Oban and made arrangements for a lift to Taynuilt where he was to stay the night. 'He made the inexplicable decision to get into this car,' said his defence agent.

Reid apologised to the householder for the damage caused, had come to an agreement to repair the damage and had pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity.

He was fined £400 and disqualified for 12 months with a reduction to a nine-month ban if he successfully completed a driver rehabilitation course.

Care home has improvement notice lifted

A BENDERLOCH care home that was issued with an improvement notice has met all of the requirements and had an enforcement lifted.

The Lynn of Lorne Care Home was given a formal warning by the Care Inspectorate in September 2017.

The report said baths and showers were 'rarely used' in the home, which houses 62 elderly people, adding: 'This meant that residents could not get a shower or bath when they wanted or indeed needed one.'

'This leaves residents more susceptible to skin problems and infections, and does not promote the dignity of the residents.'

However, after inspecting the facility again in December, the Care Inspectorate accepted 'that a significant improvement has been made' in all areas.

The list of six areas which required 'urgent' improvement, included an acceptable standard of hygiene and personal appearance; staff knowledge and how to treat pressure ulcers; and ensuring there is a record of the level of assistance required by each service user to allow them to move safely, together with a record of any specialist equipment that may be required.

It was subsequently given until November 30, 2017, to improve its services.

A spokesperson for the Care Inspectorate said: 'We recently inspected this service to check on progress



Councillors Julie McKenzie and Roddy McCuish had voiced concern over standards at the care home. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

made in the areas outlined in the improvement notice.

'Inspectors found evidence that progress had been made and that the quality of care provided to residents had improved.'

'As a result, we found that the requirements of the improvement notice had been met. However, we are not complacent and will continue to work closely with this care home to deliver the planned improvements.'

'Anyone with a concern about a care service can contact us on 0345

600 9527. During our visit to Lynn of Lorne Care Home on December 4 and 6 we could see that there was a significant improvement in people's appearance,' the Care Inspectorate said in a letter to McKenzie Care.

'We saw that there was a clear and focused improvement plan in place which involved full consultation and collaboration with the staff team to deliver the planned improvements.'

'We could see that there were systems in place to monitor and manage service users' nutritional needs.'

'We could see that there had been a reduction in the number of falls within the home and observation of lounges had improved. New specialised equipment had been purchased for each person who required assistance to mobilise safely.'

Councillor for Oban North and Lorn, Julie McKenzie, said: 'It's testament to the hard-working staff that all the improvements have been met.'

'I am delighted for the residents and their families. Hopefully, this provides some reassurance for them.'

Gaelic available all over Argyll and Isles

ARGYLL and Bute Council offers Gaelic-medium education at seven of its primary schools.

Those who attend are taught entirely through Gaelic during their first three years of school. This immersion in the language means that children do not have to be fluent in Gaelic when they begin.

After primary three, English is gradually introduced but Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom until the end of primary school and beyond, enabling them to become bilingual.

Councillor Robin Currie said: 'The curriculum is full of Gaelic songs, stories, rhymes and drama-based activities. It provides children with a fun way of learning the language. The majority of families who choose Gaelic-medium education don't speak Gaelic at home but that doesn't necessarily a barrier to learning as there's lot of support for parents, carers and children within the Gaelic community.'

'Some families choose not to learn Gaelic for use at home but want to provide their children with a high quality education in Gaelic. There has been rigorous research undertaken to ensure that the attainment of those children educated through Gaelic is appropriate.'

Gaelic-medium education is available in the following locations across Argyll and Bute: Rockfield Primary School in Oban; Strath of Appin Primary School in Appin; Salen Primary School on Mull; Bunessan Primary School on Mull; Tiree Primary School; Bowmore Primary

School on Islay; and Sandbank Primary School in Dunoon.

Where available, pupils receive Gaelic-medium education at secondary level for, at least, Gaelic as a subject.

Several locations providing Gaelic-medium education in primary also have a Gaelic pre-fives facility, known as Sgoil Áraich: Rockfield, Salen, Bowmore, Tiree and Sandbank.

If you would like your child to be educated through Gaelic and there is no provision near you, it is possible to make a request for Gaelic-medium education to the council.

Children who turn five between March 1, 2018, and February 28, 2019, should be registered for primary school during the week beginning Monday January 15, 2018. This includes those wishing to be registered at a Gaelic-medium unit.

Parents should take their children to their local primary school to register during that week, between 10am and 3pm. If your child is not already receiving pre-school education in Argyll and Bute, you need to bring their birth certificate with you when you register.

Further information, including how to make a placing request and how to request early entry to primary school, can be found by logging on to <https://www.arygyl-bute.gov.uk/primary-school-registration-2018>.

More information on provision and the request process is available on the website, following the link <https://www.arygyl-bute.gov.uk/gaelic/requests-gaelic-medium-education>.

Delays expected on the A83

MOTORISTS using the A83 through Succoth are being warned to expect disruption as £60,000 worth of resurfacing works are carried out this month.

Works to a section of the A83 almost 400m long will begin on Monday January 22 and are expected to be completed over five days, between 7am and 7pm each day.

Dad dies after quad accident

A FATHER-OF-TWO died near Oban on New Year's day following a quad bike accident.

Paul Thomson, 42, was found lying underneath his bike shortly before 9pm at Lerags, near Oban.

Police Scotland confirmed the news, with a spokesperson

saying that there was a road crash at Lerags at 8.40pm and a report into the circumstances has been sent to the procurator fiscal.

Paul was the owner of Langaneil Highland Lodges, which he purchased in 2015 along with his wife Lauren.

Star Wars could feature Argyll

SCENES from the upcoming Star Wars film could be shot in Argyll, with the Rest and Be Thankful selected as a possible filming location.

Production of the movie, which is set to be a first in a new trilogy, is scheduled to start in June.

A source told the *Sunday Mail*: 'As is now customary with any Star Wars production, the movie is shrouded in secrecy but they want to shoot scenes around the Rest and Be Thankful. Further filming has been pencilled in for elsewhere in the country.'

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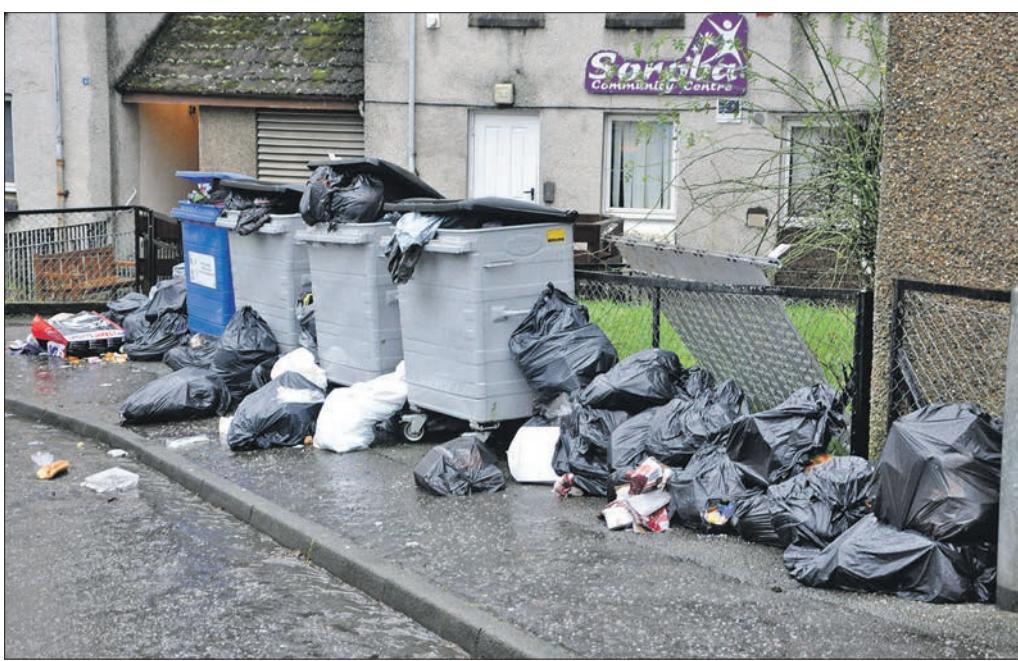
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Rancid rubbish spills from dozens of bins in Colonsay Terrace, left, and Scalpay Terrace, right, just after new year.

Bin collections are a 'disgrace'

**SANDY NEIL
and DAVID MCPHEE**
editor@obantimes.co.uk

SOROBIA'S rubbish bins were overflowing onto the streets again after the Christmas and New Year festivities, a week before they were due to be emptied by Argyll and Bute Council.

The local authority arranged an additional uplift on Thursday to clear the bulging bins and piles of black bags, some

of which were spilling rubbish onto the streets.

A spokesperson said: 'We appreciate the co-operation of residents and encourage those who use communal bins to make use of all the bins in their area, where possible.'

'Space is often available in bins that are not the nearest to their property and we are working with our partners at ACHA to provide more recycling facilities.'

Elsewhere in Oban, a resi-

dent of Stalair Crescent in Glencruitten was forced to store bin bags in his kitchen for fear of attracting vermin to the overflowing bins outside, after council lorries failed to show up on Tuesday as expected.

'This is not the first time this has happened,' he said. 'It is a disgrace. I do not know how people are getting away with this. I am paying council tax.'

And a 70-year-old resident of Lynn Gardens, Millpark, also criticised the lack of uplifts.

'They said they will pick them up on the next collection. They are not coming until January 17 - they were last taken on December 20.'

'They are all filled with Christmas paper. What are we supposed to do?'

'Apparently, one of the bin lorries broke down. Have they not heard of private collections?'

'What happens if the wind picks up and [the bins] empty all over the place? This area

will be covered in it. We have warned them and warned them and they are ignoring us. It's been a farce since day one.'

Oban North and Lorn councillor Julie McKenzie said on her social media page: 'Due to lorry breakdowns over the festive period the uplift schedules are now 11 days behind. Because of this backlog, the decision was taken by local staff - correctly, I feel - to focus on the green bins being uplifted.'

'Rotting waste must be given priority, and due to the backlog there is neither resources nor manpower available to do blue and green bins. This means that you should take your blue bin in again as it will not be uplifted until its next collection date.'

Councillor McKenzie attached an image, which advised people to leave any excess recycling in bin bags and this will also be uplifted on the next collection date.

Oban brickie knocked man off his bar stool

A DRUNKEN 30-year-old bricklayer accidentally knocked a man off a bar stool while attempting to punch another, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Wednesday.

In the dock was Kris Donald Gillies, of 9b Tweedale Street, Oban, who admitted assault by attempting to punch a man on the head and also behaving in a threatening or abusive manner by repeatedly shouting and acting in an aggressive manner.

Depute fiscal Jenny Sopiano said the incident happened on January 22 last year at a licensed premises in Oban.

'Up until then the atmosphere there had been pleasant,' she said, but Gillies had begun to argue noisily with another man and this escalated to the point where other customers had to hold him back.

Gillies then went to throw a punch and in doing so failed to connect with his intended target and accidentally knocked

against another man, who fell from his bar stool. This man banged his head on the floor and, to his credit, Gillies immediately stopped what he was doing, helped him to his feet and apologised.

'Mr Gillies expressed his considerable regret that this man suffered as a result of his actions and is extremely remorseful. He helped him to his feet and apologised,' said Gillies's defence agent. 'His actions that night were caused by a problematic use of alcohol.'

Since then Gillies had cut back on drinking and no longer went out to bars, the court was told.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes imposed a community payback order of 12 months supervision, with Gillies to undertake any alcohol treatment deemed necessary, along with 120 hours of unpaid work to be completed within nine months.



Oban Rotary Club handing their second defibrillator to Oban Hospice's new Dove Centre in Stevenson Street. Right, Rotary Club president Tommy McQuade beside senior vice-president Iain MacIntyre, and the newly installed defibrillator at Ganavan Sands.

The gift of life from Oban Rotary Club

A NEW defibrillator has been donated to the town by the Rotary Club of Oban, following an approach from Ganavan Sands Parkrun, who organise a weekly 5km jog starting at Ganavan Sands at 9.30am on a Saturday.

To access the facility, a 999 telephone call will provide the code for opening the box, and Oban Rotary along with Ganavan Sands Parkrun, intends to advertise the availability of the facility for locals and visitors.

The defibrillator and a dedication plaque were installed free of charge by Oban Electrical Services and CGL (Oban).

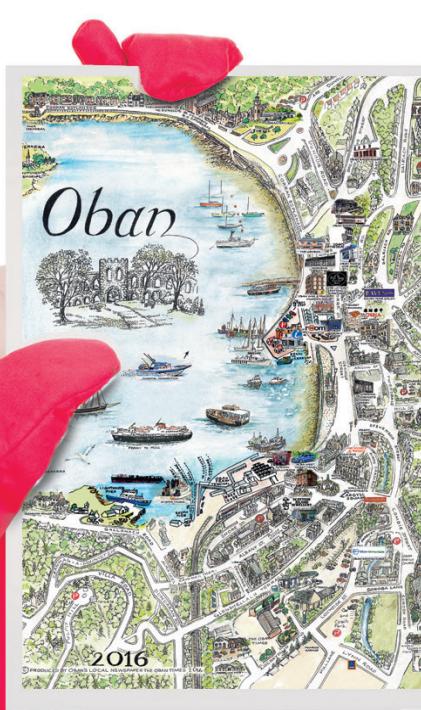
Running alongside this donation, to mark the opening of the Dove Centre in Stevenson Street

by Oban Hospice, Oban Rotary gifted the centre a defibrillator. Oban Rotary, which earlier contributed to funding for a therapeutic chair at the hospice, said it was 'pleased to be associated with this worthwhile initiative'.

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TIMELINE

Register children for primary school

CHILDREN who turn five between March 1, 2018, and February 28, 2019, should be registered for primary school during the week beginning Monday January 15, 2018.

Parents should take their children to their local primary school to register during that week, between 10am and 3pm. If your child is not already receiving pre-school education in Argyll and Bute, you need to bring their birth certificate when you register.

Further information, including how to make a placing request and how to request early entry to primary school, can be found by logging on to <https://www.argoargyll-bute.gov.uk/primary-school-registration-2018>.

Alternatively, you can contact the education department on 01369 704000 or by writing to Community Services, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ.

Art society to hold annual meeting

OBAN Art Society's AGM will be held tomorrow (Friday January 12) at the Adult Learning Centre in Soroba Road at 7pm.

Music society to stage next concert

OBAN Music Society will host a concert on Sunday January 14 at 3pm in St John's Cathedral on George Street, when Shuna Scott Sendall (soprano), Phil Gault (baritone) and Claire Haslin (piano) will present a recital including works by Mozart, Dvorak, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Thea Musgrave and George Gershwin.

Woman held for alleged theft

ON SATURDAY January 6 a woman aged 21 was reported to the procurator fiscal for allegedly stealing from Tesco in Oban.

Man arrested after road accident

On Tuesday January 2, on George Street in Oban, a 35-year-old man was arrested for being under influence and driving. He appeared at Oban Sheriff Court charged with careless driving, driving under the influence through drink or drugs, failing to provide a specimen of blood for analysis and resisting arrest.

Oban's Betty is a record breaker at 105



Betty celebrates with a sherry and card from the Queen.

essence the shepherdess and the cow girl.

Betty recalls their social life consisted mainly of visits to and from neighbours who, with no internet, TV or radio, talked, sang and told ghost stories.

Betty has lived in Oban for much of her life but has spent time living in both Myanmar and Nigeria. Her three children, Doreen, James and Claire, were all educated at Oban High School before leaving for university.

Betty celebrated her 105th birthday with the staff and residents at the North Argyll House along with her daughter (Claire Black), grandson (Rory Black) and great-grandchildren (Nancy and Ewan Black).

The latter saw groups of beginners and intermediates get together last weekend to look at how to create new learning and speaking opportunities for the year ahead.

This week the Rockfield Centre is delighted to support West Highland Housing and Lorn and Oban Healthy Options to host the first meeting of the Friendship Club giving people the opportunity to socialise in the community hut with board games, a 'cuppa' and a scone. The first meeting will be in hut two tomorrow (Friday January 12), between 2pm and 4pm, then fortnightly.

Work also continues to finalise plans for the Railway 'blether' session and the heritage project 'Journeys to the little bay' festival weekend in February. See the centre's Facebook page for all details.

THE Rockfield Centre in Oban has received £15,000 from the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) towards the development costs of the project.

The money comes at a pivotal time for Oban Community Benefit Society, formerly Oban Communities Trust, as the organisation prepares to launch its community shares offer to the public in the spring.

As well as various other specialist development work which will support future growth plans, the AHF funding will be used to help the centre launch the planned community shares offer.

Gordon McNab, chairman of OCBS, said: 'This is a great funding boost from the AHF and we are extremely grateful for its continued support. This grant will help us move another step up the ladder with our

plans to get the doors of the main building open as soon as possible. The team is working hard to get the community shares offer ready to launch, so keep posted of news and information on our website [www.therockfieldcentre.org.uk](http://therockfieldcentre.org.uk). Meanwhile, the new year's activities have kicked off with a blast at the Rockfield Centre with the usual monthly sessions as well as the first family 'stay and play' session and an informal afternoon of tutor-led Gaelic conversation.



Work continues on plans for the Journey project in February.

Thousands oppose caviar farm

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

AN ANIMAL rights group has sent a 5,000 signature petition opposing Scotland's first caviar farm to Argyll and Bute Council.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) argues that the 'intensive' caviar farm would 'keep sturgeons confined in stressful, unnatural conditions before subjecting them to a cruel, bloody death' - claims denied by the applicant.

Planners are considering The Fynest Caviar Co's plan to build a closed containment aquaculture facility for the production

of sturgeon' by Loch Fyne at Ardkinglas Sawmill, Cairndow.

The £4 million project aims to turnover £3.64 million over six years, displacing some of the £22 million of caviar and caviar substitutes imported into the UK annually, and to hire seven full-time employees, including a general manager and technical staff.

The Edinburgh-based company hopes to have Scottish caviar on the market by Christmas 2020, initially producing per year 1.5 tonnes of caviar, which can sell for over £1,000 per kilo, and growing up to three tonnes annually.

The current UK market con-

sumes 19 tonnes per annum, some of which is produced by the UK's only existing caviar farm in Devon. The Fynest Caviar Co hopes to take a bite of the £22 million of caviar and caviar substitutes imported annually.

But 5,000 members of the public have signed PETA's petition urging the council to reject the plan. A spokesperson said: 'In addition to causing cruelty to fish, a farm of this kind would likely have many negative effects on the local area, including increased traffic from goods vehicles and the obstruction of scenic views by new buildings. The generation of environmen-

tal pollutants such as ammonia could also potentially have a detrimental impact on wildlife.'

PETA director Elisa Allen said: 'Thousands of compassionate people have spoken, and Argyll and Bute Council should heed their concerns for animal welfare, the environment and the health of the community. PETA is calling for the proposal to be rejected, sparing sturgeons immense suffering.'

'Deprived of the opportunity to engage in natural behaviour, they're highly susceptible to stress and aggression. Many also sustain physical injuries because of the intense crowding. At the end of their miserable

lives, they're transferred to an ice bath, where their gills are cut and they're left to bleed out - a slow, painful way to die.'

One of the Fynest Caviar Co's three directors, Fraser Niven, responded: 'The company is committed to providing the best care and attention to the fish stock. The fish represent the key asset of the business and will only provide the premium product if this care is maintained. We are employing a highly experienced team of professionals who have established well respected and highly regarded facilities across the world.'

'I would also refute the negative claims on the impact of the business to the local area. This decision to locate in Argyll is a positive reflection of the reputation of the area for providing Scotland and the wider markets with the highest quality food and drink products, and in particular the skills of the local people in the aquaculture sector.'

The plans detail three timber-clad buildings, lower than the existing sawmill, totalling a footprint of 2,400m². The two main buildings will house the hatching, breeding and growing stages, while a third includes a shop for visitors to sample and buy the caviar.

Worker racially abused over ticket

WHEN an Argyll and Bute Council employee issued a parking ticket on George Street in Oban, he was met with a barrage of abuse, some of it racial.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes, sitting at Oban Sheriff Court on Wednesday, was told that a body-cam worn by the worker captured David Macdonald Forrest racially abusing him and telling him to 'get a real job'.

When Forrest said that his girlfriend had only parked the car there for minutes, the council employee tried to explain, but Forrest started to shout and swear at him.

Forrest, 33, of 7 Ross Crescent, Lochgilphead, admitted acting in a racially aggressive manner on July 29 last year, by shouting, swearing and uttering the racist comments.

In Forrest's defence, it was said he had been depressed since losing his job as a fisherman, and had been suffering from alcoholism, a problem he is now addressing, and that he took full responsibility for his actions and did not know why he said the things he did.

Sheriff Hughes had previously called for reports on Forrest and sentenced him to a community payback order with 150 hours of unpaid work to be completed within nine months and a supervisory order for 12 months during which time he was to undergo treatment for alcoholism.

'This is a disgraceful way to behave,' said the sheriff and, referring to Forrest's previous convictions, added: 'This is your last chance.'

The sheriff ordered Forrest to return to court in three months for a review of the order.

Daniel the Goldfish is an internet star

A GOLDFISH from Lochgilphead is making waves online after appearing in The Oban Times' Pet Idol competition.

A Facebook page has been set up for Daniel the Goldfish, which has seen his head superimposed onto a number of different scenarios, such as on Donald Trump's hair, with the caption: 'Make Lochgilphead great again.'

This isn't the only president the fish has surfaced alongside – he was also imposed onto Barack Obama, with the tagline: 'Yes we Dan.'

The Daniel the Goldfish from Lochgilphead Facebook page was set up on December 23 of last year and has so far amassed 128 fans.

Writing on the page, the admin said: 'Do you see any gold dogs or gold sheep in the competition? No. There is only one goldfish. Keep the dream alive.'

Daniel, who is vying for a place in the top 10 of Pet Idol, has also appeared on the cover of Oasis's 'Danfinitely' Maybe album, and in the band 'Goldplay'.

The Lochgilphead star has also been seen playing for 'Dan' United.

There are dozens of pictures portraying Daniel in various roles, but these are a few of our favourites.



Clockwise from top left: he is starring for Dan United; Daniel gives Barack Obama a campaign slogan; fronting the band Goldplay; and urging President Trump to 'Make Lochgilphead great again'.

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Tarbert

PUPILS of Clachan Primary School were hard at work over the last few months, preparing more than 40 Christmas cakes for retired residents in the community.

The annual school tradition dates back more than two decades and sees the children bake, package and hand deliver cakes to elderly people in the village.

Head teacher Lucy Blake said: 'The project has a positive influence in the community and in the school.'

'The children apply their numeracy skills in context and think about how they can help others in the village.'

'The cakes are all individually wrapped and the children make individual name tags so they think about each recipient as an individual. We only have five pupils so they do a lot work.'

'It's a wonderful way of linking the children to older members in the community in a tangible way, while keeping traditions alive. The Christmas cakes are anticipated by the recipients.'

'For some older members of the community, buying a Christmas cake for one would be expensive and for others it is a link to the school where they and their family went as children. The fact each cake is named individually adds to the sense of caring for each person. Christmas can be a lonely time too and we hope that by letting everyone know they are thought of, it is a way to show that we care.'

The initiative won the Active Participation in the Community Award from the Argyll College UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) last year.

Inveraray

Neil MacEachern's Scottish Dance Band.

THE DECEMBER meeting of Inveraray and District Accordion and Fiddle Club fell foul of bad weather which, unfortunately, prevented many regulars from attending.

Supporting players who braved the elements were Fyne Folk, with Sally Hall, Alex John MacLeod and Jake MacKay on fiddles and Agnes Liddell on keyboard. They played a couple of nice sets.

Young Calum MacDonald played his button box beautifully and kindly brought good wishes to the club from his tutor Fraser McGlynn.

Dalriada Ceilidh Band were back again this month with Myles Clark on accordion, Steve Hunter on guitar and Grant MacDougall on drums, and they also played nice selections.

Guest artistes were Neil MacEachern and his Scottish Dance Band with Neil on accordion, his wife Angela on fiddle, Tom Murray on keyboard and Dave Beattie on drums. They entertained the audience with an excellent selection in both halves, with two cracking solos from Angela on fiddle.

Because of the wintry weather, the evening was curtailed to allow the guest artiste to head for home. Chairman Niall Iain MacLean thanked all the artistes and the audience for making the effort to attend and conveyed the compliments of the season to everyone.

Next week, to get the New Year under way, the club welcomes back the ever popular Robert Nairn Trio from Achارacle.



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Andy Pearson-Greatrix works on his next painting in Appin Craft Shop.

Ferryman Andy moves back to dry land to focus on artwork

TO PEOPLE in Appin and on Lismore, he's known as 'Andy the ferryman', but renowned maritime artist Andy Pearson-Greatrix will be sticking to dry land this year as he turns his attention to painting.

Andy moved to Lismore to 'get out of the rat race' after spending 30 years living in Kent and working in London where he was a sought after artist, given his talent for painting dramatic and

detailed maritime scenes. After making the move, Andy took on a six-month contract working on the Lismore to Port Appin ferry to get to know the locals and learn more about the island and local landscapes.

But his hidden talent soon came to the fore, as Andy began to display his work on the ferry and receive visitors to his island studio at Crossroads.

Originally from Orkney,

Andy yearned for a return to island life and he and wife Emma chose Lismore because of the beauty of the local landscape.

'I have really enjoyed working on the ferry,' said Andy. 'But I am now at a stage where the painting is requiring my full attention.'

'I get commissions to paint vessels, or I often pick a story from history and research the boats to create an image.'

I have been painting a lot of seascapes and landscapes. You have the best landscapes in this part of the world, as there are compositions everywhere you look.'

Andy set up a mini studio on Hogmanay in Appin Craft Shop, one of the few places his work is on sale.

The small Port Appin-based shop, now in its third season, sells arts and crafts by 95 different artists.

Uist's third Fèis Chullaig hits all the right notes

NOW IN its third year, Fèis Chullaig, the Hogmanay festival organised by Ceòlas Uibhist, has gone from strength to strength.

Running between Christmas and New Year in South Uist, events including dances, family céilidhs and music sessions saw the highest number of participants yet.

Originally starting out as a residential school in 2015 based on the successful summer school model, the event has become more community orientated, responding to local demand.

Featuring a strong programme focused on children and young people this year, the fèis opened with crafts, story and dance in the Lochboisdale Hotel on December 28, followed by a traditional music session led by Alana MacInnes and Shona Masson.

Eirisgeidh was the setting for events on Friday December 29. These included cockle picking on the morning tide, further bilingual children's activities, a piping recital featuring students of

Iain MacDonald of Glenug and a dance in Talla Choimhearsnachd Eirisgeidh played by Kilphedair Sound.

The traditional Hogmanay céilidh in the 19th-century Grogarry Lodge, complete

with cocktails and fresh seafood hors d'oeuvres in a cosy setting, was exceptionally busy on Saturday, with around 50 people arriving to hear authentic local music. The relaxed evening was

At Random

State of roads is a complete disgrace

AS WE report elsewhere in this week's paper, there is very serious concern over the state of the roads in Argyll.

The A85 through Connel is an utter disgrace, with the surface completely broken up and with multiple potholes. On a recent drive through the village, I witnessed a number of cars almost colliding as their drivers took urgent action to evade the worst of the holes, swerving into the path of each other and only just avoiding being hit.

Now, before I continue ranting, I am well aware of the time of year and the degradation wrought by freezing conditions in winter.

However, the shockingly poor condition of the trunk routes – never mind the lesser rural roads – is now posing a genuine safety problem.

It is incumbent upon the relevant national bodies to ensure the roads are fit for purpose and safe for us all to use. The A85 and other routes are manifestly not achieving that status.

We had a spirited response to a post we shared from the Oban and Lorn Road Watch Facebook page last week. In the message, Charlie Jack recounted how a wheel on his car was damaged beyond repair after whacking into a six-inch deep pothole at Benderloch. A number



Fèis Chullaig, the Hogmanay festival organised by Ceòlas Uibhist, has gone from strength to strength.



Potholes and disintegrating road surfaces pose a threat to safety.

Flooding on the A85 is worse than ever

WHILE I am on the subject of roads, and staying on the A85, the flooding on the stretch between Brander Lodge and Lochawe is worse than ever.

I wrote in this space not too long ago about the need for action to deal with this and I make no apology for returning to the subject. I drove up to Oban from the central belt on January 2, a day of poor weather with snow, sleet, rain and hail. That stretch mentioned had multiple areas of flooding

and I saw three cars almost lose control as they hit the water.

I honestly believe it is only a matter of time until there is a serious accident caused by the flooding.

As I wrote back in November, it can't be beyond the wit of the relevant authority to put better drainage in place at these flooding blackspots to prevent a major accident on this main road.

Lost for words

I'VE written here before about some of the odd emails that drop into my inbox, usually from PR companies promoting the results of what seem spurious research projects.

So it was that another one land-

HIAL invests £28 million in air traffic technology

HIGHLANDS and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) is to 'future proof' its operations in Scotland with an estimated £28 million investment in state-of-the-art air traffic management technology.

The long-term remote towers and centralised approach surveillance control programme will transform the organisation's operations at key airports including Stornoway, Inverness and Dundee.

The HIAL board agreed to the move in principle on Monday January 8 and will now hold further talks with staff, stakeholder groups and politicians over the implementation of the project.

Managing director Inglis Lyon said the decision was significant for the business, adding: 'Our overriding priority is, and will always be, to deliver safe and secure air navigation services that will keep our airports open for local communities for the long term.'

'Having already involved our air traffic control staff and key stakeholders in the full review of our air traffic management operations by leading aviation consultancy Helios, the board has agreed in principle with the Helios recommendation to further pursue the remote towers solution.'

'Given the nature and location of our business and airports, we are already managing a number of challenges. These include staff recruitment and retention, increasing regulation and increasing pressure on costs. Our role is to ensure the airport network benefits from investment in its long-term future, secured through new technology.'

No decisions have been made in terms of the location of the proposed operational centre, which will be the first of its kind in the UK.

The new proposals will include HIAL airports at Stornoway and Benbecula and timescales for the implementation of the project have still to be fully discussed and approved.

HIAL airports at Barra, Tiree, Islay and Campbeltown have different levels of air traffic and will not be affected by the changes.

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MATIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



ed in my email last week from a lady who toils in the press office of the hotel group Travelodge.

This missive details some of the objects left behind in their rooms by guests around the country.

The top 10 most common items left in Travelodge hotels across Scotland during 2017 pose few surprises – chargers for mobile phones and electronic devices, tablets, mobile phones, business papers and notepads, teddy bears, toiletry bags with contents, drones, pyjamas, socks and ties, and books.

However, there have been some items abandoned – accidentally, we must assume – that might raise an eyebrow or two. These include a coin collection worth more than £200,000 (in Perth) and a six feet tall antique grandfather clock.

My favourites, though, were a replica of Ben Nevis made from shortbread (an alternative wedding cake) which was found in Fort William, and a pair of Swarovski-crusted Wellington boots which were left in Edinburgh.

Who on earth felt the need to adorn a pair of wellies with fake diamonds? The old phrase about more money than sense springs readily to mind.

What do you think?

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



The island of Soay lying beyond Rubha an Dunain with its fort and unique inland galley harbour in the foreground, and, right, Soay harbour with the remains of Gavin Maxwell's shark oil extraction plant. Photographs: Iain Thornber

Soay: island has an interesting past

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNBER
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I OFTEN think that any more books about St Kilda should be banned and those who write and publish them should be heavily fined.

More attention might then be turned to other islands in the Hebridean archipelago that really need it.

St Kilda will always be in the public eye for its spectacular seabird colonies and awesome landscapes but, in reality, the way of life which was played out there until the 1930 evacuation was little different to any other isolated coastal community in the Highlands and Islands.

Thanks, however, to sympathetic curiosity, cultural condescension and an overdose of artificial preciousness, there is nothing, living or dead, that hasn't been photographed, catalogued or recorded in triplex. Little wonder it has been said that with one or two notable exceptions, nothing new has come out of St Kilda for years.

Soay, lying to the west of Loch Scavaig on the south-west coast of Skye, from which it is separated by a narrow sound, is an island with a potentially interesting history.

It may not have St Kilda's towering stacs and such an abundance of sea fowl, but it deserves deeper investigation.

Unlike its neighbours Skye and Rum, Soay is only 463ft high and almost cut in half by two large inlets. The main settlement, Mol-chlach, (Gaelic: the stone pile) is on the shore of Camas nan Gall and is normally reached by boat from Elgol. The 2,635-acre island is included in the Cuillin Hills National Scenic Area,

which cannot bring many, if any, practical benefits.

The name comes from Old Norse 'Sauda-ey', meaning Sheep Island. Camas nan Gall (Gaelic, Bay of the Strangers) is probably named after Norse invaders although with the discovery of worked flint and the existence of burial cists, the island was obviously inhabited long before.

Laurance Reed, whose family owned a house on Soay for 30 years, wrote an excellent little book called *The Soay of our Forefathers* (first published privately in 1986 and reissued by Birlinn Ltd in 2002) in which he charts some of its social history.

The highest recorded head count was in 1851 when 28 families, comprising 158 souls, were enumerated in the national census that year. For a long period Soay was possessed by MacCaskills, a family of Norse origin, who feature prominently in the centuries-old struggle between the MacDonalds and the MacLeods for the ownership of Skye. No doubt they were bought off and given Soay and the neighbouring Rubha' an Dunain, with its fort and unique inland galley harbour, by the MacLeods as a reward for their trouble.

The MacLeods of Soay emigrated to North Carolina in the 18th century but the island was resettled largely by folk from Minginish during the Skye clearances.

In 1945, Soay was bought for £900 by the colourful, entrepreneurial Gavin Maxwell from Dame Flora MacLeod of Macleod, whose father had sold St Kilda to Lord Dumfries, later the 5th Marquess of Bute.

Maxwell, author of many books, including *Ring of Bright Water*, established a shark fishing enterprise here which, fortunately for the bask-

ing-sharks, went bust six years later when the price of their oil collapsed.

In 1952, the islanders petitioned the government in favour of evacuation and left the following year for Mull. An eye-witness of the evacuation on June 19 has left us an important record of events: 'The Campbells are going, and so are the Camerons, the Macraes, the Macaskills, and MacDonalts – over the seas from Skye. All day the Soay islanders have been packing, and a quarter of a mile off this stony beach lies the steamer Hebrides, its slim red funnel fuming as if impatient to be gone. [Actually, three people remained on the island].

'The evacuation of the 30 crofters to Mull looks (deceptively) a simple and even leisurely occupation, and so far the weather has allowed the loading to go according to plan.

'The foreground is surrealism come to life. On the grey, boulder-cluttered shore, so bleak that even June sunshine can barely warm it, stands a Victorian sofa and a number of prim kitchen chairs. They are joined by rolls of linoleum, a heavy table and some huge roped trunks. All are loaded into a motor-boat and taken out to the ship, and another assortment takes their place on the beach.

Some of this furniture cannot have seen the light of day since the island was first colonised, and its removal across the sea appears, on the face of it, a sadder business than that of its owners – who go by their own choice and appear (except for a few who admit to last-minute feelings of regret) stalwartly unmoved.

'So houseful by houseful, the physical tokens of a community's life are hauled from their familiar shadows, out into the indifferent sunshine, down into the hold of a ship. What

we do not see is as eloquent as what we do. No television sets, no radio, no piano even, but numerous bibles, a spinning-wheel or two, a pair of antlers from a stag shot on the Cuillins, and a single bicycle. This looks as exotic, as useless on Soay, as a motor car or an aeroplane would be.

'The grey-haired postmistress, Mrs Cameron, who has carried on the post office alone since her husband died 12 years ago, hustled about her last duties, which includes receiving a greeting telegram to the islanders from Major Gavin Maxwell, the island's former owner and fisher of sharks.

'Donald Campbell, four today, had no birthday party but is too excited to worry about that. The cows, goats and poultry still go about their affairs as if a thousand years of Soay were ahead of them instead of 12 hours.

'But on a stone wall above the beach perches hour after hour a black and white dog. It dithers as if it were cold, and stares fixedly at the queer things happening below. You feel that at any moment, even if the pipes are silent, it may throw back its head and sound some sort of lament for Soay.'

The following day the same witness, writing from Mull, said: 'The islanders from evacuated Soay are spending the weekend in getting used to the sophistication and sheer pace of life on Mull, their new home. Venturesome males have been dodging motor cars on exploratory walks, while wives and mothers have excitedly pressed their first electric-lights switches and gazed out across the Firth of Lorne towards the mainland mysteries of distant Oban.'

'They have all shaken the hand of Lord Home, Minister of State for Scotland, who, yesterday welcomed

them to Mull. The cost of moving and resettling the 30 crofters of Soay seems to have been about £13,000.

'Five of the families have taken over Java Lodge at Craignure, a large and pleasant house with handsome grounds. The big rooms have been divided with plasterboard partitions, and each apartment has its own bathroom as well as scullery, larder and electricity from a generator. The rent will be eight or nine shillings a week; on Soay, the crofters paid a nominal rent of about a pound a year for their holdings.

'The men can choose from forestry, farming, lobster fishing and drainage work, while the women attend to such fascinating mysteries as that of the heat-gauge on their combustion cookers. How long will it take them to bake their bread by numbers?'

'Soay went off the map with several bangs. The greater part of the evacuation has been strenuously calm. All was nearly over when three bull calves, which had been left grazing when their elders were slung aboard earlier in the day, made a snap decision to take to the hills. They had to be rounded up with men and dogs, even the island's spaniel contributed zestfully to the confusion and, eventually, we were treated to the heart-warming sight of a Department of Agriculture official hauling steadfastly at a rope with a bucking bullock at the other end.'

He still managed to look as dignified, say, as an Edinburgh house-holder, and before long the rebels were safely gathered into the ship's hold with the rest of the livestock.

'A collie dog had been left ashore and its owner had to be rowed all the way back to the island to retrieve it. The dog didn't want to go, and it was with an obscure sense of guilt that we watched a desolate hill collie being hauled to the boat, its tail trailing along the stones of the beach like a surrendered flag.'

'Soon we were disembarking at Salen and the Mull piper was welcoming us with the strains of *My Home*'.

Iain Thornber
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'MacLeod's Maidens' on Skye's distinctive coastline to the north-west of Soay. Photograph: Iain Thornber

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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

A freezing weather blows in every winter, the cold and wet conditions take their toll on our roads across Argyll and Bute and the Isles.

However, this year there is widespread concern and the appalling degree to which road surfaces across the region have deteriorated – and how quickly they have become dilapidated.

We have had numerous reports from our readers of damage to their vehicles caused directly by the disintegrating roads, whether that is as a result of potholes or stones being thrown up by other cars, vans and lorries.

It is probably more down to basic good fortune than anything else that we have not seen people hurt in accidents caused by the issues. As a few worried people pointed out on our social media, it is especially frightening for those on two wheels.

So, what is to be done about the problem?

The answer is that BEAR Scotland, which is the statutory body responsible for trunk roads such as the A85, and Argyll and Bute Council, the authority tasked with maintaining other roads, need to act with urgency to carry out an aggressive programme of repairs.



Days gone by – 1967

Iain Thornber from Morvern sent us this great photograph he took in 1967 of the MV Ben Kiel, the six-car, twin-screw Corran ferry built in 1959 by James Nobel of Fraserburgh. Iain said it was replaced in 1973 by the MV Lochaber and is believed to have been scrapped at Crinan in 1977.

MacPhail



ANGUS MACPHAIL
angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk

ON DECEMBER 6, one of the most respected men in Argyll was laid to rest. Murdo MacLeod and his construction company, formed in partnership with his brother Kenny, was one of the county's biggest employers and his positive effect on the area went well beyond the direct impact of providing jobs and housing.

I have written about Murdo in this column more than once, and I have covered the subject of mortality many times. There will almost certainly be a full obituary dedicated to this very significant figure and details of his life and achievements will be contained in that.

Instead, I would like to dedicate the following poem to him. As we stood at Kilevin Cemetery as Murdo was laid to rest, his identical twin Kenny at the head of the grave, there was strong atmosphere indicating clearly to those present that a mass of great energy had left the world. What was also felt was that being buried was a man who, despite adversity and setbacks, had run his chosen race and won, had lived his dreams and had left his mark.

Run The Race

I will not hold the sorrow for the race I didn't run,

For shying from the starting blocks and cowering from the gun. The shame to fall a thousand times will never match the pain The harrowed fret and deep regret of impotent refrain. All, we have a race to run, for each it can be found The ones I'll try before I die, I'll know once in the ground; But try I will to climb life's hill, and if I stumble down Back up I'll get and onward set, despite the laughing crowd. The choice we have to run or watch is not a simple call To watch the race go by is safe and easy for us all; You'll never lose if you refuse to make yourself join in The penance though, you'll always know you're never going to win. To stand upon the sidelines is the often taken choice; To make some fun of those who run with narrow sneering voice; Or even worse, the twisted curse that in mankind is found The secret want, for those in front to fall and hit the ground. The race it brings on many things that make life more extreme But depths of low they better show success's golden gleam To not retreat when nearly beat then

fight to reach the front It gives the soul the furnace coal to flourish in the hunt. To climb the hill with morals ill, you haven't climbed at all And further on by ways of wrong, the further you will fall; Attain your goal with truthful soul, integrity and trust For peace within the life you win, the road it need be just. Think of those who've made no mark, upon the world we know Who never grasped or followed dreams and have no dreams to show. When comes their way the final day, and death they know they'll face - Every one will wish they'd run and not just watched the race. Compare now those who shaped the world and strived to run the race Who grew to steer their ship of life, their destiny and place; When they look back along their track, upon their dying day These giant ones again would run along their chosen way. So follow dreams and see the world, and grab life by the throat Don't live by dull convention or your life will miss the boat. Live for love and friendships' glow and chase ambition's taste We only get one shot at this – don't let it go to waste.



Ewen Campbell: 'Connel is shocking and they had the cheek to put up a sign saying "temporary road surface" as if they were working on it! No, just poor quality products/laying.'

Stuart Chalmers: 'Connel is the worst. V poor workmanship and some serious damage to cars inevitable, especially when holes filled with water and therefore hidden.'

Bob Gibson: 'Connel road is like a farm

track. Drivers are all over the road trying to avoid the potholes, dangerous or what.'

Jenna MacCuish: 'From miller road junction right up to drummore road entrance is horrific. I weave all over the road to TRY and miss the giant holes – road tax.....for wot?!!!'

Mark Cringeon: 'I've lost 2 children and a dog down the potholes in Connel does that count?'

Jan Roberts: 'As you drive into Connel is terrible.'

Emma MacDonald: 'Argyll square!'

Laurie Cameron: 'Also stone point inveraray is awful.'

Anna Daley: 'Hit a pothole and wheel rim seriously damaged as a result. Tyre

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, 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.

NHS Highland should hang head in shame

Sir,

As secretary of Sunart Community Council at the time of the last attempt by NHS Highland to engineer circumstances whereby it could bring about the closure of the essential residential care facility at Strontian's Dail Mhor care home, I was involved in the battle to expose its agenda and to secure the continued operation of the home.

It is no surprise, therefore, to read (*The Oban Times*, December 21) that the current community council chair has found NHS Highland to be 'disrespectful' in its latest attempt to bring about closure of the home for the reason of the building being 'not fit for purpose'. Its job is to make it fit for purpose and we all know this is merely a term coined to offer justification for the shocking plan to close it.

As it did last time, NHS Highland unashamedly tried to deceive the community with assurances about its commitment to delivering the best possible care system for local elderly people while promising to consult with the community as to how best to achieve that.

The truth is that the six-bed unit is expensive to run and it wants to close it in favour of any other variety of non-residential uses. While such additional uses may be desirable, they cannot be allowed to cloud the acute need for residential facilities at Dail Mhor, and if a six-bed facility is not economically viable, then NHS Highland must increase the size of it, not close it.

I venture to guess that if any of the well-paid NHS Highland managers who are responsible for this lived in a remote area along with their elderly relatives, they might just think it not such a good idea to have those relatives placed in care facilities so far away from the support of their families, where visiting becomes an expensive and time-consuming ordeal that cannot be undertaken very often.

I know the phrase is used more often than it should, but I think 'they should hang their heads in shame' is entirely appropriate.

Alan Thomson,
Kilcamb Paddock, Strontian.

Public toilets are vital for tourism industry

Sir,

Argyll and Bute Council, in its annual exercise of making what it calls its policy savings, lists 32 options to save in excess of £1.8 million.

I was a member of the council for 22 years, and it was always the tactic of the administration to nominate 'unthinkable' options and then withdraw them days before the budget meeting in response to public outrage.

On reviewing the current proposals, one which is unthinkable, unacceptable and which would devastate the tourist industry in Argyll and Bute is the proposal to close 36 of the 57 public toilets. At a time when Scotland is increasingly becoming a global tourist destination, and questions are being asked on how the current infrastructure can cope with the burgeoning demand, a move like

this is completely wrong and would lead to Argyll and Bute being considered a no-go area for many tour operators and their customers.

All 36 councillors should consider this when making their budget decisions. Do not close these toilets and remove infrastructure that is key to supporting our tourism industry.

Robert MacIntyre,
Serpentine Road, Rothesay.

Litter louts need to learn a lesson

Sir,

It's good to see that Sammy's chip shop in Caol helps to keep its neighbourhood litter-free by having printed on takeaway boxes: 'Keep Coal tidy – please dispose of this box with consideration.'

Sadly, some customers living outside Caol are taking the message quite literally and tossing out the boxes from their vehicle when in another area, as found recently on the side of the A82 near Spean Bridge.

Sammy's cardboard boxes are perfectly good for recycling, so what is the problem with these people? Will replacing Caol with Scotland provide a clear message that all areas beyond Caol do not want Sammy's boxes?

Several deer have been hit in locations where different kinds of takeaway leftovers are usually found, so one can't help wondering if this is attracting them.

It's about time these persistent litter louts, who usually dump in the dark, begin to realise the risks other people take removing it.

A Robinson,
Spean Bridge.

Columnist displays a very insular view

Sir,

I always enjoy reading the views of Martin Laing in his *At Random* weekly column in *The Oban Times*.

However, I am amazed at his views regarding VisitScotland appointing the services of an English-based PR company.

Surely in this technological age, the physical location of a company is of decreasing importance. As long as the PR company is doing a good job, which in contacting *The Oban Times* it appears it was, what is the problem?

Or are we saying that no English tourism organisation should ever appoint a Scottish PR company for a similar role, even if it was thought to be doing a better job?

I seems to me to be a very insular attitude.

Ian Johnson,
Stirling.

West Coast salmon need protection

Sir,

I am in total agreement with Iain Jenner of Nether Lochaber Community Council about the expansion of the Loch Leven site.

As has been reported by SEPA, the data regarding water quality in the local

environment, I ask the question: is the sea lice issue taken in isolation of the fish farm? The surrounding area and wild fish are all affected by the use of chemicals. Is the West Coast wild salmonid of lesser importance to the total rod revenue and jobs than the East Coast? Our West Coast rivers may be of a smaller size but the wild salmonid that they support are of just as important to the gene pool of the wild fish that still exist but for how much longer is a great concern.

The need to look at the whole structure of the wild fish stocks and the fish farm industry in a holistic review to protect both interest is now well overdue.

Kevin Smith,
Chairman,
Ballachulish Community Council.

Poetic account of the clearing of Inniemore

Sir,
I read with interest Iain Thorner's article on the Clearing of Inniemore in your issue of December 7.

In 2015, when the European refugee crisis was at its height, I wrote a poem on the same subject. I offer it to your readers as a follow-up which may interest.

Refugees 1824-style
(The township of Inniemore in Morvern)
Christina* from Edinburgh,
How vicariously cruel you were
To the smallholders evicted.
Those on whom you forced the flitting
Had lived there for generations,
A friendly neighbourhood
Of some fifteen to twenty homes,
Some seventy-five Camerons.
Both old and young, fit and infirm,
You deprived of the protection
Of their kebars over their heads
From heat of the sun and blast of
the wind
And the drenching rain from off the ocean.

Christina from Edinburgh,
You saw not with your careless eye
The mischief that you wrought:
The water poured on hot hearth
stones hissing;
The cuinneag dry of milk from cow
and goat;
The lame seannamhair, carried by
her son,
In a creel up the steep Bealach na Sgairn;
The uncomprehending children
walking
Beside those bearing their few
possessions;
The pause and the keening at Cnoc nan Carn
As your victims looked back at their
loved homes,
Once the creathall of a happy
tenure,
Seeing them already stripped and
despoiled.
Soon the whistle of the Saxon
shepherd
And the bark of his dogs were on
the brae.
That was cruel, so cruel, Christina.
You had the power then, but not
today.

* Stewart.
Michael G Kidd,
Ceann Paic, Taynuilt.

Ailean Caimbeul

neart agus diongmhaltas. Am measg iomadh iomaire eile bha Iain na Chathraiche aonachair nam Pàrانت، na bhalla air bòrd Chomunn na Gàidhlige، na bhalla air Bòrd na Gàidhlige، agus air bòrd a' Chomunn Ghàidhealaich far an tug e cuideachd deich bliadhna mar Cheann-suidhe. Nuair a leig e wallach a' Chinn-suidhe dheth aig Coinneamh Bhliadhnaidh a' Chomunn toiseach 2017, thuit Iain gun robh an dreuchd air a bhith na urram mhòr dha agus bha e moiteil gun robh "an Comunn a-nise ann an suidheachadh làidir ann a bhith a' leasachadh cànán, ceol agus cultar na Gàidhlige." Tha mi làn chreidsinn gum bi mòran, mar a tha fior dhomh fhìn, a' cuimhneachadh gair a' cheartachadh Ghàidhealaich seo le mòr-spéis agus a' meas a' chothruim èolais air mar urram.

Ann a bhith a' cur "clach air a chàrn" s' e mo bheachd gair e an cuimhneachan as feàrr as urrainnear a dhéanamh. THE death of John MacLeod is an enormous blow and his commitment to Gaelic will be greatly missed. However, our thoughts are with the close family where his widow Christine, son Calum, daughter Mairi and her husband Kevin, and John's sisters and their families must attempt to adjust to this tragic loss. We wish them strength and solace.

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

Your letters

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Commemorating 50th anniversary of tragic plane crash at Lochailort

IAIN THORNBER
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LAST THURSDAY, on the shortest day of the year, 21 people wound their way slowly up a rough, boulder-strewn path to a cairn on the south side of a hill a mile above Lochailort to remember 13 Royal Air Force personnel who were killed when the plane they were travelling in fell out of the sky exactly to the hour half a century before.

It was a pleasant winter's morning. Save for the low murmur of a few cars on the Road to the Isles and the rattle of the Mallaig-bound train on the West Highland Line below, there was nothing of the present to draw their thoughts and memories away from the past.

From a knoll above the cairn where the ceremony would take place, six stags watched the approaching party until one of them gave a hoarse bark and they vanished over the timeless skyline, disturbing a pair of snipe as they went. Just so did these wild things live on that remote hillside when the plane of 206 Squadron plunged into it 50 years ago.

Witnessing the crash on December 21 1967 was Angus Cameron, a county council roadman from Glenfinnan, who was working near Arieniskill, when he heard two loud explosions and saw a bright flash. He rushed down to Inverailort Castle to inform local landowner Mrs Cameron-Head, who immediately alerted the police and rescue services and sent her companion, Barbara Mackintosh, racing to the site.

Mrs Cameron-Head, who had been stationed in the area as an ambulance driver with the commandoes during the Second World War followed, but from what the ladies saw they soon realised there was

nothing they could do. In an act of public spiritedness and generosity for which she was well known throughout the Highlands, Mrs Cameron-Head threw open her home to the RAF air accident investigation unit and the mountain rescue teams over Christmas and the New Year.

Last week's pilgrimage was organised by the chairman and members of 206 Squadron Association and accompanied by Reverend Andrew Tucker, the Padre of RAF Lossiemouth and Wing Commander Bruce Farquhar, the officer commanding the present 206 Squadron. Mr and Mrs Ken Bowker from nearby Roshven, who were instrumental in having the first memorial plaque placed on the site on behalf of the Moidart History Group, led the column.

Donald Cameron of Lochiel, Lord Lieutenant of Inverness, was represented as were family members of the deceased and friends of the former RAF personnel who had taken part in the search for survivors. Also present was Jimmy MacDonald, formerly of Loch Morar-side, who earlier in the year rebuilt the cairn with almost a ton of stone which he carried on his back in a rucksack up the hill from Arieniskill. The dry stone cairn, now surmounted by a wooden cross, incorporates material from an earlier one with small pieces of wreckage gathered round its base. It is capped with a thin layer of cement into which Jimmy set thirteen white stones - one for each man who died.

Rev Tucker led the simple but moving commemoration service with prayers and readings. John Channon of 206 Squadron listed those who died and, having known many of them, reflected on their personalities. A poem was read and Wing



Commander Farquhar gave an account of the circumstances leading to the crash and the final hour of the plane and its crew.

He said: 'Shackleton MK 3 XF 702 took off from RAF Kinloss at 12.30pm on December 21 1967 to conduct anti-submarine training off the west coast of Scotland, south west of Tiree. The meteorological briefing noted a weak cold front over the Scottish hills; associated with that was a forecast of moderate icing, severe in cloud,

with the freezing level expected

to be around 8,000 ft, which was also the aircraft's planned transit level.

'The crew's radio transmissions with Lossiemouth radar and later, Highland radar, indicated no particular problems. But contact was lost shortly after 1pm. One witness saw the aircraft emerging from cloud and shortly after a loud explosion was heard and a fireball seen. XF 702 had crashed on Creag Bhan around 1.05pm.

'Several witnesses from Lochailort and Arieniskill went to the scene but no help was

possible. The board of inquiry concluded that the most likely cause of the crash was excessive accumulations of ice on those parts of the aircraft not protected by anti-icing systems; the propellers, the underside of wings and especially the tail planes.

The aircraft had experienced worse than forecast icing, and the freezing level was lower than expected. Aircraft speed would have fallen due to the extra weight and deterioration of aerodynamics, and with little reserve power, the plane

stalled. The board of inquiry concluded, finally, that the aircraft had entered a steep stall from which recovery was not possible.'

Those who died were; Pilot Sqn Ldr M C McCallum (33) Fleet, Hampshire; Sqn Ldr H Harvey (46) Tipton, Staffordshire; Flt Lt B G Mackie (33) Aberdeen; Flight Officer R F Fonseca (27) Nairobi; Flight Officer T C Swinney (25) Beverly, Hull; Flight Officer D J Evans (22) Middleborough; Flight Officer J V Young (31); Pilot Officer L C Maclean, Buckie; Flt Sgt D J Harris (30) Axminster; Sgt C P Mathews (33) Birmingham; Sgt M B Bowen (23) Nottingham; Sgt K B Hurry (26) Whittlesey, Cambs and Sgt M A Jones (27) Stockport.

Fiona Wilde, daughter of the late John Hinde, leader of the Kinloss Mountain Rescue team which was responsible for searching for debris over a wide area, came from Fort William. Her father's diaries reveal how thorough the ground investigation was in the days that followed.

He wrote: 'Kinross MRT left the station 23 minutes after being alerted and reached the incident in three hours 17 minutes. Team leader was informed by Sgt Banks of Mallaig police that there was no chance of survivors once Sgt Banks knew that no parachutes were carried. A night crash guard was immediately placed.'

'Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team and civil defence units were thanked and told that they would not be required for search duties. Press representatives and photographers were discouraged from going to the crash location during the first night. RAF Kinross was asked to provide a crash guard as soon as possible to ensure that the MRT was available for further emergencies.'

'On December 22 1967, MRT and police removed the remains and made sweep searches of the immediate crash area; MRT searched the ridge of Creag Ban. Assistance was given to the president and members of the Accident Investigation Board who arrived in the afternoon.'

'On December 25 and 26 the MRT was employed on the following tasks; marking out the crash area into 50 ft

squares, digging in the creator for engine and propeller parts, salvaging of engine and propeller parts from a point 280 yards to the east of the crater, sweep searching the area and collecting classified papers, unexpended pyrotechnics, pieces of controls and control surfaces and other named items, collection of propeller and engine parts and stacking for salvage by helicopter and removal to the lawn of Inverailort Castle.'

'On December 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 1967, Leuchars and Kinloch MRTs carried out sweep searches [over a wider area]. It was necessary to charter a boat from Mr R Watt of Mallaig to take search parties to Oban at the head of Loch Morar on December 27 and 29. After December 28 all personnel going to the hill were briefed to use disinfectant baths which were provided as boot-dips for prevention of spread of foot and mouth disease.'

'On January 7 1968, a boat was chartered from Miss N C Ford of Meoble Lodge to take MRT to the head of Loch Morar to search a corrected estimated track of the crashed aircraft. All the new estimated track below 1,300 ft was covered within five miles of the crash but searching above this altitude was abandoned as being ineffectual because of a covering of snow to a depth of 4-6 inches. All local people were helpful to the teams and particularly gracious hospitality and assistance were provided over a prolonged period by Mrs L P Cameron-Head of Inverailort Castle.'

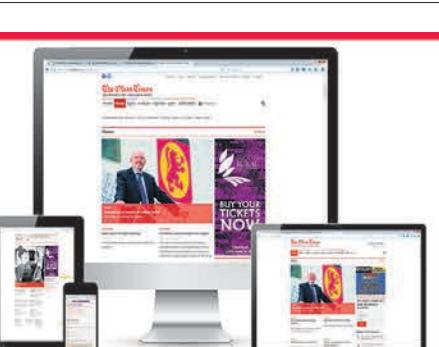
'When the shadows began to lengthen and the party fore-gathered to make their way back to Lochailort Inn, which had been kept open specially for them by manageress Mrs Eilidh Gillies, a bottle of whisky, appropriately named 'Shackleton', was passed round in the time-honoured, Highland custom at such poignant events.'

'As the last man turned to leave the scene of the terrible tragedy, the cairn was illuminated by a sun-burst of pale, yet dazzling gold, before disappearing from view behind a trailing rain-shower.'

Iain Thornber
iain.thornber@btinternet.com



FROM
56p
PER WEEK



The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

INCLUDES
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WIN £200 WORTH OF SHOPPING TROLLEYDASH

COURTESY OF TESCO OBAN

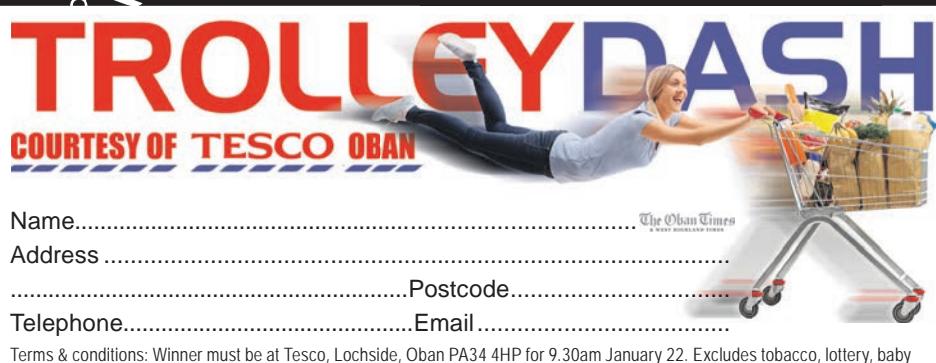
Last chance to win!

We all spend far too much money over Christmas and New Year? Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will have the chance to fill their trolley **COMPLETELY**

FREE OF CHARGE
in January? Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will have the chance to fill their trolley up to £200

worth of goods (see Ts&Cs for exclusions). All you have to do is collect all four tokens and fill out the form. Get them to us by 10am Tuesday January 16 and

you will be entered into a prize draw to win this fantastic trolley dash PLUS get clubcard points while you shop.



TROLLEYDASH

COURTESY OF TESCO OBAN

Name.....
Address.....
Postcode.....
Telephone.....
Email.....

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

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



All four tokens must be sent in a single envelope with the filled out form to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB.

One token from each week is required, multiple entries are allowed, but

must be submitted in separate envelopes. Photocopied tokens will not be accepted. Winners must agree to take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate families are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final.

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Tune in to 103.3 or listen
live at www.obanfm.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Oban High School prepares for annual dance show

Oban High School is preparing to host its 11th annual dance show in the Corran Halls on Wednesday and Thursday, January 17 and 18.

More than 200 pupils will take to the stage in a wide variety of acts that will follow a 'Old v New' theme.

Dance groups from all year groups, led by 22 senior dance leaders, make up many of the performances as well as the OHS gymnastics squad, sports leaders, staff dance, Highland

choreography, duets, P6/7 transition dance, traditional Highland dancing with OHS Pipe Band, S1-S3 school of dance and Ballet West outreach will also feature. Pupils have been working exceptionally hard in after-school clubs since August and the show will be a fantastic showcase of talent.

Tickets are now available from Oban High School or from the Corran Halls for the 7.30pm Wednesday and Thursday evening

performances and the Thursday matinee.

More than 400 local primary school pupils are booked in to watch the matinee at 12.15pm on Thursday afternoon but there will be an additional 200 seats for members of the public who would prefer to attend the afternoon show, which always has a fantastic atmosphere.

Tickets are priced £6 for adults, £4 concessions and £18 for a family ticket (two adults and two concessions).



Corran Halls set for legendary country show!



The hugely popular hit Legends of American Country show is set to make its Oban debut On Friday January 19 at the Corran Halls - and what a night of toe tapping country music it's going to be. The show is enjoying huge success this year with over 100 sold-out shows at prestigious theatres all across the UK and features four fantastic singers - Joe Moore, James McGarrett, Rod and Tracey McAuley, who perform the hit songs of icons like Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers, Patsy Cline and Merle Haggard, to name a few, in this two-hour country extravaganza that will take you to Nashville and back in one night. A

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

DIRECT FROM IRELAND THE HIT SHOW
THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY TRIBUTE SHOW

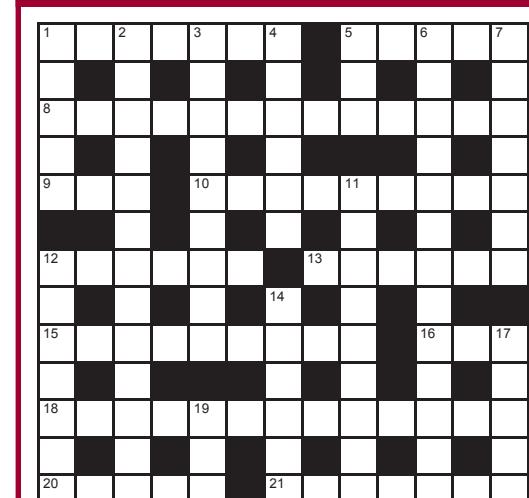
JMG MUSIC GROUP

DOLLY PARTON **ALAN JACKSON** **GLEN CAMPBELL** **GEORGE JONES** **JOHNNY CASH** **MERLE HAGGARD** **KENNY ROGERS** **PATSY CLINE**

FRIDAY 19TH JAN 2018
THE CORRAN HALLS, OBAN
DOORS 7.00PM | SHOW STARTS AT 7.30PM

TICKETS £19.50
BOX OFFICE **01631 567333**

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

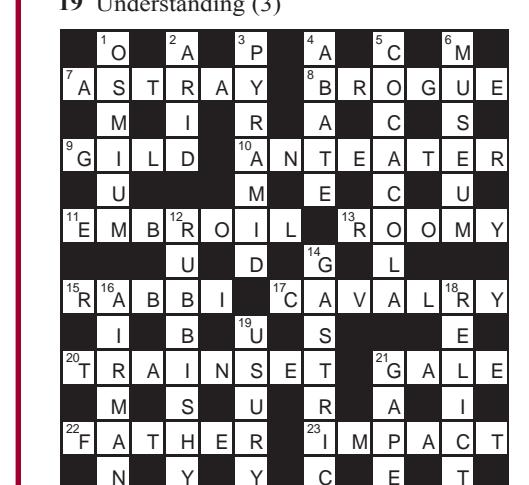


Across

- 1 Annoying sound, made in the kitchen? (7)
- 5 Two-legged creature (5)
- 8 Artistic movement of the late 19th century (13)
- 9 Menagerie (3)
- 10 Years lived for more than one (9)
- 12 Complain (6)
- 13 Place of work (6)
- 15 Of little value (2-7)
- 16 Point at target (3)
- 18 Just about to collapse (8,5)
- 20 Viscose (5)
- 21 Self-imposed punishment (7)

Down

- 1 Sparkle (5)
- 2 Aabout (13)
- 3 Conceptual (9)
- 4 Change into non-solid matter (6)
- 5 Ghost's cry (3)
- 6 Change of ownership from the government... (13)
- 7 ...ownership (7)
- 11 Sharp item, sheathed for precaution (6,3)
- 12 Yippie drinking place (4,3)
- 14 Round vegetable (6)
- 17 When two pieces of wood are made into an 90 degree angle (5)
- 19 Understanding (3)



Arena

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

Army Reserves to visit Oban and Fort William

7 SCOTS – the local Army Reserves for the Highlands and Islands – are visiting Oban and Fort William later this month as part of a recruitment drive.

The Army Reserves, formerly known as the Territorial Army, offer a variety of roles and jobs all of which can be undertaken in people's spare time, while at the same time providing an income stream.

Sergeant Tommy Stewart, from 7 SCOTS, said there are a number of myths surround the reserves. He said: 'The Army Reserves are volunteers who typically give 27 days a year.'

'One myth is that once you join you will be sent on overseas operations. Nothing could be further from the truth. An individual, if they so wish,

may be able to serve with their regular counterparts on an overseas deployment, but this is an agreement made between the person, their family and their work.'

'Another myth is that it's a boys drinking club. Reserves are simply a group of men and women - females make up more than 10 per cent of the reserves - who simply want a little more out of life, be that travel, adventure, a chance to do something they simply could not do in their normal life while at the same time being paid.'

'Flexibility is the key word. The army recognises that we all lead busy lives and free time is very precious, but the reserves can be a rewarding experience, and we are not just talking money here. Learning new life skills, like been paid to learn to drive, is just one example. Making new friends and challenging yourself in ways you never dreamed of are also what the Army Reserves can give you.'

'Travel and adventure is still a big part of what the reserves do. In 2017, members of 7 SCOTS had had members in the

Singapore, Hong Kong, Sweden, Cyprus, France, USA and Gibraltar, taking part in events like hockey, sailing, skiing and scuba diving as well as other activities.

'If you want to know a little more about doing something positive with your spare time, while earning spare cash - you could earn over £4,000 in the first year - come along to the next event in Cameron Square, Fort William, on Tuesday January 23 from noon to 4pm and at the joint Cadets D r i l l Hall on C ro f t R o a d , F o r t William, at 6pm the same day.'

'We will be at the North Pier in Oban the following day, Wednesday January 24 from noon to 3pm.'

'If you need any more details, contact me at Thomas.stewart214@mod.gov.uk.'



A member of 7 SCOTS enjoys a bit of scuba diving off Cyprus last year.



Eye to eye
with John Wallace

A time for reflection

The festivities are long gone and for many so have our New Year resolutions of a fresh start 2018. New year is also a time for reflection. Last August my elderly mother passed away. She had been unwell for some time and for her, her passing was a blessed relief. The reason I am writing about this is she was severely visually handicapped. Since her teenage year she had been a heavy smoker which took its toll on her eyesight. There is a well proven extremely strong link with smoking and macular degeneration. In fact many eye care professionals believe the message on cigarette

packaging should be "Smoking will make you blind". What I find very frustrating about my mother's eye problems was she had had distorted vision for several months before she finally told me about it. When, eventually, I was able to examine her eyes she had pronounced wet macular degeneration. Her excuse was she felt I was busy and the problem would go away eventually. This scenario is one I frequently encounter with my elderly patients. They don't want to take up my time with a "trivial" problem. Unfortunately these problems just get worse and become much harder to treat.

Macular degeneration (ARMD) comes in two forms ... wet and dry. Most patients with ARMD have dry macular degeneration which slowly changes causing a gradual reduction in vision which many don't notice until they can barely see to drive. Wet ARMD typically presents with a sudden loss or distortion of vision. If you suffer a sudden change in your vision it is vital you seek urgent advice from your optometrist. Wet ARMD can be, in most cases, successfully treatable if caught early enough. Your optometrist will be happy to see you and check your eyesight.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP

Wallace Optometrists

The West Highland Orthokeratology Clinic, 11/12 Argyll Square, Oban

Tel: 0845 230 3937 (EYES)

www.wallaceoptometrists.co.uk

Glasgow Letter

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



All to for this year's Burns Supper season

What's the difference between an Islay and a Tiree Burns Supper? It sounds like a joke but I haven't worked out a punchline yet.

You can, however, find out for real by attending two Burns Suppers in one weekend in Glasgow at the end of this month.

The Glasgow Islay Association are holding theirs in the Hillhead Sports Club in Hughenden on Friday January 26 at 7pm for 7.30pm. Tickets cost £20 and include a three-course meal plus entertainment. Tickets are available from the association Facebook page or by emailing katislay26@hotmail.co.uk

The following evening, Saturday January 27, the Tiree Association will hold their Burns Supper in the Ralston Community Hall in Allanton Avenue. A meal is

provided and there is a great programme of entertainment featuring Cathie Lees, Donald Iain Brown, Kenneth MacLeod, Mike Hughes, and the competitive table singing that has become a tradition of the Tiree Burns Supper.

Tickets are £15 and can be reserved via Facebook or through any committee member.

Scotland and Ireland meet at Gaels Le Chéile

On Saturday January 20, Ceol 's Craic are staging a Gaels Le Chéile event in the Centre for Contemporary Arts celebrating the shared Gaelic culture of Scotland and Ireland.

Imlé, an up-and-coming Irish band who deliver a unique fusion of poetry, rap, rock, trip hop, and traditional music, all in Irish Gaelic, will represent their own Irish culture, while Mischa Macpherson from the island

of Lewis and friends will represent Scottish Gaelic culture.

Trip will also be performing. They are a young, emerging Glasgow-based band who draw influence from the traditions of Scotland, England, Ireland and the Isle of Man so will hugely contribute to the multi-cultural feeling of the evening. Doors open at 7.30pm and tickets cost £14.50.

What's on at 2018 Celtic Connections

Thursday January 18: Celtic Connections 25th anniversary concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.

Friday February 2: Elephant Sessions and Notify in the Old Fruitmarket at 9.30pm.

Saturday February 3: Fergie MacDonald: The Ceilidh King in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.

Saturday February 3: Tide Lines with Cassie and Maggie in St Luke's at 7.30pm.

Wednesday January 24: Dougie MacLean and Yvonne Lyon in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.

Thursday January 25: Binneas nam Bàn in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 8pm.

Friday January 26: Orain nan Gàidheal: Songs of the Gael featuring the BBC SSO and special guests in the main auditorium of the Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.

Friday January 26: Peat bog Faeries with special guests in the Old Fruitmarket at 8pm.

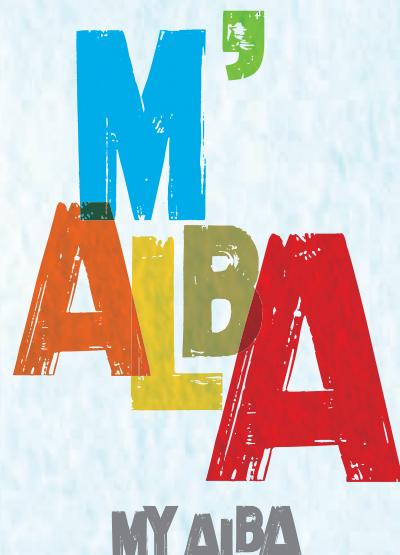
Wednesday January 31: Mary Ann Kennedy and Luar na Lubre in the Old Fruitmarket at 8pm.

Friday February 2: Skipinnish and Cruinn in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.

Friday February 2: Elephant Sessions and Notify in the Old Fruitmarket at 9.30pm.

Saturday February 3: Fergie MacDonald: The Ceilidh King in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.

Saturday February 3: Tide Lines with Cassie and Maggie in St Luke's at 7.30pm.



DIARDAOIN 11 FOILTEACH THURSDAY 11 JANUARY	19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt) 19.30 Albisidh (rpt) 20.00 Prógraman Chloinne – Children's programming 19.00 Eileanan Fraoich – Isle of Rum (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt) 20.00 An Là – News 20.30 Balaich a' Bhioibhail – students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt) 21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt) 21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael : Ceòl (rpt) 22.00 Tiree Music Festival 2016 – Trail West (rpt) 22.30 ÚR NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich – competitive fishing around the world
DISATHAIRNE 13 FOILTEACH SATURDAY 13 JANUARY	16.00 Prógraman Chloinne – Children's programming 19.30 Machair (rpt) 19.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt) 20.00 Albisidh – Quiz Show (rpt) 20.30 Turas a' Bharlainn (rpt) 21.00 Ceòl Country (rpt) 22.00 Fleasgaich an lasgaich – competitive fishing around the world (rpt) 22.45 Dhan Uisge – Sanna (rpt) 22.50 Tatù Rioghla Dhùin Eideann
DILUAIN 15 FOILTEACH MONDAY 15 JANUARY	17.00 Prógraman Chloinne – Children's programming 19.00 An Lot (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt) 20.00 An Là – News 20.30 ÚR NEW: Kerris Kirsty: Mòrargu Árasaig 21.00 Trusadh – Dion nan Leabhar (rpt) 22.00 Togaidh Sinn Fonn (rpt) 22.25 Binneas – Na Trads – N.E Folk Collective (rpt) 23.30 Alleluia (rpt)
DIMAIRT 16 FOILTEACH TUESDAY 16 JANUARY	17.00 Prógraman Chloinne – Children's programming 19.00 Eileanan Fraoich – Isle of Rum (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt) 20.00 An Lot (rpt) 20.30 ÚR NEW: Turas a' Bharlainn – Neen Mackay explores the world of salmon and fly fishing in Scotland 21.00 Air a' Chanáil (rpt) 21.30 ÚR NEW: Leugh Mi 22.30 Port (rpt) 23.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt) 23.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael : Ceòl (rpt)
DICIADAIN 17 FOILTEACH WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY	22.30 Air Tòir Manachainn Dhèir (rpt) 23.30 Tiree Music Festival 2016 – Trail West (rpt)
DIARDAOIN 18 FOILTEACH THURSDAY 18 JANUARY	DIMAIRT 16 FOILTEACH TUESDAY 16 JANUARY

DICIADAIN 17 FOILTEACH
WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY

17.00 **Prógraman Chloinne** – Children's programming

19.00 **Eileanan Fraoich** – Tiree (rpt)

19.35 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)

20.00 **An Là – News**

20.30 **ÚR | NEW: Turas a' Bharlainn**

– Neen Mackay explores the world of salmon and fly fishing in Scotland

21.00 **Air a' Chanáil** (rpt)

21.30 **ÚR | NEW: Leugh Mi**

22.00 **Air an Rathad** (rpt)

22.30 **Port** (rpt)

23.00 **Trusadh – Dion nan Leabhar** (rpt)

23.30 **Togaidh Sinn Fonn** (rpt)

23.45 **DIY le Donnie** (rpt)

23.45 **Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael**: Ceòl (rpt)

23.45 **Air an Rathad** (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 18 FOILTEACH
THURSDAY 18 JANUARY

17.00 **Prógraman Chloinne** – Children's programming

19.00 **Eileanan Fraoich** – Tiree (rpt)

19.35 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)

20.00 **An Là – News**

20.30 **Balaich a' Bhioibhail** – students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)

21.00 **DIY le Donnie** (rpt)

21.45 **Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael**: Biadh (rpt)

22.00 **Gaoil @ Gael** (rpt)

22.30 **ÚR | NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich** – competitive fishing around the world

23.15 **Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan** – C. Duncan (rpt)

23.25 **Air an Rathad** (rpt)

NEW YEAR NEW You

What is your New Year's resolution for 2018? Find a more fulfilling career, learn new skills or even start a business? Get counselling for an ongoing personal issue? What about losing weight or getting fitter? As CS 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 amid

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 and 95 per cent of people fail to achieve their New Year's 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 sticking to your 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 have achieved your goal.



START 2018 WITH WEST HIGHLAND COLLEGE UHI

So what is your local college offering this winter?

Maritime Skills

Our ever popular 19-week Maritime Skills Certificate starts in February in Mallaig. Students who complete this frequently return in September to study NC Shipping and Maritime Operations which can open opportunities for a career at sea.

Ryan Morrison, from Kyleakin, Isle of Skye, knew he was interested in a career at sea but wasn't sure what all his options might be. He decided to do our Certificate in Maritime Skills in Mallaig because he knew it would introduce him to various aspects of the marine industry. He found the course very helpful and decided to return to study the NC Shipping and Maritime Operations.

On completion of that, he successfully applied for a three-year cadetship with V.Group. He studies at City of Glasgow College and will also spend a year at sea onboard V.Group managed vessels which will prepare him for a Certificate of Competency as Officer of the Watch.

Ryan commented: 'I would definitely encourage anybody to do these courses in Mallaig if they are interested in a career in the maritime industry. The courses helped me to decide that this is the career I wanted to pursue. Everyone was very helpful and supportive throughout my time there and I would like to thank them all.'

Part-time courses

West Highland College UHI has lots to offer this winter. January is the month many of our short part-time courses start, finishing by June. So, come along to our Fort William campus in the evenings and become confident in a variety of DIY skills using our fully kitted-out construction rooms or how about one day a week to study art and design with Ali Berardelli, a graduate of visual communication from Glasgow School of Art? We are also opening up our music department in the spring with Rachel Walker and Alasdair Murray (both of whom perform with Skippinish) delivering music performance and sound production as an online/practical combination.

Networked learning at all our centres

Regardless of where you live in our



Ryan Morrison working on chart work in West Highland College UHI, Mallaig.

large geographical area, you can study a range of subjects at HNC level such as Administration & IT, Childhood Practice and Social Services – all of these can lead to HND and then to degree level study, part-time with your local college centre as part of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

Learning can be flexible and fit in with your other commitments of work and family. You can study part-time, full-time or even unit by unit – really helpful if you want a gentle introduction to learning.

Across all our college centres, we offer a variety of vocational/leisure/training courses with something to suit everybody. With possible funding options available, why not try something new?

So if you are considering how to improve your skills for a future career or because you would like to get back into study longer term, then think West Highland College UHI.

Make 2018 the year YOU start something NEW.



**Apply now for winter courses
@ West Highland College UHI**
01397 874000 / whc.uhi.ac.uk

@Fort William

Art and Design with Ali Berardelli

Start Fri 12th Jan, 1 day a week for 23 weeks, £270

Music Performance with Rachel Walker

Start March: 10 weeks online study with 4 days (April 2-5th) in Fort William £240

Sound Production with Alasdair Murray

Start March: 10 weeks online study with 4 days (April 2-5th) in Fort William £240

Bricklaying and Plastering for Beginners 16/01-06/03: 6-9 pm £90

Painting and Decorating for Beginners 13/03-01/05: 6-9 pm £90

Carpentry for Beginners 14/03-02/05: 6-9 pm £90

Plumbing for Beginners Dates tbc 6-9pm £90

Funding may be available to help towards the cost. Please call for more info.

@Mallaig

Maritime Skills

Start: 14th Feb, 3 days a week for 19 weeks

@ All college centres

Part time study at HNC/HND and degree level with the University of the Highlands and Islands



University of the Highlands and Islands
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an lar

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New Year's resolutions don't have to be something to dread. Becoming an apprentice or taking college courses are fun and interesting ways 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 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 rediscover-

ing 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 often 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

our area. 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.

Many of us shy away from changing our look, but just a subtle revamp – for instance, cutting a wispy fringe into your hair, or swapping poker-straight locks for gently tousled – can re-energise your look. Consult your hair stylist about a cut or colour that flatters and is easy to care for.

Resolving to get counselling for an ongoing personal issue is a great way to really

ADVERTORIAL

New year, new you!

New Year is often a time when people start to consider what they hope to get out of life and start to make plans for the year ahead. Argyll College UHI has a range of short, full-time courses starting at the end of January that can be a great first step into education and will get you started on the right track.



Our brand new Access to HN Business, Administration and IT will prepare you for study in business or administration and IT at HNC level, and is ideal if you don't currently have the minimum entry requirements for these courses. We can tailor the course to your interests and even include some computing units which can set you on track for an NC Computing with Digital Media.

You'll learn lots of useful skills and we guarantee to interview you for one of these programmes if you complete the course successfully.

With the Scottish Government's commitment to increasing free childcare to 1,140 annual hours by 2020, there's never been a better time to think about a career in the childcare sector, as this

increasing entitlement will require a substantially larger workforce. Our range of SVQs in Social Services Children and Young People will give you lots of practical experience in working with children and young people as well as a nationally recognised qualification. You'll attend college for two days each week and spend the rest of time in a work placement, where you can put your new skills into practice.

Our Maritime Skills course is available in Oban and Lochgilphead. This combines SQA and RYA / MCA certification so you'll receive a comprehensive introduction to the maritime industries, as well as gaining internationally recognised certificates.

We also have a range part-time courses

which can help improve your skills and enhance your chances of getting a job. You might want to brush up on your computer skills with the European Computer Driving Licence. You can study at home, online, at a time that fits around your other commitments, or join an evening class to take a more structured approach.

As an academic partner of the University of the Highlands Islands, Argyll College also gives you access a wide range of part-time and full-time degree programmes, many of which can be started at the end of January.

Visit our website or call us to find out what's available at your local Argyll College centre and make 2018 the year you learn, achieve and advance towards your future.

APPLY NOW FOR OUR COURSES STARTING IN JANUARY



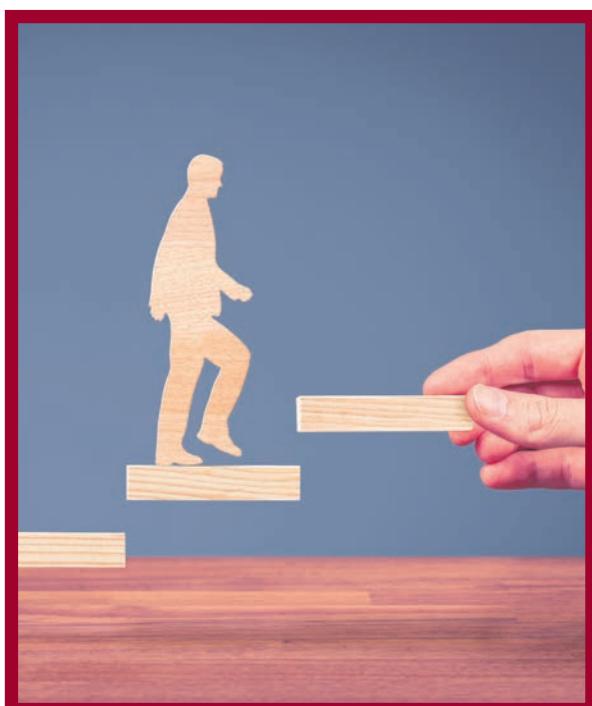
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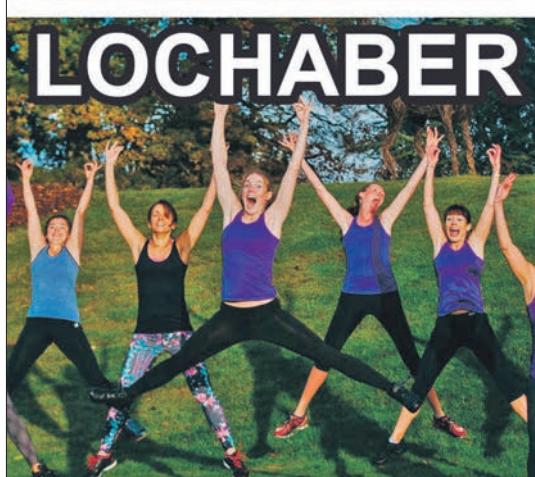
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Argyll College

Oban Centre,
Glensheallach
Business Park,
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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 2018.



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Learn how to keep accurate financial records, understand the key components of book-keeping, produce a bank reconciliation and understand VAT in this practical half day workshop.
Oban, 17th January 2018

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you curious about social media and what it can do for your business? Then this half day workshop is for you, it is designed for people who haven't used social media and would like to learn more.
Oban, 23rd January 2018

DOING MORE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you looking to take your social media to the next level? If you've already got a Facebook Business Page, a Twitter account and LinkedIn profile then this half day workshop is for you.
Oban, 24th January 2018

BUSINESS START-UP

A one and a half day workshop that covers business planning, finance, marketing and market research helping you turn your ideas into a practical and effective plan and move into self-employment.
Lochgilphead, 23rd and 24th January 2018

GET YOUR BUSINESS NOTICED (PR ON A BUDGET)

Get your business noticed without spending a penny. This workshop will show you how to get your business featured in the newspapers, on the radio and television and understand how the media works.
Oban, 25th January 2018

INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE TRADING

A workshop that will focus on the basics required for trading online, and will look at various tools, platforms and payment options available and online marketplaces Etsy, Amazon and ebay.
Lochgilphead, 30th January 2018

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

A workshop for business owners that want to improve their marketing, identify customers, understand competitors and plan an effective marketing strategy.
Oban, 31st January 2018

BUILD YOUR OWN BUSINESS WEBSITE

Learn from scratch how to build and manage your own business website. This workshop will give you an overview of how to plan, develop and manage your website.
Lochgilphead, 1st February 2018

To book call 1546 604030 or email g@argyll-bute.gov.uk



What can Interface do for your business?

What will 2018 bring for your business? Whether it's new customers, a better product, streamlined processes or improved services, have you thought about working with an academic partner to help achieve your next goal?

Local businesses such as Craine Communications in Oban, Johnnie Mac's Oysters on Lismore, Staffin Community Trust on Skye and Tarbet-based Zing Organics have all benefited from being matched to academic expertise to help develop their ideas.

After learning more about their business challenge, Interface was able to match them with academic partners following a search for relevant expertise across Scotland's universities, research institutes and colleges.

Whether it's a large international conglomerate or a small family-owned business, Interface can help.

'Interface provides a free and impartial service, open to businesses and organisations alike, wherever they are in Scotland,' said Interface



Business engagement executive Carol-Ann Adams.

'Businesses of all sizes can collaborate with universities, research institutes and colleges to help drive their ideas forward. You have the opportunity to work with academics based anywhere in Scotland – and you choose which one best suits your needs.'

No matter the type of business, there is expertise available to help it grow. While tourism, food and drink, engineering, energy and IT are some of the industries that have received assistance from Interface, their

friendly experts can work with any type of business in any industry sector.

'Interface will support and guide your business through the process of being matched with academic expertise and can help source funding options to help offset project costs,' Carol-Ann added.

'Impacts for the businesses we work with range from employing more people and expanding product ranges, to breaking into new markets and increasing turnover. In fact, 79 per cent of Interface-assisted businesses have or expect to increase turnover.'

Interface makes it easy for businesses to get a helping hand and in a recent survey, 98 per cent said they were either 'satisfied' or 'extremely satisfied' with Interface's service.

Stuart Craine, of Craine Communications, said: 'I would highly recommend this Interface experience to any company looking to progress with an idea or a project. To tap into such an academic source has been extremely valuable.'



For more information on Interface please visit www.interface-online.org.uk/oban-times, or contact the team in Inverness: Lorraine.thomson@interface-online.org.uk tel: 01463 245263 (for businesses in Argyll and the Isles) or Carol.Ann.Adams@interface-online.org.uk tel: 01463 245262 (for businesses in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross).



AN CÙRSA COMAIS GAELIC IMMERSION YEAR

'S e càrsa cànan air fad a th' anns a' Chùrsa Chomais a tha deasaichte airson luchd-ionnsachaidh eadar-mheadhanach leis an amas a bhith fileanta sa Ghàidhlig. 'S e adhartachadh sgilean labhairt is sgrìobhaidh prìomh amas a' chùrsa, ach thèid cuspairean eile a thoirt a-steach mar a thèid an càrsa air adhart. Nì oileanaich trì seachdainean de ghreis dhreuchdail ann an Gàidhlig an lùib a' mhodail Greis-gníomhachais.

Tha e na chùrsa fad bliadhna làn-uine aig a' Cholaiste is tha e co-ionnan ris a' Chùrsa Adhartais a tha ga teagastair astar fad dà bhliadhna. Ma shoirbhicheas le oileanaich anns a' Chùrsa Chomais bidh cothrom aca airson glusad gu dàrna bliadhna prògram a' cheuma.

An Cùrsa Comais is an intensive language learning course designed for intermediate level learners whose aim is fluency in the language. The major focus is on language skills, both speaking and writing, but other subjects will be introduced as the course progresses. Students on An Cùrsa Comais undertake a three week work placement within a Gaelic setting as part of the Greis-gníomhachais module.

The course is a one year full-time course at the College that is the equivalent to An Cùrsa Adhartais that is taught over 2 years long distance. If students successfully complete the Cert HE Cùrsa Comais they have the opportunity to progress to the second year of the degree programme.

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Scots kittiwakes facing extinction

SANDY NEIL

sneil@obantimes.co.uk

THE black-legged kittiwake, a small species of gull found in Scotland, has been added to the list of birds considered to be facing a high risk of global extinction.

The latest annual revision of birds on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species brings the total number of UK bird species considered to be facing the risk of extinction to nine.

Generally, the species is thought to have declined by around 40 per cent since the 1970s, justifying its upgrading from Least Concern to Vulnerable.

The RSPB argues climate change and fishing sets aside too little for the birds are pushing the kittiwake closer to

extinction by affecting the availability and quality of sand eels, a crucial food source, during the breeding season.

Over 70 per cent of the British breeding kittiwake population is found in Scotland. The RSPB reported 'alarming' trends in their numbers here, particularly in Orkney and Shetland where breeding birds have declined by 87 per cent since 2000, and on St Kilda in the Western Isles where 96 per cent of the breeding population has been lost.

Laura Bambini, RSPB Scotland's seabird recovery officer, said: 'Some efforts are underway to protect important seabird foraging areas in international waters, but there is still much more to be done around Scotland and the rest of the UK to protect our internationally important and increasingly threatened seabird populations.'



A pair of kittiwakes displaying at their nest

In the North Sea, sand eels provide a vital food source for many species of seabird and are crucial to the breeding success of kittiwakes. However, sand eels are threatened by rising sea temperatures and are the target of an industrial fishery. As a result, kittiwake food supplies could be affected by both local and large-scale processes.

Alex Kinnimonth, RSPB Scotland's head of marine policy, said: 'Frequent and widespread breeding failure is now being observed in several

of Scotland's breeding seabird species, particularly those reliant on sand eels. Kittiwakes are among the worst hit and are clearly struggling to cope with the effects of a changing food supply.'

'If they are to have any hope, it's critically important that we act on climate change, and make sure added pressure from fisheries, pollution and marine development don't make an already bad situation far worse.'

The other regularly occurring birds in the UK classed as 'vulnerable' to global extinction on the IUCN Red List are the Atlantic puffin, European turtle dove, pochard, Slavonian grebe, long-tailed duck, velvet scoter and aquatic warbler. The Balearic shearwater, a regularly-occurring migrant in the UK waters, is 'critically endangered'.



The Scottish crossbill is also under threat.

UK's first polar bear cub born in the Highlands

DAVID MCPHEE

dmcphée@obantimes.co.uk

THE first polar bear born in the UK for 25 years hails from the Highlands.

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) announced that its resident female polar bear Victoria had given birth at the Highland Wildlife Park.

Una Richardson, the park's head keeper responsible for carnivores, said: 'We first heard promising noises in the week before Christmas and these have now continued into the new year.'

'Because we don't have sight inside her cubbing box, we can't be sure if Victoria has had more than one cub but we can confirm the birth.'

'While we are absolutely thrilled, we are not celebrating prematurely as polar bear cubs have a high mortality rate in the first weeks of life due to their undeveloped immune system and the mother's exaggerated need for privacy, with any disturbance risking the cub being killed or abandoned.'

'We will continue to monitor Victoria and very much hope for the best possible news when



The polar bear cub's mother, Victoria, with a frozen birthday cake.

she emerges around March.'

'Until then, Victoria's enclosure will be closed to the public and keeper activity will be at a

minimum to give her offspring every chance of survival.'

Newborn polar bear cubs are

blind, around 30cm long and

weigh little more than a guinea pig. They only open their eyes when they are one month old and are entirely dependent

on their mother, feeding on fat-rich milk to grow quickly, weighing around ten to 12kg by the time they leave their den.'

Climate change is a threat to birds

THE distribution, numbers and behaviour of birds in the UK, including many in Scotland, are altering because of a changing climate, according to a new report.

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

The report highlights how species are moving northwards within the UK, shifting their distributions as temperatures rise and the habitats change.

Many of Britain's rarer breeding birds are at a high risk of extinction in the UK, based on projections of how climate will become less suitable for these species.

For species such as the dotterel, whimbrel, common scoter and snow bunting, whose UK breeding populations are found almost entirely in Scotland,

population declines have been considerable already. Breeding success of the Slavonian grebe has also been impacted.

With Scotland on average 11 per cent wetter between 2007-2016 than 1961-1990, periods of very heavy rainfall during its breeding season leads to smaller populations.

The reports also show that the Scottish crossbill, the UK's only endemic bird and only found in Scotland, is at risk of becoming extinct.

However, the report contains better news for some birds which are finding the changed climatic conditions more favourable in Scotland.

Nuthatch, goldfinch and chaffinch have been expanding their range into Scotland over the past 30 years with large increases in the number of these birds breeding here.

While the UK cuckoo population has declined by 43 per cent between 1995 and 2015, over the same period numbers in Scotland have increased by a third. Similar patterns have also been noted in numbers of willow warbler, house martins and tree pipits in Scotland.

THIS WEEK'S WALKS

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

THE WALK leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy.

Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk. Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk.

Thursday January 11

Coire Ghiubhasan, Glen Etive

A pleasant walk along the banks of mountain burns. Pure clear

water tumbling over rocky slabs and boulders, and an impressive hidden glen, steep-sided and craggy, surrounded by hills and corries.

Start from the bridge over the River Etive at Alltchaorunn, NN197513. Limited parking is available in the vicinity. Cross the bridge and follow the track to the Alltchaorunn Cottage, sadly damaged by fire in 2015.

Follow the path S beside the Alt'a Chaoirnain. It curves E above the confluence with the Allt Coire Ghiubhasan, which it crosses on a single-plank bridge at NN199500. Cross the bridge, climb the path

up the bank to a junction and turn left. Follow the path SE in to Coire Ghiubhasan, through some natural woodland and along the bank of the burn. Continue up to the waterfall at NN 216492. Return by the outward route.

Grade: L; Distance: 8km; Height to climb: 350m; Map(s): LR41/50, EX384. Meet at Glencoe village car park at 9.30am. Start of walk at 10am. Leader: JGerry Gilbert 07765 830203.

Sunday January 14

Beinn Sgulaird, Glen Creran

Beinn Sgulaird rises from the sea at the head of Loch Creran. A traverse of its high-level un-

dulating ridge affords splendid views of both coast and hills intertwined in this fascinating landscape.

Start from the lay-by near Druimavuic at NN008451. Take the track which leads around the back of Druimavuic Ho, through a wood and on to the open hillside. Stay on the track, climbing to about 160m alt at NN014445. The route now ascends the SW ridge to a small summit at 488m then continues rising E to a summit at 863m. The ridge turns NE to Meall Garbh at 848m and curves up to the main summit of Beinn Sgulaird at 937m. Descend

NE at first. The ridge twist and turns, then heads E down to a small lochan on a col, then up to the small summit of Stob Gaibhre. Continue the descent E for about 1.2Km to a ring contour at NN075467 then head N down a steep spur to reach the track in Glen Ure. Follow the track W down Glen Ure to the bridge at NN045480. Cross the bridge and follow the track around Glenure Lodge to the estate approach road, then NW to finish at Elleric CP. Transport required

Grade: S; Distance: 13km; Height to climb: 1,050m; Map(s): LR50, EX376/384. Meet at N NE at first. The ridge twist and turns, then heads E down to a small lochan on a col, then up to the small summit of Stob Gaibhre. Continue the descent E for about 1.2Km to a ring contour at NN075467 then head N down a steep spur to reach the track in Glen Ure. Follow the track W down Glen Ure to the bridge at NN045480. Cross the bridge and follow the track around Glenure Lodge to the estate approach road, then NW to finish at Elleric CP. Transport required

Grade: S; Distance: 13km; Height to climb: 1,050m; Map(s): LR50, EX376/384. Meet at N

Ballachulish school at 8.30am or Longsdale Road car park, Oban at 8.30am. Start of walk at 9.15am. Leader: Toril Frantzen 07788 264007.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Please see full walk details at www.nevishillwalking.club.

If anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevishillwalking.club.

Saturday January 13

Beinn Chabhair, Glen Falloch.

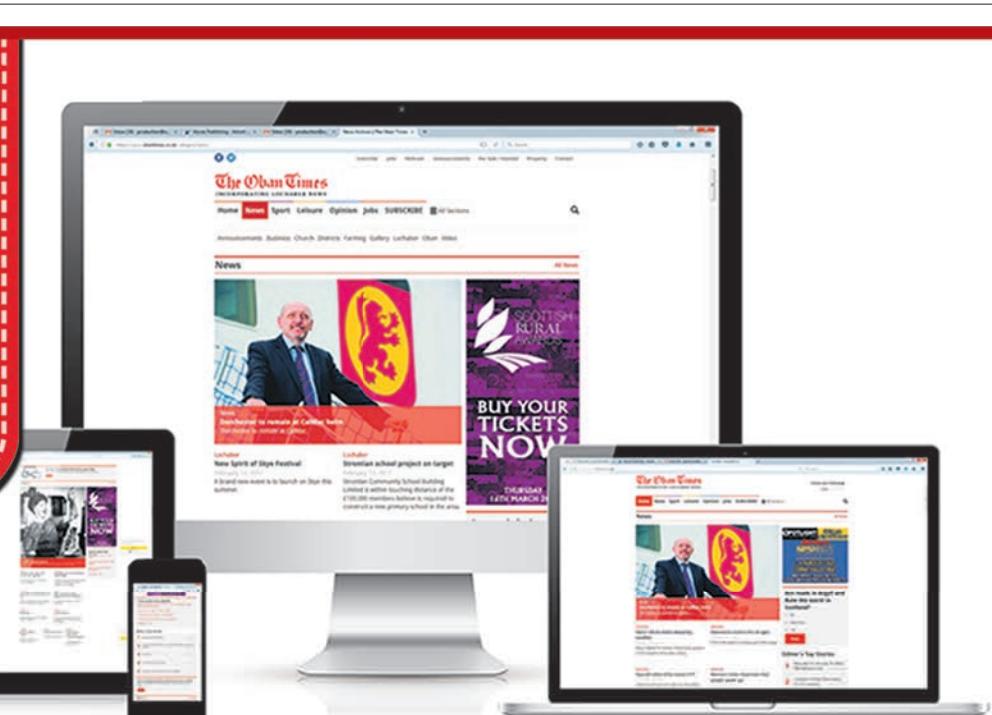
Start at Inverarnan Hotel, Loch Lomond side on A82. Head N on the A82 and across to Ben Glas

farm. Follow up the steep path beside the falls and continue along N side of Ben Glas Burn to Lochan Beinn Chabhair. Skirt the lochan and go NE up steep slopes to join the NW ridge of Beinn Chabhair. Follow the ridge about 1km to cairn and then to summit on top of small crag.

Descend the NW ridge back to the col then continue over Meall nan Tarmachan and down to Lochan a Chaissteil. Descend over Meall Mor nan Eag and pick up the outward path.

Distance: 11km; Height to climb: 1,000m. Suggested and coordinated by Chris Tracey.

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BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK... 2018

Big Energy Saving Week runs from 22 to 28 January 2018. It is a national campaign to help people cut their fuel bills and get all the financial support they are entitled to.

The week focuses on raising public awareness of how to switch energy supplier or tariff to get the best deal, access discounts and make homes energy efficient. This is the 7th Big Energy Saving Week and is a partnership between Citizens Advice, the Energy Saving Trust and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy with the support of numerous organisations, charities and companies.

People can use the Citizens Advice price comparison tool to compare prices from different energy suppliers. Visit and save today!

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-a-better-energy-deal/compare-gas-and-electricity-prices>

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Advertisorial

Loans from the Scottish Government help homes stay warm and cut bills

THE Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland interest-free loan is helping homeowners make energy and money-saving improvements to their homes.

Up to £32,500 per property is currently available to owner-occupiers and some registered private sector landlords in Scotland.

The loan can be used for energy efficiency improvements like insulation and replacing single glazing with double glazing, with cashback grants of up to 25 per cent also available for a limited time.

Home renewables systems such as biomass and solar photovoltaic are covered as well as connections to an approved district heating scheme powered by renewable energy.

Loans must be used to improve existing residential buildings. New buildings under construction, where the property is already owned by the intended owner occupier, are also eligible for support for renewables systems or district heating connections but not energy efficiency improvements.

Funding is on a first-come, first-served basis and is subject to availability.

Cashback grants are not available for renewable technologies like solar PV or for district heating connections.

Only Home Energy Scotland can arrange to have an application form sent out; third parties like installers or letting agents cannot apply on a householder's behalf.

Work must not commence on any installation until a loan offer in writing is received.

All applications will undergo credit and affordability checks.

Successful applicants who claim funding will need to pay an administrative fee of 1.5 per cent of the total loan value up to a maximum of £150 per application.

The complete loan terms and conditions are stated in the application form.

Get in touch now.

If anyone is interested in applying or would like more information, please call Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282 (free from landlines and most mobiles).

Pet Idol

Time to vote for your
WINNER!



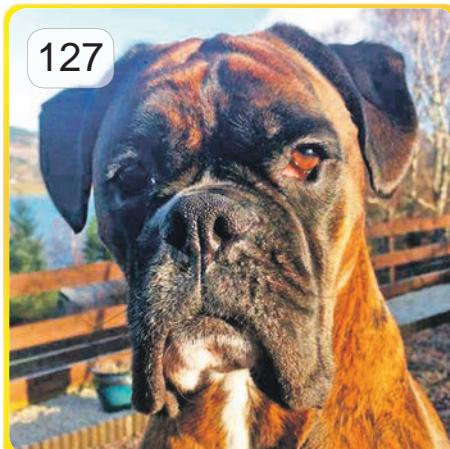
029
Marni
Jack Russell Terrier
Caol, Fort William



068
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072
Daniel
Goldfish
Lochgilphead



127
Bracken
Boxer
Fort William



207
Max
Cheviot tup lamb
Oban



277
Bear
Dog
North Connel



280
Hamish
Cockapoo
Tarbert



282
Keira
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332
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Dog
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348
Finn
Cockapoo
Campbeltown

Time to vote for your WINNER!

It seems that readers all agree that a pet is not just for Christmas. Despite being preoccupied with all-things festive you continued to vote in your thousands before, during and after Santa's big day, and we are now in a position to reveal the top 10 pets in the race to become Pet Idol. Our staff are worn out counting the votes, but we are nearly ready to crown our champion. Voting for the winner is now open and you have until 10am on Monday 22nd January to get your votes to us. We will then announce our winner on Thursday 25th/Friday 26th January. Go on, give it one last push for your favourite furball and get voting.

VOTING COUPON

FINAL

I would like to vote for:

Pet number*:.....

Pet's name:

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

*Pet number must be supplied. This can be found at the top left of each pet photograph.

Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted and will not count as one vote.

You may send in multiple voting coupons in one envelope.

Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 22nd January.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES **LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times** **Argyllshire Advertiser** **Campbeltown Courier**

Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 22nd January.

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

FARMING NEWS

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Farmers sign up in their thousands for cattle record system

MORE than 4,000 cattle keepers have now registered on the ScotMoves system in the year since its introduction.

The online system provides a simple, fast and convenient way for beef and dairy cattle businesses to record cattle moves within their enterprise. This information provides added transparency on the location of cattle within Scotland and will be vital in controlling and eradicating diseases.

Additionally, it provides added reassurance in checking that cattle in Scotland continue to meet the eligibility criteria for BSE Negligible Risk – adding value to our beef sector.

Welcoming the landmark, Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing said: 'The information on the location of cattle in Scotland contained in the Scot-



Fergus Ewing.

Moves system provides greater reassurance to government and keepers that Scotland is well placed to prevent and control exotic diseases such as foot-and-mouth and endemic diseases such as bovine virus diarrhoea.

I am therefore delighted that since its introduction on January 1, 2017, the 4,000

registered cattle-keepers have recorded nearly half a million cattle movements. This is new information, which increases the providence, quality and resilience of the sector as these keepers are making the effort to record these moves on a system that is easy to use and well designed.

'Through the introduction of the ScotMoves system, we are increasing the resilience and quality of our cattle sector, as a next step a new bovine EID pilot will start in the spring.'

ScotMoves replaced CTS Links on January 1, 2017, following detailed discussions between industry, government, the EPIC Centre of Expertise and ScotEID.

All keepers who have registered on the system have recently been sent a card to

remind them to add or remove their additional holdings on the ScotMoves system and to renew their exemptions.

This is a simple process that is carried out on their account on the ScotEID website or by contacting the ScotEID Information Centre.

Prior to the system's introduction, and in the event of a disease outbreak such as foot-and-mouth disease, the location of more than half a million cattle would not be known until animal health inspectors arrived on farm.

This potentially allowed for unreported and unknown contacts between livestock leading to disease transmission, which could significantly prolong the time taken to trace contacts and the time required to control and eradicate an outbreak.

Around the markets

STIRLING – United Auctions on Thursday January 4 sold 4299 prime sheep comprising 3010 lambs selling to an average of 175.5ppk and 1289 ewes and rams. Old season lambs (3010) Luckenburn (BTex) £103; West Balgothrie (Tex) £97; Ancaster (Suff) £94; West Balgothrie (Char) £92; Little Raith (X) £90; Toxside (Chev) £89.50; Chalmerstone (BFL) £88; Harvie's mailing (Mule) £83.50; Dirnanean (BF) £75.

Old Season Lambs (3010) Luckenburn (BTex) 229p; Ballechin (Tex) 211p; Groan (Chev) 196p; Easter Cash (Char) 191p; Longfaugh (Suff) 191p; Wester Middleton (X) 190p; Little Raith (Mule) 174p; Chalmerstone (BFL) 169p; Dirnanean (BF) 170p.

Ewes (1289) Chalmerstone (Tex) £130; Marvington (Suff) £100; Fortacres (X) £82; High Milndovan (Chev) £82; Duncairne (Mule) £80; Luckenburn (BTex) £82; Hatton Knowe (Zwa) £76; Little Raith (BF) £46.

Rams- Duncairne (Tex) £134; Quixwood (BTex) £88; Duncairne (Suff) £86; Meadows of Ballied (Chev) £80; Drummond Estates (BF) £66.

STIRLING – Caledonian Marts on Thursday January 4 sold 208 cattle comprising 116 prime bullocks, heifers and young bulls, 76 cast cows and bulls, and 16 calves.

Prime cattle of all classes upheld the prices achieved throughout December unlike some establishments.

Bullocks averaged 217p
Heifers averaged 224p
Beef bulls averaged 205p
Beef cows averaged 124p
Dairy cows averaged 89p
Bullocks sold to 242ppkg for a British Blue from Todhall, Cupar to J Hastie, Butcher,

Markinch, and to an astonishing £1716 for a Limousin from South Flanders, Kippen.

Heifers sold to 245ppkg (twice) for Limousins from Learielaw, Broxburn, and Upper Kinneil, Linlithgow, both selling to Hugh A Black & Son, Stirling, also to £1618 gross for a Limousin from Learielaw.

Bulls sold to 208ppkg for a Limousin from Dyke, Milton of Campsie, and to £1672 for the same animal.

Leading prices

Bullocks ppkg:
240p Easter Ochtermuthill & Learielaw

238p Moorfield & Easter Ochtermuthill

230p Faskine & Moorfield

228p Spittal (Gardner), Cander-

mains, Learielaw & Easterton (Owen)

225p Candermain, Faskine, Moorfield, Spittal & Todhall

222p Seggarsdean, Parkfergus & Faskine

Heifers ppkg:

242p Borlick & Easter Ochter-

muthill

240p Meadowend & Knockhouse

238p (Twice) Knockhouse, South

Woodlane, Learielaw, Meadowend & Bankhead (Kerr)

235p Borlick, Spittal & Knock-

house

232p South Woodlane & Easter

Ochtermuthill

230p Wester Carmuir, South

Woodlane & Bankhead

228p Over Inveraz, Upper Kinneil

& Easterton

Prices per head;

Bullocks

£1632 South Flanders

£1630 & £1608 Balkaithy

£1560 & £1550 Learielaw

£1527 Parkfergus

Heifers

£1603 Knockhouse

£1587 & £1577 Easter Ochter-

muthill

£1550 Upper Kinneil
£1532 Knockhouse
Also forward were 76 cast cows and bulls.
Beef cows averaged 124p selling to 177p for a Limousin from M Jack, Carriston, Star of Markinch, and to £1500 again for a Limousin from A & K Farming, West Woodlane, Gargunnock.

Dairy cows averaged 89p selling to 118p from A Sibbald, Greenrigg, Lochgreen and to £800 from the same home.

Other leading prices
Beef cows per head
£1460 Upper Kinneil
£1370 Gillandersland

£1360 Carriston

£1300 & £1150 West Woodlane

Beef cows per kilo

166p Upper Kinneil

164p Bankhead

159p, 156p & 153p West Woodlane

152p Bankhead

150p Gillandersland

Dairy Cows per head

£730 & £690 Blairmains

£690 Greenrigg (twice) & Summerhouse

Dairy cows per kilo

104p Greenrigg & Summerhouse

103p Blairmains & Greenrigg

99p Blairmains

Also forward were 16 calves, both beef and dairy

Top price of the day was £190 for an AAx Heifer calf from J B Steel, Kibbleston, Renfrewshire.

Other Leading Prices;

Beef

£180 Shankhead (AA)

£72 Kibbleston (AAx)

£60 Kibbleston (Bx)

Dairy

£62 Nyadd (twice)

The next sale of calves will be Thursday January 18. For information call 07561 305922.

Kirk appoints its first 'farming minister'



The Rev Chris Blackshaw could be the first of a number of farming ministers.

THE Church of Scotland has appointed its first dedicated 'farming minister' to help support people in the hard-pressed agricultural industry.

The Rev Chris Blackshaw visits farms across Ayrshire to provide spiritual and family support, counselling and encourages people to buy local produce.

The 57-year-old also interacts with young farmers' groups, National Farmers' Union Scotland representatives, visits the weekly livestock mart and attends annual agriculture shows.

Mr Blackshaw, a farmer's son, will also draw together groups of people linked to

the industry such as vets, government agencies, livestock mart staff, those servicing the farming industry and estate workers.

A retired police sergeant, he has experience enabling him to provide support to people dealing with a wide range of issues such as bereavement, addictions, illness, depression, stress, suicide and isolation.

The 'innovative and creative' pioneer ministry post is an initial five-year appointment supported by the Church of Scotland's Ministries Council and the Presbytery of Ayr.

The new role has been welcomed by National Farmers' Union Scotland and rural

charity RSABI, who say the perilous state of the ailing sector is taking a 'serious' toll on the health and wellbeing of many people who too often suffer in silence.

Mr Blackshaw, who was previously a minister to the agricultural community in Cumbria, said: 'I absolutely love my new job and the feedback I have received since I started in September has been very positive.'

'I was born and bred on a Derbyshire hill farm and have a good understanding of farming.'

'There are not many jobs I couldn't do on a farm so this is the ideal job for me – showing people the love of Christ by walking alongside them.'

Mr Blackshaw, who owns a smallholding in Cumbria and has seven English longhorn cattle, said farming can be a very isolating profession.

'For some farmers, there are not many people who they can turn to and have a confidential conversation with,' he explained. 'I have met vets who have told me they often go back to farms, not to look at the animals but to make sure the farmers are okay.'

The five-year pilot post could be rolled out across other parts of rural Scotland in the future if it proves successful in reconnecting rural Ayrshire with Christianity.

Hogmany on the Isle of Coll

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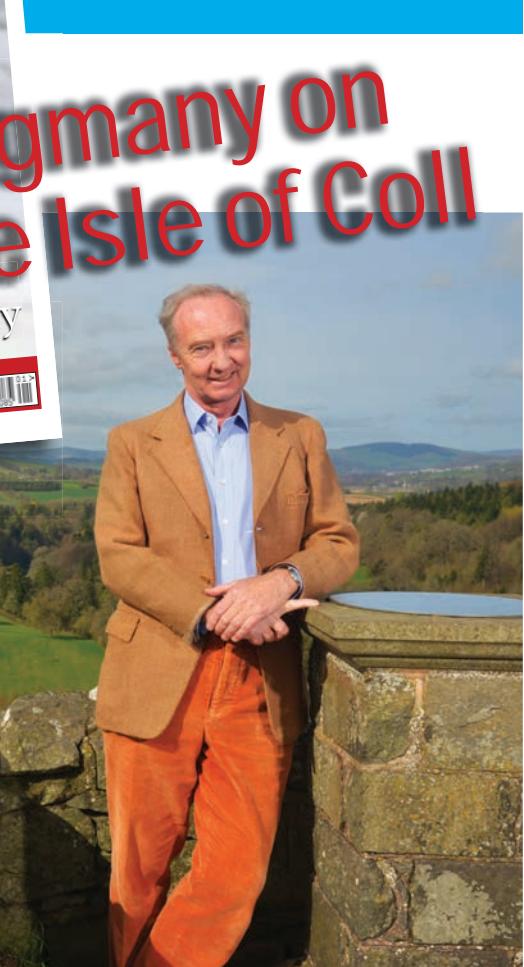
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Details on support post-Brexit is welcomed

SCOTTISH Land and Estates has welcomed new details on post-Brexit rural support and has urged the UK and Scottish governments to work together to deliver further progress in future.

The organisation, which represents land-based businesses across Scotland, said the speech by UK Environment Secretary Michael Gove to the Oxford Farming Conference recognises its own view that a move towards improved profitability in farming, with public support

for public goods, was required but that a significant transitional period was necessary.

David Johnstone, chairman of Scottish Land and Estates, said: 'It is pleasing that we are now starting to see more detail emerge on rural support for the post-Brexit landscape.'

'The Environment Secretary has set out where he wants to see change delivered in four key areas and, in particular, his latest commitment to ensuring transitional arrangements from the CAP is to be welcomed.'

It is clear that the UK government's long-term vision sees public support being delivered in return for public goods, with a greater emphasis on enhancing natural capital such as carbon storage, and improved soil, air and water quality. This chimes with our own thinking in our policy paper, *A new direction for Scottish land management*.

'The Scottish Government has already signalled its support for a suitable transitional period and the speech from Mr Gove underlines the importance of both governments working collaboratively to develop the mechanics that will create the best possible environment for Scottish farming moving forward after Brexit.'



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RENAULT CROSSOVER RANGE EVEN MORE APPEALING AT W.D. SEMPLE IN 2018

RENAULT has announced a new tempting offer to beat the January Blues with up to £2,000 off a new crossover when customers part exchange their old car. Customers will have to be quick, though, as the offer will end March 31, 2018.

As part of the offer, customers can part exchange any old car and receive up to £500 off the rugged New Captur small-crossover, up to £1,500 on the muscular family-size Kadjar or £2,000 off the sophisticated All-New Koleos large SUV. What's more, this offer can be used in conjunction with all other Renault retail offers currently available.

For those looking for a smaller car, but still with versatility and personalisation options, the newly refreshed New Captur is available from £15,115 on-the-road when used in the part exchange offer. The New Captur provides a high level of specification across the range such as automatic climate control, MediaNav infotainment and navigation system with seven-inch touchscreen and removable, washable upholstery. This rises to the truly luxurious at the top-of-the-range to include a panoramic glass sunroof, hands-free parking, leather upholstery and blindspot warning.



Buyers in the market for a larger, family-sized vehicle need look no further than the Kadjar crossover with its seductive, muscular styling, priced from £18,285 on-the-road when used in the part exchange offer. With a high level of specification on every trim, such as climate control, lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition, R-Link 2 multimedia navigation system, electrically adjustable and heated door mirrors and Bose sound system, the Kadjar is perfect for family journeys both long and short.

The newest vehicle in the Renault range – the All-New Koleos, priced from £25,500 on-the-road when used in the part exchange offer – has an array of refined features making any trip more comfortable for both driver and passengers. The All-New Koleos provides an opening panoramic glass sunroof, automatic dual-zone climate control and heated and cooled cup holders, rising to hands-free parking, heated and ventilated two-tone Nappa leather seats and 13-speaker Bose sound system at the top of the range.

For further details on the offers, including full terms and conditions, and Renault's extensive model range, please visit www.renault.co.uk/offers.

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No 1 SUBARU UK SALES DEALER COMES TO OBAN THIS WEEKEND



S&S Services in Ayr your No1 dealer for Subaru UK is looking set to win Dealer of the Year 2017 for an impressive 11th time. The family-owned business has sold Subaru models to buyers across Ayrshire since 1978. Paul Tunnicliffe, managing director of Subaru UK, said at their last award winning: 'S&S are the epitome of a great Subaru dealer – hard-working, passionate and totally committed to the brand and to their customers. They have unsurprisingly been at the very top of the league table of dealers for many years now, and I cannot be more pleased for them to receive this honour.' John Spicer, dealer principal at S&S Services, said: 'I would like to thank staff and all of our customers for helping us achieve this fantastic award.' Located in Heathfield Road, S&S Services is one of the longest-serving Subaru dealers in the UK.

BE THE FIRST TO PREVIEW THE ALL NEW ALL-NEW SUBARU XV AND IMPREZA THIS WEEKEND!

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Come and see the all new Impreza and XV this weekend at Tesco Oban.

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To request an application form and/or a detailed job specification, please see contact details below.
To apply and/or request a detailed job specification, please contact:
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Closing date: Friday 26 January 2018
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Salary: Competitive plus overtime
We are also recruiting for two Marine Operatives to join our net washing team, which operates across all Upper Loch Fyne sites. Under the direction of the Site Manager, duties will include cleaning nets, operating and maintaining net cleaning equipment to a high standard. Applicants must have sound practical and problem solving skills along with good standards of fitness, with the ability to pass a full ML5 medical. Previous net washing experience would be useful, but is not essential as full training will be provided. As this position involves travelling, a full clean driving licence is essential.
To apply and/or request a detailed job specification, please contact:
Natalie Randamy
The Scottish Salmon Company
8 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7JA
Tel: 0131 718 8547
natalie.randamy@scottishsalmon.com
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1) Depot Administrator

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The ideal candidate will possess:

- Previous supervisory experience which demonstrates an aptitude for developing people and building an effective, efficient team.
 - A good standard of computer literacy and a good level of familiarity and competency with general office administration.
 - An ability to work on your own initiative as well as part of a larger team.
 - Good problem-solving skills coupled with an ability to plan ahead and utilise resources efficiently.
 - Experience with stock control and the scheduling of delivery runs would be an advantage.
 - Forklift experience and ADR qualification desirable but training can be provided for the right candidate.
 - A reasonable standard of physical fitness is required as the job will entail regular handling of gas cylinders.
 - A full clean driving licence desirable.
- Pay dependant on experience and qualifications, attractive salary available to right candidate.

2) HGV Drivers

Experienced HGV drivers required Oban and Mull. Work will involve driving a variety of vehicles including mixers, tippers and skip lorries. Applicants must have Class 2 licence (LGV Category C) and up to date CPC hours. Competitive rates of pay.

3) Delivery Driver

Reliable delivery driver required in Lochgilphead area. ADR and CPC hours preferred although full training will be available to the right candidate.

4) Apprentice Mechanic

Apprentice plant mechanic required for our Oban workshop. Training divided between practical workshop experience and college instruction. Minimum three National 4 or 5s or equivalent required. Successful candidate will be reliable, diligent with an aptitude for and interest in mechanical engineering.

All above:

Please send CV, clearly stating which position you are interested in to: susan@argyllresources.co.uk or post to: Argyll Resources Group, c/o John MacLachlan Ltd Head Office, Torran Gorm Industrial Estate, Oban, Argyll PA34 4PL. Tel: 01631 566370

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SFHA responds to Draft Scottish Budget

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) has responded to the Draft Scottish Budget announcement by Finance Secretary Derek Mackay by welcoming the increase of £138.9 million for the More Homes Programme. (1)

Funding for the More Homes programme has increased from £583.6 million in the 2017–18 Budget to £722.5 million in the 2018–19 Draft Budget.

Sally Thomas, SFHA Chief Executive, said: 'The increase of £138.9 million for the More Homes Programme is a very welcome announcement for the social housing sector. This funding – and the increase in the planning budget of £4.1 million – should further assist our members in contributing towards the Scottish Government's 50,000 affordable homes target and help to house more people who are in desperate need of a home of their own.'

'The investment will also secure jobs and training opportunities, key challenges identified by our members in our Brexit report earlier this year.'

'Access to the National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland and the Building Scotland Fund will be important for Scotland's construction industry to secure new, innovative housing.'

Ms Thomas continued: 'While we welcome the government's commitment to invest £60 million in a Low Carbon Innovation Fund to deliver innovative low carbon energy infrastructure solutions, we are disappointed to see that there is only an increase of

WANTED

Professional couple relocating to Oban are looking to rent somewhere from the end of January.

Rural location preferred but anything considered. We are non-smokers and have no pets. References available.

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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 online at <http://wam.hightland.gov.uk> or electronically at your nearest Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.hightland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z

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
17/05522/FUL	Acharacle Primary School, Acharacle	Installation of air source heat pump
17/05597/FUL	Land 100M NE of Eilean Shona House, Eilean Shona, Acharacle	Alterations and part change of use of boathouse to form upper floor self catering unit
17/05861/FUL	Fasgadh A Deas, Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle	Erection of house and garage
17/05862/FUL	Land 3520M SW of Bothy, Kingie, Invergarry	Small scale run of river hydroelectric scheme on the Allt Garaidh Ghualainch
17/05863/FUL	Land 2315M South of Garrygualach, Kingie, Invergarry	Small scale run of river hydroelectric scheme on Greenfield Burn
17/05866/PIP	Land 35M SE of MacEachen And Carr Boat Builders, Toigal, Morar	Erection of house
17/05916/FUL	Land North West of Coire Dubh, Glenfinnan	Erection of house and formation of access
17/05917/FUL	Land West of Struth A' Mhuilin, Glenfinnan	Erection of house

Time period for comments is 14 days

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX

Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

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Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 13:30-16:00 hours Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
17/03168/PP	Renewal of planning permission 14/02721/PP (formation of jetty on the foreshore for private recreational use)	Land South West Of Gorsten Farmhouse Lochdon Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA64 6AP	Sub Post Office Craignure
17/03128/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Plot 2 Land North West Of Alesha Croft Drive Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
17/03171/PP	Demolition of ruin and erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of new vehicular access.	Ruin At Mishnish Lochs Dervaig Road Glengorm Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6QE	Tobermory Area Office
17/03175/PP	Change of use of garden shed to form self-catering accommodation.	Garden Ground Of The Coach House Kinloch Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4QT	Oban Area Office
17/03077/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse (amendment to foul drainage system and access path design relative to approved planning permission 15/02926/PP) - Retrospective	Iona Port Appin Appin Argyll And Bute PA38 4DE	Sub Post Office Connell
17/03075/PP	Erection of 10 affordable dwellings, installation of private drainage system and formation of vehicular access	Land South West Of Red Lodge Barcadine Oban Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Connell
17/03024/PP	Demolish existing cottage and workshop. Erection of replacement dwellinghouse with garage, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access.	Land South West Of Stronachroibh Isle Of Lismore Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Lismore
17/03213/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle 14/02626/PPP (Site for erection of one dwellinghouse and installation of shared private drainage system)	Kentallen Farm Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JS	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
17/03214/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle 14/02627/PPP (Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse and installation of shared private drainage system)	Kentallen Farm Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JS	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
17/03058/PP	Installation of upvc replacement windows and air source heat pump (retrogressive)	10 Main Street Port Charlotte Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA48 7TX	Sub Post Office Port Charlotte
17/03059/LIB	Installation of upvc replacement windows, air source heat pump and alterations to internal layout	10 Main Street Port Charlotte Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA48 7TX	Sub Post Office Port Charlotte
17/03183/PP	Erection of garage with flat above	Garden Ground Of Achallic House Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1JQ	Sub Post Office Taynuilt
17/03070/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 12 metre high telegraph pole, formation of 15m access track and associated works	Land At Layby (approx 220M South East Of Ardura Lodge) Ardura Estate Ardrara Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Craignure
17/03065/PP	Installation of ground source district heating scheme comprising boreholes, underground pipework and installation of 9 heat pump cabinets	Village Of Iona Isle Of Iona Argyll And Bute PA76 6SJ	Sub Post Office Isle of Iona
17/03119/PP	Erection of sub station building, boundary fence and gate, upgrading works to existing access track	Land Approx 100 Metres South Of Taynuilt Water Pumping Station Taynuilt Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Taynuilt
17/03158/PP	Alterations and change of use of store/ workshop to form holiday accommodation including demolition of timber storage shed and erection of detached garage	Land South East Of Argyll Arms Hotel Buinessan Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Buinessan Isle of Mull
17/03127/PP	Erection of a dwellinghouse and boat shed and installation of private drainage system	Land East Of An Taigh Fada Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
17/02842/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 15 metre high column and associated works	Land North East Of Blaighour Farmhouse East Loochaweside Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA33 1BW	Sub Post Office Dalmally
17/03105/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land Adjacent To Tigh-An-Lagan Kilniver Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4UJ	Sub Post Office Kilnford
17/03212/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage	Plot 5 Land North West Of Carrraig Craigspuir Lane Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Tobermory Area Office

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Councils website.

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BIRTHS

MACGREGOR- Mark and Michelle would like to announce the safe arrival of Karla Moyra Macgregor on December 23, 2017, at the Belford Hospital. A little sister to Conner, Courtney and Kelsey. Special thanks to the Midwife team at the Belford.

ENGAGEMENTS

MACKAY - RAYBOULD - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Vairi Fiona youngest daughter of Joanie and John MacKay, Tobermory to Alex Michael, youngest son of Julie and Mike Raybould, Carlisle, on Christmas day.

DEATHS

HAY - Kenneth Ross passed away peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on January 3, 2018 aged 89. Loving husband to Ann, Dad to Geoff and Neil and daughters-in-law Nicki and Sue, Gramps to Jessica and Jodie, Grandad to Elliot. Sadly missed by family and friends. Funeral Dalmally Parish Church at midday January 16. All Welcome. Family flowers only.

MACGILLIVRAY - Robert. Peacefully at Lynn of Lorne Care home Oban on January 1, 2018, Robert formerly of Callander. Loving husband to the late Ellen MacGillivray and much-loved friend by all. Funeral service to be held on January 12 at Callander kirk at 1.15pm followed by committal in Callander cemetery, to which all friends are respectfully invited.

MACKAY - Donald. Peacefully after a long illness bravely borne at home in Callander on the January 3, 2018, Donald, much loved son of the late Alexander and Janet MacKay brother of Alastair and Cathy and uncle to the family. Funeral service will be held on Tuesday January 16, 2018 at 11am in Callander Kirk thereafter to Callander Cemetery. To which all family and friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Strathcarron Hospice and Bracklinn Doctors Surgery.

MACKINNON - Suddenly but peacefully, Iain MacKinnon (the Man), at his home in Kilmoluig, Tiree on December 14, 2017 aged 54 years. Much loved father of Arlene and Heather and adored grandfather of Adyson, beloved son of Morag and the late John (Iain) MacKinnon and brother of Angus and Grant, dear brother-in-law, uncle and great-uncle. A good friend and neighbour to many. Sorely missed.

MACLEAN - Peacefully at Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch, on January 8, 2018, in his 90th year, Matt MacLean, beloved husband of the late Meryl, a dear dad, father-in-law, grandpa and great-grandpa. Sadly missed.

MACPHAIL - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital on January 2, 2018, Neil Alexander, devoted brother of Chrissie and a dearly loved uncle. Sorely missed.

MACDONALD - Gail, Gary and their families would like to offer most heartfelt thanks to relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy following the loss of our cherished mum and granny, Lorna. Sincere thanks to the Rev. Gordon Thomson for his personnel uplifting service, and to Uncle Bill for reading the poem mum chose, so well. Grateful thanks to Catriona and staff at Hamish Hoey for their caring and efficient service. To the Flower Basket and Petals for the beautiful floral tributes. To Joan, Colin and their staff at the Olive Garden for their kindness and great food. To every one of the fantastic carers over the last two years who looked after mum so well and shared many stories and laughs with her. Grateful thanks to the doctors, nurses and staff at the Lorn Medical Centre for their excellent care and attention. A huge thanks to all

MARTIN - Morag (née Mackay). Peacefully at Home Farm Nursing Home, Portree surrounded by her loving family, on December 26, 2017. Dearly loved wife of Kenny and mother to Jessie, Mairi, Duncan, Alasdair and loving granny and great-granny. Funeral service was held on Saturday December 30 at the Church of Scotland, Portree.

MCVICAR - It is with great sadness that Judith, John and Kirsty announce the peaceful passing of John Robert, at home, surrounded by love, on Sunday December 31, 2017. A wonderful, loving and much loved husband, a proud and adored father, beloved brother and great friend to many. Funeral service to be held in Meigle Parish Church on Tuesday January 16 at 1.30pm followed by interment in Meigle Cemetery to which all relatives and friends are respectfully invited. No flowers, please. Donations at the church if so desired to Johns favourite charities.

TOMAN - Peacefully at home, with his daughters by his side, on Thursday, January 4, 2018, in his 80th year, Francis Toman, (Frankie), beloved husband of the late Mairi, much loved dad, grandpa, great-grampa, brother and uncle. Funeral service will take place at St. Columba's Cathedral, Corran Esplanade, Oban, on Friday, January 12, 2018 at 10.00 a.m. Thereafter to Pennyfui Cemetery. Family flowers only. Donations in lieu if desired, will be taken for Oban Hospice and ABCD.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMERON - The family of the late Margaret Cameron would like to thank all friends and relatives for their support at this sad time. They would particularly like to thank the ambulance crew and staff of ward B for their care of Margaret.

Grateful thanks to the Rev Dugald Cameron for spiritual comfort and to Catriona of Hamish Hoey Funeral Directors for her caring and efficient service. They would also like to thank the staff of the Royal Hotel for excellent catering. The sum of £200.00 was raised for Mary's Meals.

COCKBURN - Joe and family would like to thank everyone for the many kind expressions of sympathy, cards and support received following the sad loss of Topsy, and to everyone who came to pay their respects. Grateful thanks to everyone who cared for Topsy, allowing her to stay at home. Special thanks to Rev Cliff Acklam for a comforting service, to Roddy and Fiona of Donald MacDonald Undertakers for a compassionate and efficient service, and to Tayvallich Inn for lunch. A retiral collection of £800 was raised for Vasculitis Lauren Currie Twilight Foundation and Alzheimer Scotland.

MACKINNON - Suddenly but peacefully, Iain MacKinnon (the Man), at his home in Kilmoluig, Tiree on December 14, 2017 aged 54 years. Much loved father of Arlene and Heather and adored grandfather of Adyson, beloved son of Morag and the late John (Iain) MacKinnon and brother of Angus and Grant, dear brother-in-law, uncle and great-uncle. A good friend and neighbour to many. Sorely missed.

MACLEAN - Peacefully at Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch, on January 8, 2018, in his 90th year, Matt MacLean, beloved husband of the late Meryl, a dear dad, father-in-law, grandpa and great-grandpa. Sadly missed.

MACPHAIL - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital on January 2, 2018, Neil Alexander, devoted brother of Chrissie and a dearly loved uncle. Sorely missed.

MACDONALD - Gail, Gary and their families would like to offer most heartfelt thanks to relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy following the loss of our cherished mum and granny, Lorna. Sincere thanks to the Rev. Gordon Thomson for his personnel uplifting service, and to Uncle Bill for reading the poem mum chose, so well. Grateful thanks to Catriona and staff at Hamish Hoey for their caring and efficient service. To the Flower Basket and Petals for the beautiful floral tributes. To Joan, Colin and their staff at the Olive Garden for their kindness and great food. To every one of the fantastic carers over the last two years who looked after mum so well and shared many stories and laughs with her. Grateful thanks to the doctors, nurses and staff at the Lorn Medical Centre for their excellent care and attention. A huge thanks to all

MEMORIAS

CAMPBELL - In memory of Chrissie Campbell who died January 12, 2004, aged 65 years. A beloved wife, mum and gran. Remembered with love every day from Duncan and family.

CRUICKSHANK - In ever lasting memory of Jimmy, a most loved husband, father and grandfather, who passed away January 15, 1999. Though long years have passed you will always be remembered - Kate, Iain and Dougie and their families.

DOUGLAS - In loving memory of my son Andrew James (Davros), who passed away in Majorca on December 27, 2016. Always in my thoughts and mind. - Inserted by her loving son Jim and Helen.

LAUDER - Stephen - 3/3/65 - 4/1/14. Treasured memories of our darling son Stephen.

In our hearts your memory is kept To treasure, to love and never forget

No verse, no flowers, no tears can say

How much we miss you every day You always had a smile to share Time to give and time to care

Always thoughtful, always kind

These are the memories you left behind.

- Love Ma and Dad xx

MACDONALD - Treasured memories of Eileen, much loved mum of Philip, precious daughter of Margaret and sister of Colin and Karen, taken from us January 6 2008, 10th anniversary. Also remembering 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, 14 Corran Brae, Oban.

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MACDONALD - In loving memory of my dearest niece Eileen Susan, died January 6, 2008, aged 41.

A daily thought

A silent tear

A constant wish that you were here

Cherished memories

- Auntie Eileen and cousin Rhea.

MACLEOD - In loving memory of our dearly loved son Douglas who was accidentally drowned at Largs Marina on January 13, 2007.

The call was sudden

The shock severe

To lose a son we loved so dear

As thoughts drift back

As they often do

We cherish the memories we have of you.

- Mum and Dad.

MACMILLAN - In fond and loving memory of our dear son Mark, who died January 14, 1991 aged 15 years.

Deep in our hearts you will always stay

Loved and remembered every day

Love you always.

- Dad, Mum and family, Ballachulish.

MACMILLAN - Our cousin Mark, January 14, 1991, aged 15. Always missed.

- Lynne and family xx

MACMILLAN - Mark, died January 14, 1991, age 15.

Always in our thoughts

- Maureen and Andrew Jr.

MACMILLAN - Mark.

Miss you always.

Love you.

- Jane xxx

MACPHAIL - Proud and precious memories of our son and big brother Ryan, tragically taken on January 7, 2003, aged 16 years.

We love and miss you every day

- Mum, Dad, Jenna and Jason xxxx

MACRAE - In loving memory of my husband Len and our dad and grampa, passed away January 18, 2003.

Always in our hearts.

- Love Kate and families xxx

McGILLIVRAY - In loving memory of my dear mother May (née Wilson), who died January 10, 1995.

A heart of gold stopped beating

Hard working hands at rest

For each and everyone of us

She always did her best

As time goes by without her

And days turn into years

They hold a lot of memories

And a thousand silent tears.

- Inserted by her loving son Jim and Helen.

SCOTT - William. In loving memory of a dear father and grandfather William Scott, Ardtur Farm, Port Appin, who passed away January 9, 2017. Always remembered.

- From Fiona, Roddy and family Kinlochleven.

STODDART - Treasured memories of our dear brother Malcolm Livingston, passed away January 10, 1972.

Loved and remembered always

- Brothers and sisters, Glasgow.

SCOTT - William. In loving memory of a dear father and grandfather William Scott, Ardtur Farm, Port Appin, who passed away January 9, 2017. Always remembered.

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To us you were so special What more is there to say We only wish with all our hearts That you were here today Sorely missed

- The family, 14 Corran Brae, Oban.

Obituary – Sandy MacFarlane

IN 1957 a tragedy on Loch Etive was narrowly averted. The regular mail boat taking mail, milk and farm supplies to the scattered houses in the far reaches of the loch, was towing a small barge loaded with hay.

Sandy, who was 13 at the time, was helping his dad, who skippered the boat, by keeping the loaded barge secure while they sailed up the loch. Why Sandy fell in is not clear, but as a non-swimmer at the time, it was only the quick reactions of Ben Holland and his dad that enabled a timely rescue. Sandy later became a competent swimmer and years later enjoyed sea swimming on his many holidays abroad with his wife Deirdre.

Sandy was a Taynuilt man to the core. Born in the village and raised with his two sisters at Lochandhu, helping on the farm at Brochroy and occasionally on the mail boat on Loch Etive, he was steeped in village life. He attended Taynuilt Primary then Oban High School before leaving aged 15 to start his apprenticeship with the local MacCallum joinery firm.

Work took him initially to the new hydro scheme at Cruachan, then briefly to Glasgow, but in 1967 he returned to Taynuilt and stayed there for the rest of his life. It was that joinery work, initially on new housing construction, that was the source of the asbestos exposure that so many years later would be the cause of his untimely death. Thereafter, he had nearly 20 years self-employed which saw him working on many different locations in Argyll. Many will remember his attention to detail and painstaking approach to his work. Seldom were things done abruptly or without

Jags suffer defeat away to Bellaire

Bellaire 5
South Lochaber Thistle 2
Greater Glasgow AFL

SOUTH Lochaber Thistle started the new year with defeat at the hands of Bellaire AFC after a trip to Greenock last Saturday.

With both sides in the mood for goals, the score ended up 5-2 to the hosts, meaning South Lochaber suffered defeat for only the second time in the Greater Glasgow Amateur Premier League this season.

The Jags sit in sixth place, on the same points total as Boswell and Carradale, who sit just above them in the league.

The Lochaber side are in league action again this Saturday as they take on Glasgow side Busby AFC at home in Kinlochleven with a 2pm kick-off.

Lochaber Rugby Club postponement

Rugby

LOCHABER Rugby Club's fixture away to Wigtownshire RFC on Saturday was postponed due to a frozen pitch.

The Banavie side's last outing was in November, so the squad will be keen to get their league campaign back up and running.

Lochaber's next fixture is due to take place this Saturday (January 13) away to Police Scotland Glasgow RFC in Glasgow.

Lochaber sit in sixth place in BT West League Division 3, with four wins from eight matches and a points difference of 32. They sit just two points off Shawlands FP RFC in fifth place and three points off Cowal RFC in fourth.

Winning lottery numbers

Lottery numbers

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 12, 14 and 18. There was no winner this week. There will now be £800 available for the lotto drawn today (Thursday January 11).

The numbers drawn in the Caol Regeneration lotto were 6, 7 and 14. There were no winning tickets this week. There will now be a jackpot for £1,200 for next Thursday's draw.

The Caol Community Centre bingo lotto numbers for this week are 9, 15 and 18. There were no winners this week. That means that next week's jackpot is £400.

The Ballachulish Shinty Club lottery numbers for this week were 15, 16 and 18. There were no winners this week. Next week's draw will have a jackpot of £400.

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The Fort William squad, management team and coaching staff pictured before a recent game. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Fort misery continues as Broch relish seven heaven

Fraserburgh	7
Fort William	0
Highland League	

FORT William Football Club's first outing of 2018 ended in a heavy defeat as four-goal hero Paul Campbell helped Fraserburgh to a 7-0 victory.

Buoyed by their narrow defeat to Lossiemouth at the end of December, the Fort were looking to enter the new year in style with a long trip north to Fraserburgh.

However, the Lochaber outfit faced a rampant Fraserburgh side who were looking to keep pressure on league leaders Cove Rangers.

The home side got off to a blistering start with James Beagrie netting after just five minutes, settling the Broch into the match early on.

The Fort responded with resilience and made the remaining 40 minutes of the first half an uncomfortable affair for Fraserburgh.

Going in at half-time, the visitors faced a big challenge to overcome the one-goal deficit, especially considering Fraserburgh have the second best defensive record in the Highland League this season.

Just six minutes after the half-time break, the Broch doubled

their lead thanks to a Gary Harris strike. James Beagrie followed this up with his second goal of the afternoon in the 57th minute.

But, again, the Fort battled back and staved off the worst of the Fraserburgh pressure. Their doggedness could only keep out the home side for 20 minutes, however, as Paul Campbell struck in the 74th minute to bag his first goal of what would be a man-of-the-match performance from the forward.

Making the most of Fort William's tiring defence, Campbell added his second and third goals in quick succession, completing his hat-trick in a devastating nine-minute spell.

A fourth goal of the game came for Campbell in the 90th minute, rounding off a memorable afternoon for the Broch striker.

The victory means Fraserburgh cemented their position in second place in the Highland League, and continues their good form in the run up to their glamour tie at home to Rangers in the Scottish Cup in two weeks. The win was the Broch's 2,500th Highland League game and their 1,100th Highland League win since their addition to the league in 1921.

Fort

The result, however, leaves Fort William rooted to the bottom of the Highland League, having picked up a solitary point from their opening 19 matches.

The Fort sit two points behind fellow strugglers Strathspey Thistle with one game in hand.

Fort William are in action again this Saturday (January 13) at home at Claggan Park against Forres Mechanics.

Forres lie in seventh place in the Highland League and are in fine form having won their last five matches.

Thistle continue winning streak in indoor league

AFTER 10 rounds of competition in Sammy's Indoor Winter League, Doghouse Thistle are the favourites for the title this

year, sitting top of the league table with 30 points and a 100 per cent win record. Thistle are three points clear of Fiorentina



Michael Ellis (right) of Fiorentina Turner tackles Alex Kennedy of Lisbon in the 10-4 match which sees Fiorentina just three points behind Doghouse in the league table. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



League top scorer Dave Forbes (left) of Doghouse Thistle in action against Sean Clark of Borussia Dortmund, who were defeated 4-0. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Turner in second place who are maintaining a long winning streak to keep pressure on the table-toppers.

Further down the table, Portowey, Fortmund and The Goon Squad are in joint third place, all sitting on 18 points.

David Forbes looks certain to finish the league as top scorer, having netted an impressive 36 times so far this season.

Results from week ten of Sammy's Indoor Winter League: Doghouse Thistle 4, Borussia Fortmund 0; Fiorentina Turner

10, Snorting Lisbon 4; Portowey 8, HW Energy 1; Gozos 4, Expected Toulouse 1; Balla 4, The Young Team 1; The Goon Squad 0, Arse N All 3.

Indoor football

Lochaber 10-pin bowling results

10-pin bowling

AFTER week six of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William both the scratch and the handicap divisions are still very close at the top.

The Empire still lead the scratch division with 25 points followed by Alleycats in second place on 24 points and Council on 22 points. Council are the new leaders of the handicap division with 22 points followed by The Empire on 21 points and Alleycats on 20 points.

Individually, the best scratch game of the week came from Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 185. Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) had a 176. Pam also had the week's top two-game scratch series of 324. The week's high handicap game of 230 and the top two-game handicap series of 435 both went to Brenda Rennie (The Dominos).

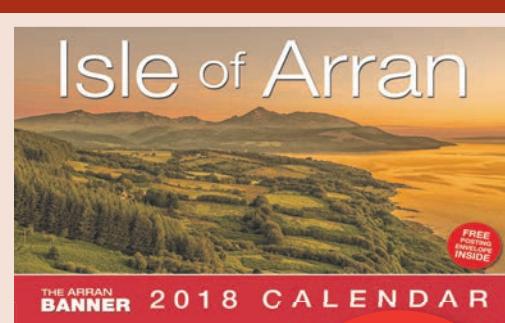
The best team scores of the week all came Alleycats, who swept the board with the top scratch game of 640 (the season's high), the top handicap game of 833, the top two-game scratch series of 1165 and the top two-game handicap series of 1551.

The top scratch average is held by Ben Weller (The Empire) with 158 followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 153 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 152.

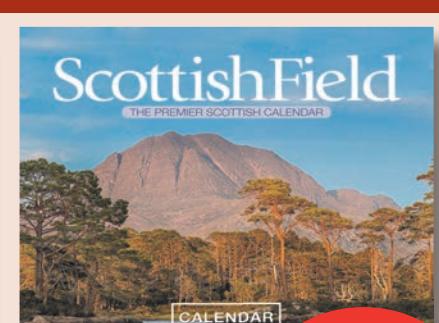
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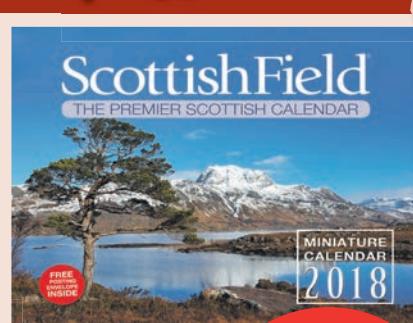
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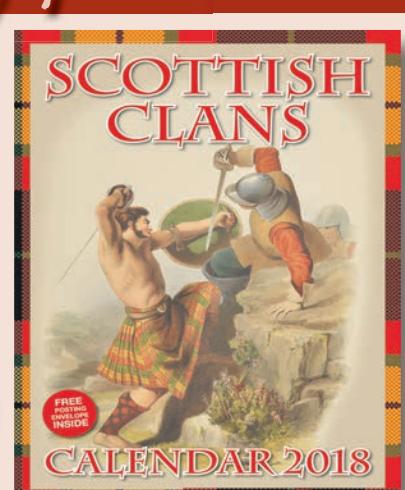
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Brave fight but Lorne go down to Allan Glen's

Allan Glen's	52
Oban Lorne	20
BT West Division 1	

OBAN Lorne started 2018 with a daunting trip to Bishopbriggs to take on West Division 1 leaders Allan Glen's RFC. Glen's topped the league going into Saturday's meeting with eight wins from eight while Oban occupied 10th place, sitting above only Irvine and Helensburgh. The sides had met earlier in the season at Glencruitten with the visitors recording a convincing 76-14 win.

The men in green have been improving since their opening performances of the season and have had some closer results in recent times with their previous game being a 23-17 win away

to Argyll rivals Helensburgh RFC.

With a struggle for available front-row players available for Saturday's game, experienced veteran prop Andrew 'Pads' Johnston was recalled to the team as well as starts for Kyle Graham in the second row and Daniel Broderick at No 8.

The Green Machine performed remarkably well in the first 40 minutes of the game and led the league leaders 20-17 at half-time.

Two tries were awarded to Oban in the first half. One, a try of the season contender from hooker Radi Maksimov, who made a storming run from the halfway line to score. The other try came from an intercepted pass by centre Cammy Smith



Vasil Borisov (25) and Iwan Rhys Roberts tackle a Glen's player.

Rugby

who finished off well. These tries, combined with two conversions and two penalties from scrum-half Finlay Carmichael, resulted in a surprising but well-deserved lead for Oban at the interval.

The start of the second half was a close affair but flowed well under the superb guidance of match referee Rab McHenry from Dumfries.

Oban were doing well in all areas of play to keep Allan Glen's at bay with man of the match Kyle Graham and Daniel Broderick putting up a fantastic show in the physical forwards battle.

After 60 minutes the score stood at 24-20 to the home side. From here until the final whistle, fitness and match sharpness took its toll on Oban as the hosts ran in four unanswered tries to run out 52-20 winners.

Despite losing by a margin of more than 30 points, the Oban team were left delighted with their efforts in the match that could have potentially brought a much-needed win.

Oban's performance was summed up on Allan Glen's Facebook page by president Robert Jamieson, who commented: 'Hard-fought game yesterday, hope you guys had a good day despite result. Glen's made to play right up to final whistle. All the best for rest of season. Bob Jamieson AG RFC president.'

Saturday's result leaves Oban Lorne 10th in the league but,



Cameron Smith dives over for Oban's second try. Photos: Stephen Lawson

with a number of winnable fixtures coming up, the club will hope to lift themselves clear of the relegation zone.

This Saturday Oban Lorne entertain mid-table Annan for the first home game of 2018. Kick off is at 2pm with the

game to be played at Glencruitten. A. Johnston, R. Maksimov, T. Sutherland, K. Graham, J. Baxter, S. Povey, R. MacKay,

D. Broderick, F. Carmichael, I. Rhys Roberts, C. MacLachlan, C. Smith, C. Wright, R. Morrison, V. Borisov.



Oban High School badminton championship winners and runners-up.

Oban High School holds badminton championships

OBAN High School held their annual badminton championship just before the Christmas break in Atlantis Leisure. More than 80 pupils contested the coveted U14, U16 and U19 singles, level doubles and mixed doubles titles.

With the school competition now attracting such high numbers every year, OHS PE teacher Denise Gemmill is making a plea to see if there are members of the community willing to donate a trophy for any of the competitions.

Denise explained: 'We have 15 competitions with the different age sections and the singles, doubles and mixed events. The small entry fee we charge pupils covers the cost of hall hire, shuttles and medals.'

'We would love to present some trophies to our winners and I know there is a very strong badminton community in Oban so this may be a lovely opportunity to remember a loved one or perhaps donate a trophy as a business or from an individual.'

'Donated trophies would

take pride of place in our new school trophy cabinet and, with the competition taking place in school, it takes place every year with huge numbers without fail.'

Please contact Denise at Oban High School PE department if you could help in any way with a donation of a trophy.

Results: U14 girls singles – 1 Ellie MacInnes; 2 Alice Needham. U14 boys singles – 1 Morgan Gemmill; 2 Kyle MacDougall.

U16 girls doubles – 1 Alice Needham and Charlotte Jackson Stark; 2 Ellie MacInnes and Kaelyn Shores. U14 boys doubles – 1 Morgan Gemmill and Kyle MacDougall; 2 Thomas MacCrindle and Pearce MacBeth.

U14 mixed doubles – 1 Ellie MacInnes and Morgan Gemmill; 2 Charlotte Jackson Stark and Murray Scott.

U16 girls singles – 1 Zoe Cook. 2 Katie MacCorquodale. U16 boys singles – 1 Fergus Carmichael; 2 Connor Dott.

U16 girls doubles – 1 Zoe Cook and Katie Mac-

Badminton

Corquodale; 2 Rowan Duffy and Lucy MacKinnon. U16 boys doubles – to be completed – semi-finalists Stuart Head/Neil McCracken and Connor Dott/Lewis Campbell. Finalists – Finlay France and Fergus Carmichael.

U16 mixed – 1 Fergus Carmichael and Zoe Cook; 2 Neil MacCracken and Katie MacCorquodale.

U19 girls – 1 Kirsty MacArthur; U19 girls doubles – 1 Kirsty MacArthur and Claire Reid. U19 boys singles – 1 Craig MacCorquodale; 2 Ewan Shearer.

U19 boys doubles – 1 Craig MacCorquodale and Angus Neil. U19 mixed – 1 Kirsty MacArthur and Craig MacCorquodale.

The winners and runners-up of all the competitions will represent OHS in the Scottish Schools Argyll and Bute regional qualifiers which will be held in Atlantis Leisure on Monday January 29.

Brown proves to be the big shot at clay target shoot

Shooting

DUNOON and District Clay Target Club held a 50 clay down the line competition for the J E Jacobson Trophy on January 2.

The changeable weather was maintained for the first shoot of the new year with poor light and heavy showers making for a testing competition.

Despite the conditions, there was a large turn-out of 36 senior guns and two juniors. In addition to the main 50 target 'down the line' competition for the J E Jacobson Trophy, there was a very popular pool trap event.

Only five points separated the first five places, with a three-way tie for fourth place. For the second time in three years, the trophy went to Alan Brown, Bute, who shot a solid round of 145 ex 150. Second place with 143 went to Tam Young,

North Ayrshire. In third place with 142 was Leighton Reid, Bute. Three guns on 141 tied for fourth place: Derek Street, Glendaruel; Ted Blakeway, Glendaruel; and John Docherty, Bute.

Craig MacKay, Dunoon, was the leading junior, closely followed by Josh Cowan, Bute. The pool trap was won by David Mundell, Blairgowrie, after a closely-fought shoot-off.

The club wishes to thank all the visitors for their support and Amanda and Willie Arthur and the other volunteers for the smooth administration of the event. The contact details and fixtures are on the club website <http://www.dunoonanddistrict-ctc.com/>



Alan Brown winner of the J E Jacobson Trophy with the other high guns. Left to right: John Docherty, Leighton Reid, David Mundell, Alan Brown, Derek Street, Tam Young and Ted Blakeway.

SHINTY

Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

Marine Harvest Media Award winners 2016

Matheson mows down Beauly

LOVAT retained the Lovat Cup as four-goal Greg Matheson gave them a convincing 4-0 victory over Beauly at Braeview Park on Tuesday January 2.

The match was originally scheduled for Lovat's Balgate home but a frozen pitch led to a venue switch to Beauly's ground.

Conditions underfoot were difficult for the players who kept the gathering of shinty supporters from across the country entertained throughout the 90 minutes.

Lovat went into this 1pm throw-up as holders, having won the previous year's encounter 5-2 at Braeview Park.

Lovat were also favourites, having finished third in the Marine Harvest Premiership last season whilst Beauly ended the year in fifth spot in the Marine Harvest National Division.

Lovat Cup games have been known to go against form though and Beauly had been training hard for this encounter.

Both sides had absentees in attack as Beauly were missing Conor Ross whilst Lovat's Calum MacAulay was also unavailable.

The hosts made a composed start to the game and an early Jack MacDonald shot went wide of goal.

When a ball across goal reached Greg Matheson, his strike from the left tested Beauly keeper Josh Grant but he turned the ball away at the expense of a corner.

Marc MacLachlan tried to flick a Greg Matheson ball on target but his effort went past the post.

Both defences remained on top and the match stayed level until 37 minutes. Marc MacLachlan controlled the ball on the Lovat left. MacLachlan, playing against his former club, then drifted the ball in on target. Beauly keeper Josh Grant stretched to turn MacLachlan's effort away with his caman.

Beauly looked to clear, but Greg Matheson won possession and played a one-two with Duncan Davidson before running to the right, steady himself and crashing the ball into the net to open the scoring.

Despite the setback, Beauly remained in contention and Sean Stewart went close but was foiled by Lovat custodian Stuart MacDonald.

With the rain coming down, Lovat's Lewis Tawse gave the crowd something to cheer about with a great run forward from midfield, juggling the ball on his caman, but the Beauly defence cleared the danger.

Lovat scored a second goal just minutes before half-time to take a firm grip of the match. This was a superb solo effort from Greg Matheson who tracked back into the middle of the park where he dispossessed Barrie MacDonald on the Beauly left.

Matheson then went on a surging run forward, cutting infield before blasting a blistering back-hand drive into the top corner of the net to make it 2-0 at the break.

Greg Matheson completed his hat-trick 10 minutes after the re-start. Lorne MacKay played in a corner from the Lovat left to the back post where Matheson had lost his marker. The Lovat top scorer flicked the ball in the air before striking the dropping ball. His left-sided shot took a bounce past the keeper and the Balgate side had one hand on the trophy.

The quality of the four Lovat goals was something to behold and Matheson's fourth strike was no exception. Marc MacLachlan's initial shot, following a free-hit, was deflected onto the Lovat right wing. Matheson was first to the ball and he held off a challenge before squeezing a low, back-hand drive between keeper Josh Grant and his left post to make it 4-0.

Marc MacLachlan forced the ball into the Beauly net, but it was ruled out for offside. Greg Matheson then won possession and pushed forward before playing a weighted pass to Marc MacLachlan on the right. MacLachlan beat his marker but his low shot came off Josh Grant's left post and the keeper scrambled the ball away for a corner.

Referee Martin MacLean brought proceedings to an end and it was fitting that it was Lovat captain Greg Matheson who was presented with the Lovat Cup by the 16th Lord Lovat Simon Fraser.

The Scotland forward has been a key player in this fixture in recent years and he was the main difference between the sides. Lovat's Lewis Tawse can also be pleased with his performance, as can Beauly's Josh Grant.

Neil MacDonald takes over at Lochaber

Neil MacDonald is the new Lochaber first team manager.

Neil takes over from Ally Ferguson who had been in charge of the Spean Bridge side for the last three seasons.

Ally Ferguson called for improved player commitment just before he left his post and Neil MacDonald assumes the role under the same mantra.

A classy player, MacDonald came out of retirement last season to appear initially for the second team and then help the seniors and he hasn't ruled out playing in the Marine Harvest Premiership next season, should it be necessary.

John Fraser has been persuaded to stay on in charge of the Lochaber second team who will play in Marine Harvest North Division 2.

Michael MacKinnon is Oban Celtic player of the year

Michael MacKinnon has been named 2017 Oban Celtic player of the year.

Michael was the choice of

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon who said: 'Michael has been there for most of the games last season and he also trains well. He's been solid in defence and was asked to play in the centre line away to Inveraray when we won 2-1 and played well. He's a quiet guy who listens to me and he just gets his head down and gets on with it. He really deserves this award.'

New Oban Celtic signings

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon has made two new signings ahead of the 2018 season.

Glenorchy full centre Dylan Cooke has joined the Oban side as has Oban Lorn defender Calum MacLean.

The pair will add to Kenny's selection options after David MacInnes confirmed his retirement, whilst Connor Howe is unlikely to be available on a regular basis.

Wotherspoon hasn't given up hope of further adding to his squad before the new season starts.

John Collie Cup

Oban Camanachd host The John Collie Cup at Mossfield on Saturday January 13.

This will be a mixed match with players from the club's U17 side, Lochside Rovers, Oban Camanachd and ex-players taking part.

Throw-up is at 1pm.

Oban Camanachd training

Oban Camanachd and Lochside Rovers start their pre-season training at Oban High School's gym on Monday January 15.

New players welcome.

Kingussie veterans stay on top

The Kingussie Veterans retained the Bob Sinclair Memorial Trophy with a 3-1 New Year's Day win over the club's Young Pups at Market Stance.

The game was played in what could be described as 'proper shinty conditions' with a dusting of snow and a touch of frost, along with a bobbly pitch.

This made the old timers feel quite at home but perhaps did not suit the Pups, raised and spoiled on summer shinty, who found it a touch cold.

The Kingussie Veterans went into the contest as holders and their forward line of Gary Dallas, John Gibson, Kevin Thain and Ronald Ross looked threatening from the throw-up, forcing Young Pups' keeper Robert Shiells into a couple of good early saves.

It was no great surprise when Ronald Ross opened the scoring after 15 minutes with a



Lovat Captain Greg Matheson with the Lovat Cup.

low, hard shot into the corner of Shiells' goal. The Pups' midfield of Rory MacGregor, Ryan MacWilliam and Calum Grant began to provide some decent balls for their forwards, but the experienced defence of Michael Thain, Iain Borthwick, Garry Munro and Martin Genini proved hard to break down with Savio Genini getting no cuttings from his 'old man' whilst Roddy Young, Ruaridh Anderson and James Falconer were unable to find space within the tight confines of the Market Stance football pitch and they rarely troubled Craig Dawson in goals.

Both teams regularly used all six substitutes, partly to save the legs but mostly to keep warm, as the temperature dropped further with the mist rolling in off the River Spey.

Early in the second half, Kevin Thain found himself in space on the right and he fired an unstoppable shot across keeper Shiells and into the far corner of the net to make it 2-0.

The youngsters pulled a goal back when Savio Genini was quick to convert a re-bound off keeper Craig Dawson, but Ronald Ross soon restored the Veterans' two-goal cushion when he made it 3-1.

The Young Pups had the chance to narrow the deficit when they were awarded a penalty, correctly given when keeper Craig Dawson was penalised for a blatant push in the back on Lee Bain inside the box.

Lee Bain could not convert from the spot though and the Veterans held on for the win.

This was an entertaining game played in front of a large crowd made up of locals and

interested New Year visitors to Kingussie. Kingussie stalwart Donnie Grant presented the Bob Sinclair Memorial Trophy to Veterans captain Michael Thain and both sets of players then gathered to enjoy New Year refreshments.

John Gibson is new Kingussie manager

Kingussie Camanachd Club has announced John Gibson will be their first team manager for 2018.

John Gibson is a hugely experienced player who has won every honour in the game, including seven Camanachd Cups between 1995 and 2014, captaining the team to success in 2006 when they defeated Fort William 4-2 at Dunoon.

He has also coached the club's U17 team for many years, leading them to victory in the national competition, The London Shield, in 2017.

In his professional life, John Gibson is north area manager for Thain Electrical, based in Aviemore.

Kingussie are both delighted and excited by the appointment as Gibson takes over from Dalglish Young who led the side to a fifth place finish in last season's Marine Harvest Premiership.

John is still to name his assis-

tant manager but he will be in action quickly as the club has a full pre-season programme arranged for February.

Kingussie host newly-promoted Premiership side Caberfeidh at The Dell on Saturday February 3 ahead of the club's annual sixes competition the week after.

Next up is a home meeting with Premiership champions Kinlochshiel on Saturday February 24, whilst the side travel to Yoker at the end of the month to play Glasgow Mid Argyll with the new season starting on Saturday March 3.

John MacLeod returns as Skye manager

John MacLeod has returned to the Skye Camanachd first team manager's role ahead of the start of the 2018 shinty season.

John MacLeod previously managed the side from 2014 to 2016 when he led the team to successive Marine Harvest North Division 1 and National Division titles, followed by the club's first season in the Premiership since 2002.

John stepped down after the team was relegated at the end of the 2016 season but, with Willie Cowie in charge last season, the islanders made an immediate return to shinty's

top flight by again winning the National Division. When Cowie announced his decision to step down after just 12 months in charge, the club went on the hunt for his successor and are delighted to have secured a manager with premiership experience.

Neil MacVicar joins Kyles Athletic

Neil MacVicar has left Skye Camanachd to join Kyles Athletic.

Neil came through the Skye youth ranks and was part of the Skye team which won the Marine Harvest National Division last season. The defender has premiership experience having played in the top flight for Skye in the 2016 season.

He had been travelling from the central belt to play for Skye and will undoubtedly be an asset to the Tighnabruaich side.

Neil MacVicar strengthens a family connection with the Tighnabruaich club as his uncles Duncan and Ronnie MacVicar played for the side.

Neil MacVicar is a second absentee for new Skye boss John MacLeod to contend with as midfielder Gilleasbuig MacDonald, who has shown great commitment, travelling from Glasgow each week for a number of years to play for the side, has also opted not to play for the islanders this coming term and may look for a club closer to his Glasgow base.

Glenorchy look for new players

Glenorchy are looking for players to join them for the forthcoming season shinty.

Players of all ages and abilities would be welcome.

Anyone interested should contact the club through their Facebook page or call Maryann Murray on 07765 576856.

Aberdour recruitment drive

Aberdour Shinty Club are looking to recruit senior male and female players for the 2018 season. The club has men's first and second teams along with a women's side and a women's development squad.

Based in West Fife, Aberdour attracts locally-grown players but also recruits players from Edinburgh, Dundee, Kirkliston and even as far afield as Aberdeen.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Maggie at aberdoursshintyclub@gmail.com or send a personal message to the Aberdour Shinty Club FB page.



Kingussie veteran Ronald Ross and 'Young Pup' Fraser Munro during the Bob Sinclair memorial match which the veterans won 3-1. Photograph: Neil Paterson.



A minute's silence was held before the Lovat Cup match to remember shinty players that have passed away. Photograph: Donald Cameron.

MARTIAL ARTS



WITH IAIN RODGER

Kyokushinkai Karate

BEGINNERS are welcome at the clubs in Oban and Lochgilphead from now until the end of March so why not try something new for the New Year that could make a real difference in your life?

The minimum age for starting at the Kyokushinkai clubs is eight, with no upper limit. The classes are taught by Shihan Iain Rodger, 6th dan Kyokushinkai Karate, with assistance from a team of black belts in both classes.

It's been a busy year for the Scottish branch of the IKKU under the watchful eye of Iain Rodger, with new clubs opening in Perth and Stirling, bringing the total tally of clubs in Scotland to six.

Chief instructor Rodger had this to say: 'I expect a lot from the individual club instructors so you can be assured of the very best tuition at any of our dojos.'

Iain is in the middle of organising the Scottish Open Knockdown Championships which take place on February 24 in Glasgow and attract fighters from around the world. Once this is out of the way he immediately starts planning for a children's tournament in May to be held in Lochgilphead.

Anyone interested in learning Kyokushinkai Karate should contact Iain Rodger on 07584 166542 or iain@ikkuk.co.uk.

Kickboxing

Coach Wullie Rodger had this to say: 'With 2017 over, we at Senshi Do Kick Boxing traditionally award the Student of the Year to two of the juniors, based on how much the student has developed and grown. This year it was awarded to Keiran Denholme and Rebecca Palmer, both of whom have really come into their own.'

'Also on the shortlist was Adam Bratton who, if he keeps going the way he is, will certainly be a contender for 2018. 2017 has been a good year for the juniors at tournaments with medals coming back from every tournament entered, and the fight team is looking forward to winning more in 2018.'

'We also had some changes with starting up more sessions on Friday (4.30pm for juniors and 6pm for seniors), and starting the Kick Fit session on a Monday at 6pm with Doug Craig putting people through circuits and pad work for a calorie-burning, cardio-building sweat-fest.'

'We all would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year and anyone wishing to start training with us just pop along and you'll be made welcome.'

For club details, contact Wullie Rodger on shihanwill@gmail.com or 07588 513618

**Shukokai Karate**

The clubs have beginners' classes starting this week in all three clubs; Oban, Dalmally and Inveraray. For club details contact Kenny Gray on kenni.gray@btinternet.com.

BJJ

Anyone looking for more information about BJJ and MMA classes should contact club coach Iain (Coogie) Potter on coogiepotter@gmail.com.

Keiran Denholme and Rebecca Palmer were students of the year at Senshi Do Kick Boxing Club.

Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup 4th round replay – Oban Saints 2, Greenock HSFP 0; Premier Division One – Barrhead Arky v Campbeltown Pupils, postponed; Premier Division Two – Easthall Star v Lochgilphead Red Star, postponed; Tarbert v Houston, postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup 5th round – Rolls Royce East Kilbride v Oban Saints; Premier Division One – Campbeltown Pupils v Neilston; Premier Division Two – FC Argyle v Tarbert; Lochgilphead Red Star v Port Glasgow OBU.

Saints youth team results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s – 11, Greenock United 1. Scoring for Saints were Kyle Cooper (4), Ewan McTavish (2), Andrew Nicol, Jack Reid, Ruairidh Buchanan, Morgan Gemmell and Lewis Campbell. Under 14s, no game; Broomhill v Under 15s, postponed; Under 16s, no game; Under 17s, no game.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Broomhill; Under 14s, no game; Under 15s v Busby; Drumchapel United v Under 16s; Campbeltown Pupils v Under 17s.



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John Douglas – under 14 player of the year



Mairi Inglis – under 18 player of the year.



Duncan MacEwan – under 14 most improved player.



Cameron Crowe – award for attendance.

Oban Lorn Shinty Club celebrates with prize-giving

OBAN Lorn Shinty Club held a prize-giving in the Rowantree Hotel recently.

The winners in the ladies' team were Karen MacKinnon for player of the year, Gillian Ruth MacKenzie for most improved player, and Mairi Inglis for under-18s player of the year.

The U14s winners were John Douglas for player of the year, Duncan

Shinty

MacEwan for most improved player, with William MacEwan, James Manson and Cameron Crowe all winning best attendance.

The ladies went to Roxy's to thank her for sponsoring their jackets and enjoyed lovely hot chocolate.



Oban Lorn Shinty Club ladies' section with their new club jackets sponsored by Roxy's Cafe.



Karen MacKinnon – ladies' player of the year.



Gillian Ruth MacKenzie – ladies' most improved player.



William MacEwan – award for attendance.



James Manson – award for attendance.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3300

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



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

C Fletcher
Bridgend,
Isle of Islay
&
K MacGillivray
Pennighael,
Isle of Mull

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, Lochavallin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

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

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

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

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

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

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

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

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

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Greenock keeper Neil Flack can't keep Ally McKerracher's header from looping into the top corner of the net during last Saturday's Scottish Cup fourth round replay at Glencruitten. Match report and photos Derek Black

High school pupils taught a lesson

Oban Saints 2
Greenock HSFP 0
Scottish Cup - 4th round replay

IT WAS a case of third time lucky for Oban Saints last Saturday as their Glencruitten pitch was declared playable, if still slightly frosty, to allow their twice previously postponed Scottish Amateur Cup fourth round replay against Greenock High School Former Pupils to finally go ahead. The tie must still have been in doubt up until the eve of the match when the seemingly endless rain finally decided to relent for a spell. Full marks to Argyll and Bute Council groundsman Ian Hay for preparing such a good playing surface under trying conditions.

Oban Saints manager Alex Craik made five changes to the starting eleven which came from behind twice to force a 2-2 draw at Batter Park, Greenock, five weeks previously.

The visitors also welcomed back some regulars who had missed the previous match, making four changes to their starting eleven and naming a strong four-man bench.

Referee Thomas Lacy got proceedings under way on a crisp afternoon with the visitors kicking off attacking the Mossfield end where the low sun threatened to pose problems for Saints keeper Graham Douglas. Saints were first to threaten in the third minute after Willie Gemmell had cut out a Kenny Munro cross from the left intended for strike partner and

scorer of the High's second goal in the previous match Craig Boyd. From the clearance from Graham Douglas Myles McAuley nodded down to Keith Millar who sent Scott Maitland scurrying up the left wing. Maitland fed skipper Donald Campbell 22 yards out, who opened up his body for a curling shot across Neil Flack which beat the High keeper's left hand but bounced inches wide of target.

In the eighth minute referee Lacy rather harshly adjudged Paul Carmichael to have fouled Craig Boyd in winning a header 35 yards from goal. Saints knew what to expect from the resulting free-kick but fortunately Greenock dead ball expert Barry Munro sent an excellent effort just wide of the junction of post and bar.

The 10th minute signalled the beginning of a spell of Saints pressure starting when Matthew Kelly and Donald Campbell combined well on the right for the skipper to send a cut-back to Ally McKerracher, whose first-time shot was saved by the legs of Neil Flack at the expense of a corner kick. McKerracher's delivery from the right was headed behind at the back post by Stuart Higgins. The second delivery was cut out at the front post by Lewis Graham with the third effort again failing to clear the front post but falling kindly for Scott Maitland, who struck the crossbar with a left-foot effort from the corner of the six-yard box with Neil Flack rooted to the spot.

The High couldn't clear their lines and Saints kept the pressure on with Craig MacEwan winning a free-kick 25 yards from goal on the left. Willie Gemmell's flighted delivery picked out Craig's clever back-post run with last season's top scorer cushioning a half volley a foot wide of Neil Flack's left-hand post.

The visitors enjoyed their best spell of the first half after 37 minutes when Willie Gemmell produced a solid block to deny Kenny Munro after the High danger man had beaten Paul Carmichael on the bye-line to turn and fire in a left-foot shot from eight yards.

Munro was put through again two minutes later by namesake Barry with Graham Douglas bravely smothering the ball at the feet of the High striker.

Saints dead ball expert Willie Gemmell had two opportunities before the half-time interval, with the first being deflected off the Greenock wall and over the crossbar before the second from 22 yards beat the four-man wall but bounced wide of Neil Flack's right-hand post.

With nothing to show for their first half supremacy Saints knew they had to maintain the high tempo in the second half and were immediately back on the attack after the restart. Greenock goalkeeper Neil Flack, a Scotland cricket international, twice denied Donald Campbell inside the opening two minutes, firstly blocking with his legs at the near post and secondly diving full length to his left to fingertip a net-bound effort around his left-hand post.

Saints eventually made the breakthrough in the 51st minute when an audacious piece of skill from Craig MacEwan left Stuart Higgins for dead just short of the bye-line on the left of the Greenock Box. The trick gave MacEwan time and space to measure a dinked cross over the heads of David McLean and Lewis Graham for Ally McKerracher, who beat Robbie Davis to loop a header from eight yards into the postage stamp corner beyond the despairing dive of Neil Flack.

McKerracher threatened to double his tally two minutes later, bursting through the inside-left channel before being denied to a vital interception by David McLean.

Saints gaffer Alex Craik decided to freshen things up in midfield, introducing Kerr Newbigging for his first appearance of the season at the expense of Keith Millar. At the same time

The High goal continued to lead a charmed life as Scott Maitland raced up the left wing on the half-hour mark and picked out Donald Campbell in the box who threaded a left-foot shot through the legs of Lewis Graham but unfortunately yet again wide of Neil Flack's left-hand post.

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the High brought on veteran of many campaigns Chris McAllister to bolster the attack in favour of Craig Boyd. McAllister soon set about making a nuisance of himself and headed a deep Kevin Brown cross from the right wide of target.

An accidental clash between Paul Carmichael and Barry Munro left the Saints man nursing an ankle injury from which he couldn't recover, forcing the introduction of Craig Campbell in a straight swap at the back in the 75th minute.

Graham 'Sugar' Douglas kept his clean sheet intact with a sensational save to deny Kenny Munro, who cut in from the right and unleashed a fierce 78th-minute left-foot shot which Sugar threw himself to his right to parry away at full stretch.

Craig MacEwan's first match back since sustaining cracked rib in the third round replay against Falkirk Community on November 11 came to an end in the 80th minute when he was replaced by Daniel McCuish making his home debut.

McCuish was quickly into the action showing no sign of being overawed by the occasion and linking up well with Kerr Newbigging to send Ally McKerracher through for a left-foot shot from the corner of the six-yard box which cleared the head of David McLean but unfortunately also the crossbar.

McKerracher blazed over again with five minutes remaining on the clock after Donald Campbell had skilfully taken down a Kerr Newbigging diagonal ball on the corner of the 18-yard box.

Saints finally made the tie safe in the 89th minute with a swift counter-attack from a Greenock free-kick cleverly won by Chris

Football

McAllister 10 yards inside the Saints half. With everybody expecting a straight ball into the box, David McLean rolled the ball short to Kenny Munro, who was immediately closed down by the quick reactions of Ally McKerracher, who slid in at full pace to dispossess the Greenock striker.

Saints then broke quickly with Daniel McCuish threading a perfectly timed pass for Donald Campbell to race through one-on-one with Neil Flack. The Saints skipper rounded the Greenock keeper and, from a tight angle, clipped the ball left-footed into the unguarded net for Saints' second goal.

Referee Lacy, whose job was made easy by both sets of players, brought another cracking Scottish Amateur Cup tie to an end after three added minutes, signalling Saints' progress to the fifth round and another away tie with familiar foes East Kilbride Rolls Royce which will take place this Saturday with a 2pm kick-off. Venue still to be decided.



Saints keeper Graham Douglas brought off a great save in the 78th minute.

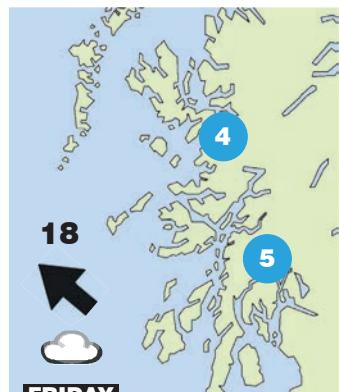


Greenock striker Kenny Munro gets a shot on target despite this tackle from Paul Carmichael. The shot was blocked by Willie Gemmell as Steven MacLeod and Graham Douglas look on.

NORTH WEST MARINE
DIVING & MARINE SPECIALISTS

WEATHER

Thursday	Sunny intervals Winds light South Easterly Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds strong South Easterly Temperatures 4°C to 5°C.
Weekend Outlook	Cloudy on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds strong South Easterly Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday January 4, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	
Thur	05.58	1.5	12.20
Fri	01.20	2.9	07.04
Sat	03.16	3.2	09.27
Sun	04.00	3.4	10.20
Mon	04.40	3.6	11.02
Tues	05.19	3.8	11.40
Wed	05.56	3.9	12.16

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



Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban



Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist
Oban to Coll/Tiree
Kennacraig to Islay

Moderate
Moderate
Moderate

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

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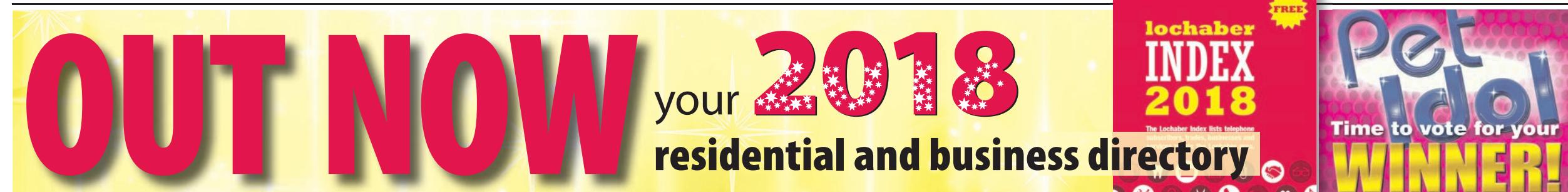
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Established 1861 No 8389

Thursday 11 January, 2018

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90 pence



Parents voice fears over Caol school crossing arrangements

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

THERE were angry and worried parents this week when it looked like there would be no school crossing patroller on duty on the busiest main road in Caol from Tuesday this week.

The unwelcome situation had arisen due to an absence and parents found out on Monday there would be no crossing patroller outside the Old Clinic on Kilmallie Road.

Although action was swiftly taken to provide temporary cover, the issue has prompted calls from members of the local community for a permanent crossing, 20mph speed limits and a pelican crossing all to be considered.

In a post on Caol Primary School's Facebook page on Monday, parents were informed: 'We are afraid it is now council policy not to use janitors for this in the long-term and not to employ staff to cover.'

The notice went on to advise parents that if their child walks to and from school using the route in question, they needed

to ensure youngsters were aware of the situation.

The crossing is one of the busiest in the area, being used by children attending Caol and St Columba's primaries and it provoked a flurry of angry responses on social media.

One Facebook poster said he appreciated it was not Caol Primary School's fault, but added:

'Do we need to be asking as a community for a permanent crossing to be put in place, along with making it 20mph limits on side streets, as well as a pelican crossing?' it said in an online statement on Monday.

One person summed up the majority of feeling on the matter, stating: 'This should not be open for discussion. It should be done without question. The volume of traffic has certainly increased since new schools opened.'

Local Highland Council member Ben Thompson told the *Lochaber Times* concerned parents should join together and take the matter up with either the local authority or the appropriate parent council.

'This is a difficult area for kids to negotiate, but it is not the only school crossing in Fort William that has faced this type of situation,' said councillor Thompson.

'Banavie Primary School lost its patroller some time ago and I now walk my own kids to school. I wouldn't like them to be crossing a busy main road on their own.'

However, councillor Thompson said that, while it appeared quite short notice for parents, Highland Council was not in a position where it was able to employ a bank of people on the off-chance of cover perhaps being needed when someone went off sick.

Asked for its view of the situation, Highland Council education management team was unable to provide a comment before the *Lochaber Times* went to press this week.



A school crossing patroller from another site was transferred to Kilmallie Road in Caol on Tuesday to provide cover on one of the area's busiest roads after it looked like there would be no patroller from Tuesday due to absence. JP F02 Kilmallie road crossing_7



TV tracks amazing effort to build model railway across Lochaber

Presenter Dick Strawbridge with the model locomotive and some of the army of volunteers which helped build a 71-mile model railway from Fort William to Inverness for a television series currently being broadcast on Channel 4. See page 2 for full story and photograph special.

Chairlift fault leaves skiers stranded

A MECHANICAL problem left skiers and snowboarders suspended on a chairlift for almost two hours in freezing temperatures above Aonach Mor at the weekend.

At 11.30am on Sunday January 7, the Quad chairlift at Nevis Range ski ground to a standstill. Dozens of people were left stranded almost 30 feet above the mountain in some of the coldest conditions at the ski resort this year, with temperatures dropping to -4 °Celsius. It took an engineering team until around 1pm to fully resolve the issue.

The chairlift remained closed for a time for inspection before re-opening later in the day.

Commercial manager at Nevis Range Chris O'Brien explained: 'There was a minor mechanical failure with the chairlift, resulting in an hour and a half delay. No-one had to be rescued but the team did take some people off the lift to reduce the weight load.'

Mr O'Brien assured the *Lochaber Times* there are no long-term problems with the chairlift, adding: 'Once the mechanical issue was resolved and the rest of the skiers got off the lift, they were taken to the ski club hut for a seat and a hot drink. Everyone was in good spirits in the warm-up room.'

Everyone affected by the mechanical failure and subsequent delay was offered a free ski pass to use at Nevis Range.

Belford Hospital exceeds A&E targets

THE BUSY festive period saw the Belford Hospital's accident and emergency department emerge as one of the top performing mainland NHS sites in the country with 97.7 per cent of patients seen, treated, discharged or admitted within four hours.

It means the Fort William hospital's A&E staff have once again met and exceeded the Scottish Government's waiting time targets, according to latest figures.

Anne Boyd-Mackay, the hospital's rural general manager, said she was delighted by the news and put it down to the hard work and dedication of what she called 'our wonderful A&E team'.

She added: 'The Belford is regularly one of the top performing sites in Scot-

land and it is a credit to all our staff that work in the hospital and the community that, despite staffing challenges and all the usual pressures over the festive period, the department has held up very well.'

More generally, performance against the Scottish Government target was challenging over the festive period, with the average figure for all A&E departments and minor injury units in NHS Highland hospitals at 87.6 per cent and 78 per cent across Scotland.

Ms Boyd-Mackay remarked: 'We are aware of the wider pressures across Highland and indeed the UK exacerbated by the flu.'

'Raigmore [hospital in Inverness] is under particular pressure impacting on

bed capacity. This will mean all urgent and emergency work will be prioritised in Raigmore in January and may have an impact for some local patients.'

'However, so far we are not planning to suspend or postpone any local services but we will need to monitor the situation very closely.'

The Health Improvement, Efficiency, Access to Treatment and Treatment Standard is for 95 per cent of patients to wait less than four hours from arrival to admission, discharge or transfer for accident and emergency treatment.

The Belford Hospital – at 97.7 per cent – saw 213 people attending the A&E department over the festive period, with only five people having to wait more than the four-hour target.



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Lochaber midges prove a fierce obstacle to biggest little railway



Britain's Biggest Little Railway.

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

AN EXTRA 49 billion midges was just one of the myriad of challenges a team of model railway enthusiasts faced when attempting to build a 71-mile miniature railway from Fort William to Inverness.

The 12-day project took place last year and was filmed for a series by Channel 4, with the first of five episodes of *The Biggest Little Railway in the World* airing on Sunday night.

Presenter Dick Strawbridge said it was a typically bonkers British idea, albeit a simple one. 'It's a very simple idea. The Victorians failed to build a railway along the Great Glen Way and it was one part of the railway network in Scotland that was never built,' explained Dick.

'So we had the idea of building a model railway across Scotland. It just had to be done. So we did it, along the Great Glen Way.'

'Model railway enthusiasts are a very maligned bunch. People don't understand them, but it was a great opportunity to get a bunch of like-minded people together.'

The former army officer turned television presenter and author, admitted it was a tough challenge, even for him: 'Scotland in June is not like Scotland in January, but it's still pretty challenging. We were eaten by midges, the weather changed every day, we had sunshine, wind, rain, fog, and it was the most amazing place - so beautiful.'

The 56-strong team of enthusiasts was brought together via a nationwide call for volunteers issued to model railway groups.

'We also looked for grown up engineering jobs, not in an age sense but in terms of size. And we auditioned them, we gave them challenges to see what skills people had,' said Dick.

'They all did something that very few of them ever thought they could do, because we must

have walked hundreds of miles each. By the end, we knew the Great Glen Way very well.'

Dick says, in terms of scale, the project equated to constructing half of the trans-Siberian railway in 12 days.

'And some of the hills we had to go over were pretty tall. One of them was the equivalent of one-and-a-half Everests.'

'And Silver Lady, our little steam engine, was meant to pootle around on nice level ground, with the occasional very gentle incline of a couple of degrees. She was not built to cross Scotland. That, in its own right, was one of the big challenges. One coast to the other is a long way for a little engine.'

Asked what was the biggest obstacle that had to be overcome, Dick singled out Scotland's most infamous airborne irritant.

'Midges. I think this year in Scotland there was an increase in the midge population of 50 per cent. There were something like 49 billion extra midges.'

'We had mountains. We crossed the Caledonian Canal. One of the bridges we built looked a bit like the bridge over the River Kwai. That was a phenomenal thing. Alec Guinness would have been happy if he'd seen it.'

'But those obstacles were not as difficult as the physical obstacle of getting the job done, because it's relentless. The num-

ber of miles, every day, that had to be done, and the number of pieces of track required, it was so tough.'

'And you pull together. It doesn't matter what your challenge is, there's a sense of achievement at the end of it.'

'We were having to wear nets because of the midges, and we'd have to walk two miles in because there was no road access, carrying all the track. But one thing I did like is that people got to appreciate how beautiful that part of Scotland is.'

But Dick admitted the sense of achievement felt by everyone involved at the project's conclusion made it all worthwhile.

'When you work with people, you buy into it, you work together



Presenter Dick Strawbridge holds the model engine, while volunteers celebrate the project's success.



The engine, Silver Lady, kept on going.



Volunteers work on the project.

There were numerous engineering challenges to overcome on Britain's Biggest Little Railway.

receiving from the public and appreciate everyone's understanding and co-operation.'

Catherine Stokoe, infection control manager for NHS Highland, added: 'Coming to hospital to visit a family member or friend when you have been ill with symptoms such as those associated with flu could put them, and our other patients, at risk so we would ask that you hold off visiting until you are better.'

The last confirmed sighting of the 63-year-old was around 11.30pm on Friday September 29 at the Bridge of Orchy Hotel. He then left the area and headed south towards Tyndrum on the A82.

Tony had travelled from Tillicoultry to Fort William by train earlier in the day, arriving at Fort William train station around 4.10pm. He set off to cycle back to Tillicoultry along the A82 and passed Glencoe village shortly after 6pm.

Tony is described as 5ft 9ins tall, of stocky build, with short greying hair, a moustache and usually wears glasses. He has a tattoo of an anchor on his right upper arm and a tattoo of an eagle on his left arm.

He was last seen wearing a distinctive red waterproof jacket, a blue long-sleeved cycling top, a high-vis vest, fingerless gloves, beige combat trousers and walking boots.

He was also wearing a silver and grey cycling helmet, carrying a silver and blue rucksack and riding a yellow-framed bike with black handlebars.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Police Scotland on 101, quoting incident number 0559 of October 2.

Belford escapes worst of flu pressures so far

THE BELFORD Hospital in Fort William seems to be escaping the worst of the pressures currently being felt in many other Highland hospitals due to an outbreak of flu.

NHS Highland, similar to the rest of Scotland, has seen an increase in the number of flu cases being treated within its hospitals over the weekend with Raigmore Hospital in Inverness under significant pressure.

Dr Ken McDonald, associate medical director for Raigmore Hospital, has stated that emergency and urgent work will be prioritised within the hospital.

Bed use across all hospitals is also being looked at so people may find that they are being admitted elsewhere in Highland or transferred to another hospital before being discharged.

Asked how the Belford was faring in the current outbreak,

an NHS Highland spokesperson told the *Lochaber Times*: 'They've had a couple of confirmed flu cases which are being managed.'

'However, we do know flu and other respiratory illnesses are circulating in the community so if you have any respiratory symptoms we would ask that you do not visit any of our hospitals. We are grateful for the support staff across all our hospitals in NHS Highland are

receiving from the public and appreciate everyone's understanding and co-operation.'

Catherine Stokoe, infection control manager for NHS Highland, added: 'Coming to hospital to visit a family member or friend when you have been ill with symptoms such as those associated with flu could put them, and our other patients, at risk so we would ask that you hold off visiting until you are better.'

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Anyone with information is urged to contact Police Scotland on 101, quoting incident number 0559 of October 2.

Fresh police appeal to trace missing cyclist

POLICE Scotland has launched a new appeal for information in its efforts to trace missing man Tony Parsons, who visited Fort William shortly before being reported missing three months ago.

The last confirmed sighting of the 63-year-old was around 11.30pm on Friday September 29 at the Bridge of Orchy Hotel. He then left the area and headed south towards Tyndrum on the A82.

Tony had travelled from Tillicoultry to Fort William by train earlier in the day, arriving at Fort William train station around 4.10pm. He set off to cycle back to Tillicoultry along the A82 and passed Glencoe village shortly after 6pm.

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Anyone with information is urged to contact Police Scotland on 101, quoting incident number 0559 of October 2.



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WHAT'S ON in Lochaber

THE FIRST local history society meeting of 2018 sees the return of Richard Sidgwick who will continue his series of talks on land ownership in Lochaber.

This talk is entitled 'Land Use - Lochaber's Changing Landscape'. Richard's lifelong role at the centre of estate management in Lochaber places him in a unique position to share his knowledge and experience. The preservation and recording of past land ownership will be a great resource to local historians in the future. Everyone is welcome to the Ben Nevis Hotel tonight (Thursday January 11) at 8pm.

BUN-SGOIL Ghàidhlig Loch Abar is hosting an open afternoon for Gaelic medium education in Lochaber this Saturday (January 13) 1-3pm.

Call in to the informal open afternoon for more information and have a tour around the school. Speak to staff and ask current parents about their experiences at the school. There will also be activities for children including messy play, outdoor learning and dance and a bottle stall to raise money for Cròileagan.

THE NEXT concert in the Lochaber Music For All series is Brass Diversions on Sunday January 14 at 3pm at Kilmallie Hall, Corpach. Brass Diversions are a collective formed from Scotland's leading brass players. Musicians for the afternoon will be Tom Poulsen on trumpet, Davur Juul Magnussen on trombone and Mark Reynolds on tuba. The concert will also feature the annual fundraising cream tea during the interval. Tickets are £10 per adult and £1 for children and students.

KILMALLIE Community Centre committee is calling all gardeners and volunteers for a further session to help restore Kilmallie community gardens on Saturday January 20 from 10am to 1pm. Everyone is welcome to help the team work bring the gardens back to the level they were at when Princess Anne opened them in 1999. Contact Sarah Kennedy on 07768 805040 for more information.

STAFF and volunteers from Caol-based Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC) for sight and hearing support will visit Abbeyfield Care Home, Ballachulish, on Monday January 15. Between 10.30am and 12.30pm, LSC representatives will offer help and advice to anyone with a hearing loss or sight loss - residents and members of the public. The team will also supply NHS hearing and batteries and re-tube and maintain hearing aids.

LOCHABER Environmental Group is holding a clothes swap on Tuesday January 16 at 6pm in the New Hall, Duncansburgh Church, Fort William.

Donated clothes must be clean and in good condition. Everyone is welcome to the free event which is being hosted by Lochaber Environmental Group as part of its Lochaber Energy and Waste Project, funded by the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund.

Frustration over new prison plans

SCOTTISH Prison Service (SPS) has confirmed to me that future custodial arrangements for women from the north will remain as they are at present.

'Under current plans women will continue to serve their sentences in Peterhead.'

'This is unacceptable in the 21st century. Women offenders need to be accommodated closer to home to allow loved ones, particularly children, to visit easily.'

'It is neither acceptable nor right that families in the north

should have to travel these distances to visit.'

'I appreciate the old Inverness Prison is more than 100 years old but the SPS needs to move with the times and come into this century.'

Mrs Grant says she has previously contacted the Cabinet Secretary for Justice Michael Matheson about this and has now also asked the Chief Inspector for Prisons to intervene to ensure there are facilities in the north for women to serve their sentences.

MP FOR Ross, Skye and Lochaber Ian Blackford is holding a surgery in Mallaig this Friday, January 12, to meet with constituents about the effects of the proposed closure of the Royal Bank of Scotland's Mallaig branch on the wider community.

Before the Westminster Parliament closed for the Christmas recess, Ian Blackford secured a debate on the RBS closures across the UK and called on the government to intervene, on the basis that 73 per cent of the bank is in state ownership.

He said: 'Government statements that this is entirely a commercial decision over which they have no control is nonsensical. They were consulted on the departure of the former chief executive and just in the

MP to hold surgery on Mallaig RBS closure

last few weeks on the sale of an insurance arm of the business. How can they claim to have no say?'

'The Mallaig branch, along with those in other parts of the constituency such as Kyle and Beauly, are more than just places of business, but important parts of the communities they serve. They not only provide jobs in the bank but, by providing a local service, encourage and assist other businesses to remain in the area. I will continue to fight these closures.'

The Mallaig surgery will be held in Mallaig Leisure Centre between 2pm and 3pm this Friday, January 12, and follows a joint surgery with Kate Forbes MSP in Fort William at 11.45am.

Ian Blackford MP with the petition he has started against closure of RBS branches in Mallaig. IF F51 RBS branch closure petition.



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Campaign launched as plastic pollution is last straw for MSP

MARK ENTWISTLE
markentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

LOCHABER MSP Kate Forbes has launched a campaign to ban plastic straws.

The MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, whose constituency covers the east and west coasts of Scotland, is highlighting the damage caused by single-use disposable plastic items to the onshore and marine environment in Scotland.

Items such as plastic straws can take up to 500 years to decompose, despite only being used for less than half an hour.

Ms Forbes, who sits on the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Reform Committee, wants consumers and businesses to get behind the project.

The official campaign launch was held at the Royal Hotel in Cromarty on Monday, one of the first businesses in her constituency to ditch plastic straws in favour of paper biodegradable ones. Ms Forbes said plastic is choking seas, damaging the environment and risking the lives

of seabirds and sea creatures: 'One of the most common plastic items on the beach are plastic straws. We could be throwing out just under £3 billion straws every year in Scotland, based on US estimates of people using an average of 1.6 straws per day every year,' she said.

'Pub chain Wetherspoons has indicated it uses 70 million straws a year in the UK, so the figures are huge.'

'Most people don't ask for a straw and don't want one, but pubs and restaurants automatically pop it in their glass. That plastic straw could end up in our seas, causing damage to wildlife.'

Ms Forbes said Jenny Henderson, owner of the Royal Hotel in Cromarty, had decided to switch to paper straws over Christmas after being inspired by Ullapool Primary School pupils who have made their village the first straw-free village in Scotland.

Ms Forbes continued: 'Before the Christmas recess, I asked the Scottish Government to look at the issue of plastic straws and the Cabinet Secretary said the



Kate Forbes MSP, left, with hotel owner Jenny Henderson, launches the campaign to end the use of plastic straws.

Scottish Government was considering a number of options.

'I am asking pubs and restaur-

ants to stop handing out straws automatically and to only provide biodegradable alternatives.

'Chains like Wetherspoons and individual businesses like the Royal Hotel have already

done that and I hope others will follow their lead.'

'If you agree governments should take more action on plastic straws and restaurants and pubs should stop stocking plastic straws, sign up to my campaign petition at finalstraw.scot.'

The MSP's call is being supported by the Marine Conservation Society.

Scotland conservation officer Catherine Gemmell commented: 'It is fantastic to see MSP Kate Forbes call for a ban on plastic straws as they are one of the many single-use plastic items that we find rising in numbers on our beaches, in our seas and impacting our wildlife.'

'Our seas should not have to pay the price for a throw-away culture and any move to reduce the amount of single use plastic items being thrown away is good news for our seas and wildlife.'

'It was incredible to see school pupils taking the lead on this issue before Christmas with Sunnyside and Ullapool primary helping Ullapool go plastic straw free. If Ullapool can go plastic straw free why can't Scotland?'



Drivers are not happy about the state of the A82 coming into Fort William.

BEAR brings forward A82 resurfacing works

TRUNK roads maintenance company BEAR Scotland says it is aware of problems with parts of the A82 road surface on the north side of Fort William and will bring forward remedial action.

Problems with potholes and crumbling road surfaces in and around Fort William and at Spean Bridge have been the subject of numerous complaints in recent months.

However, following recent completion of the new roundabout and approach road on the A82 opposite the town's new Marks & Spencer store, there have been even more grumbles about the state of the road at the BP filling station end of that particular stretch of the A82

where large areas of the road surface are breaking up.

A BEAR spokesperson told the *Lochaber Times* this week: 'We're aware of the defects on some sections of the A82 around Fort William and our teams have been working to bring forward resurfacing schemes in our programme to address areas most in need of repair.'

'Cold and wet winter weather has had a serious impact on the condition of some areas of the carriageway and our teams have been carrying out temporary repairs to some of the road defects until resurfacing can be completed, with three locations around Fort William scheduled to be resurfaced in late February and early March.'

'In the meantime we will continue to monitor the road and carry out further repairs as required.'

Resurfacing schemes are planned for three locations around Fort William as follows:

■ Lochy Bridge roundabout to Torlundy in late February during the day over five days.

■ Morbaine roundabout to Lochy Bridge roundabout for three nights in early March.

■ Nevis Bridge roundabout to Earl of Inverness roundabout for two nights in early March.

BEAR Scotland says consultation with all relevant stakeholders for all three schemes will begin this month before any final programme of works is determined.

'We are looking for a self catering accommodation option, nearby or within a cycling distance or with bus connections to Fort William centre, as the school is located there.'

'As we come from Finland, we'd need a fully furnished apartment/cottage. We are outdoorsy people who enjoy peaceful surroundings and nature.'

'We are tidy and trustworthy, as well as easy-going and friendly. We would enjoy living close to the nature very much and we are also very fond of animals, if the premises happen to have a pet, for example.'

'For further information, please don't hesitate to contact us.'

'We'd love to hear more from your options!'

The *Lochaber Times* tried to contact Jenna and Jaakkko last week but by the time we went to press yesterday we had not received a reply.

However, asked to comment, a spokesperson for West Highland College UHI said this week: 'We are really looking forward to welcoming eight Erasmus students who are travelling to study modules from our Adventure Tourism

Connel bridge to close for maintenance

CONNEL bridge is to close for essential maintenance.

Work to improve lighting and traffic signals will be carried out on the A828 bridge later this month.

The repairs are scheduled to start on Sunday January 21 from midnight until 6am for five nights. To ensure the safety of road workers and road users, the bridge will be closed each night to all traffic and pedestrians.

The bridge will be open as normal

outwith these working hours. Traffic will be diverted northbound at Connel via the A85 and A82 and southbound at Ballachulish via the A82 and A85.

Emergency services will be able to pass through the works at all times. Local access will also be maintained across the bridge at approximately hourly intervals, starting from 1am.

Eddie Ross, BEAR Scotland's north west representative, said: 'These essential electrical works on

Connel bridge will ensure the lights and traffic signals are maintained to a safe working standard. We've taken steps to minimise disruption as much as possible and arranged for this scheme to take place overnight and avoiding the busier Friday and Saturday nights to limit any impact as much as possible. The road closures are essential to keep everyone safe during the electrical works on the bridge. Teams will do all they can

to complete the work quickly. We encourage motorists to plan their journeys in advance by checking the Traffic Scotland website for up-to-date journey information and leaving extra time to complete their journey.'

Real time journey information is available from Traffic Scotland on www.trafficscotland.org, twitter @ trafficscotland or the new Traffic Scotland mobile site my.trafficscotland.org.

Councillor defends gritting services



Councillor Andrew Baxter.

A LOCHABER councillor has defended Highland Council's strategy of priority gritting this winter, but has called for extra resources to be made available for the area's villages.

Highland Council member and Kinlochleven resident Andrew Baxter explained: 'As a councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, I find it as frustrating as everyone else that we can't grit all our footpaths.'

'Even if we had unlimited budgets, it would be logistically difficult to grit every pavement in Fort William before we even thought

about the Lochaber villages. That's why we set priority routes every summer, for the forthcoming winter, based on the budget available. It's difficult juggling the need to keep our main roads, bus routes, school routes and shopping areas open or concentrating on residential areas.'

'The winter teams deal with priority routes before heading out to deal with other areas.'

'In my own village of Kinlochleven, it's the first year I've ever seen our main pavement gritted on the day it was needed, instead

of several days later. This is despite years of arguing with the director of community services that a priority pavement should be gritted the same day.'

'Please spare a thought for our staff who are out there, often in appalling conditions, trying to keep the network gritted. We had one team go off the road in Glen Roy the week before Christmas. One gritter off the road or in for repair causes chaos.'

'All that said, I still argue for extra resources for Lochaber – despite some Inverness officers in recent

years arguing we could cut the winter maintenance budget by 30 per cent – and we received two new gritting lorries before Christmas, one stationed in Fort William, the other in Strontian.'

'Every autumn we write to every community council asking if there are additional areas of their community that require grit bins so that residents can 'help themselves.'

If anyone knows of a problem area that needs gritting, contact Andrew Baxter or the council on 01349 886603 so it can be reported to the appropriate team.'

Man sent abusive text messages

A JOINER from Fort William was fined £450 and given a two-year non-harassment order after pleading guilty to sending abusive text messages to his ex-partner.

Steven Milne, 40, of Mamore Crescent, appeared before Sheriff David Sutherland at Fort William Sheriff Court on Friday.

Self-employed Milne admitted sending the messages by text and social media on October 8 last year, causing his ex-partner fear and alarm.

Milne's defence agent, Hamish Melrose, told the court his client had sent the messages during the space of an hour on October 8 and that Milne had described his mental state at the time of the offence as being 'out of control'.

Mr Melrose said derogatory texts and messages had been sent by both sides involved.

Driver banned and fined £400

A ROY Bridge man has been fined £400 and banned from driving for a year.

At Fort William Sheriff Court last week, Christopher Parton, 48, whose address was given as Riverbank House, pleaded guilty that on June 19, 2017, at his home, he failed to provide police officers with the identity of the driver of a car and failed to provide two breath test samples.

Trial of Claggan man deserted

THE TRIAL of a Claggan man charged with threatening to kill his former partner was deserted at Fort William Sheriff Court last week.

Alexander Watson, of Polmona, Claggan, Fort William, had pleaded not guilty that, for the purposes of causing her annoyance, inconvenience and needless anxiety, he had phoned the woman on May 12 and threatened to kill her.

However, the indictment against Watson has been withdrawn permanently.

Police investigate office break-in

POLICE in Fort William are appealing for information after entry was forced to a construction site office in Lochside.

A window was smashed to gain entry to the office on Rankin Drive between 3pm on Sunday and 7am on Monday of this week. Nothing was stolen from inside the property, although police say there were signs of items being interfered with inside the office.

Constable Ben Cruickshank said: 'Anyone who saw anything suspicious should call us on 101, quoting reference NP192/18, or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.'



Jenna Koskimaki.

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'We're proud that our world-class courses can attract students each year from all over Europe for a short time during the winter months. Our student services team contact all the students individually to find out what support they might need.'

'We provide a list of accommodation that's available and also encourage the students to join local community social media pages to get a feel for what might suit them.'

'We'll keep in touch to be sure we are doing all we can to help them get a good start to their studies.'

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FW
Skye Live
returns
to Portree
in 2018

THE LUMP in Portree will once again be filled with music this year as Skye Live announces its return.

The increasingly popular electronic and traditional music festival will take place on Friday September 21 and Saturday 22. And although the line-up is still to be decided, excitement is already building.

Now in its fourth year, the two-day festival showcases some of Scotland's finest bands and DJs as well as food and produce from the Isle of Skye and has become a mainstay in the island's events calendar. This year's event is proving so popular that the 'super early bird tickets' have already sold out.

Skye Live began as an idea between two friends, Niall Munro and Ali MacIsaac, who believed the hill which overlooks Portree Harbour, known locally as The Lump, would make an excellent venue for a music festival.

Last year's line-up included electronic artists as headliners Django Django and Glasgow duo Dixon Avenue Basement Jams, while Blazin' Fiddles and Skye natives Niteworks headlined the Scots traditional stage.

Campaign to fund First Responders

PORTRREE Community First Responders hope to raise £1,500 to help buy the equipment.

On its fundraising page, the group said: 'The equipment we require is not cheap and any donations, no matter how small, are greatly appreciated. Even once the kit has been purchased, it requires maintenance and upgrading.'

A community First Responder is a local volunteer who agrees to undertake training in basic life support. This enables them to provide life saving treatment to people in the community who are critically ill, in the first few minutes prior to the arrival of an ambulance.

To show your support, visit Portree Community First Responders' JustGiving page.

Ferry operator enjoys increased passenger numbers and revenue

PASSENGER numbers and revenue increased over the past year for ferry operator David MacBrayne Ltd (DML), according to the company's annual report and accounts.

The government-owned holding company for Caledonian MacBrayne posted a profit before tax of £4.8m in 2017, reversing a loss of £4.8m last year.

Total revenue was £195m, £5 million up on 2016.

Last year DML carried more than 5.3 million passengers, an increase of 300,000, and nearly 1.4 million

vehicles. With a fleet of 35 vessels, the company services 26 islands and mainland locations through CalMac Ferries Ltd and Argyll Ferries Ltd.

'This has been another successful year for us, the highlight undoubtedly being successfully securing the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service contract for another eight years,' said DML chairman David McGibbon. 'The period covers the last six months of our old Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service contract and the first six months of the new one.'

'I'm delighted that thanks to efficiencies outlined in our contract bid, we are starting out how we mean to go on, in profit.'

As part of the bid, CalMac Ferries agreed to implement more than 350 service improvements.

'Many of our service improvements have already been delivered, such as the roll-out of wireless broadband across all vessels and ports, and passengers will be able to see many more as the contract progresses,' said Mr McGibbon.

The report outlined several key achievements for the company. DML were part of the Project SEAHORSE consortium that looked at implementing safety considerations pioneered by the aviation industry at sea.

This was recognised with a Maritime Safety Award from the Royal Institution of Naval Architects.

The company, through its joint venture Solent Gateway, has now completed its first year operating Marchwood Military Port in Hampshire on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. The 230-

acre site presents a number of commercial opportunities that DML are keen to pursue over the 35-year concession.

'CalMac has a crucial role to play in driving economic development on the islands that is much more than simply providing ferry services.'

'Working in partnership with local tourism bodies and visitor attractions, we are a primary partner in encouraging people to the islands and getting them there and back and were delighted to have this recognised,' added Mr McGibbon.



Members of Cairdean Og Alt nan Gall visited the Scottish parliament this year thanks to money donated from the trust.



Tiumpeanhead Community Association received £800 from Point and Sandwick Trust for their Christmas lunch.

Christmas donations help fight elderly isolation on Lewis

COMMUNITY groups which combat social isolation on Lewis have enjoyed Christmas parties thanks to donations from Point and Sandwick Trust.

The trust, which is behind the community-owned wind farm at Beinn Ghridag just outside Stornoway, donated nearly £2,000 to two community groups to help with the festivities.

Cairdean Og Alt nan Gall, one of the biggest and longest-running groups for the elderly on Lewis, received £1,000 towards the party in the Caladh Inn on December 5, attended by more than 40.

The Cairdean received a similar amount last year and the financial support from Point and Sandwick also makes it easier for them to lay on their summer trip to the mainland. This year, they

stayed at the Crieff Hydro and visited the Scottish Parliament and the Royal Yacht Britannia.

Cairdean has monthly get-togethers in Ionad Stoodie in Point which are usually attended by around 40 people.

There are 60 members altogether, who range in age from 60 to around 90 and come along from Branae up to Bayble and Garrabost.

Duncan said: 'Without a doubt, Point and Sandwick Trust have been a godsend to us. They're really good and they're always there. If they can't help, Donald John MacSween will at least point us in the right direction as to where we should be going. Providing a minibus for the community is another saving.'

Meanwhile, Tiumpeanhead Community Association

received £800 towards their Christmas lunch on Saturday December 9 in the Community Centre, Aird.

Numbers were a little low this year, due to the bad weather, but a good time was still had by all – and those who were unable to attend will be getting a home visit and a present over the festive season.

Community association chair Grace Smith said the afternoon had been great, with a big dinner and 'a dram or two or three'. The Lewis branch of the Clarsach Society provided musical accompaniment and there were Christmas carols and games of 'pass the parcel' at the tables between courses.

Grace said: 'They all thoroughly enjoyed it. I've had folk phoning me afterward saying

how much they enjoyed it. It was good craic, absolutely fantastic. They really enjoyed themselves and we enjoyed it because of that. The committee mucked in and afterwards the volunteers all got their Christmas dinner too. It was a lovely day.'

Like the Cairdean, the community association sees inclusion as paramount.

Point and Sandwick Trust general manager Donald John MacSween said they were very pleased to help the groups, which provide a social focus for people who may otherwise be isolated and lonely.'

He added: 'We have an ageing population and often their needs are ignored. Getting out and meeting others and staying active and connected to your community is important.'

Public meetings on port plans

CALEDONIAN Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) is to host public exhibitions to share proposals for construction work at the Skye triangle ports of Tarbert (Harris), Uig and Lochmaddy.

The upgrade project has now entered the design stage following the completion of masterplans and detailed designs for the preferred option for each location are being developed. The events, during the week commencing Monday February 26, will allow local communities and other interested parties to comment on proposals and

work at various stages of the process. Being discussed at the meetings in February are Tarbert upgrades proposed by CMAL, Lochmaddy upgrades proposed by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Uig upgrades proposed by The Highland Council.

These include pier modifications and upgrades, land reclamation and new terminals.

Ruth McIntosh, principal planning engineer at CMAL said: 'Previous meetings at Uig, Tarbert and Lochmaddy were useful in gathering comments on the various stages of work and the public

exhibitions in February are an opportunity for communities to see how the plans have developed and have their say on the preferred options.'

'We encourage those with an interest in this work to come along to find out more and ask questions.'

The exhibitions will take place at Uig Community Centre, Uig, Skye, on Monday February 26 from 4 to 7pm; Harris Hotel, Tarbert, Harris, on Tuesday February 27 from 4 to 7pm and Lochmaddy Village Hall, North Uist on Wednesday February 28 from 4 to 7pm.

Quieter year for Skye mountain rescuers

SKYE Mountain Rescue (SMR) has had a quieter year than normal, according to figures released this week.

SMR reported that its volunteers spent 1,425 hours on 43 call-outs to help 54 casualties.

The biggest rescue of the year for the team was two men attempting to walk the Skye trail via Blà Bheinn in poor conditions.

In a public statement on Monday, an SMR representative said: 'Interestingly, last year has not been our busiest, despite increased visitor numbers to the island. 2015 remains our busiest year to date, with 2,935 volunteer hours required for 53 call-outs.'

Raasay Distillery opens its doors to visitors

RAASAY'S first legal distillery opens its doors to the public next week.

Raasay Distillery announced it will be opening for tours from Monday January 15.

Tours will be run up to eight tours a day, seven days a week before Easter, giving visitors a chance to get the first look at the new island

distillery. The owners, craft whisky makers R and B Distillers, hosted an open day in September 2017 on the Raasay site with a grand ceremony marking the opening of production at the distillery.

The first batch of single malt from the island distillery is due to be ready by 2020.



Raasay Distillery held an open day in September and will open for daily tours next week.

Time to end Highland energy rip-off, says MSP

WITH Scots facing a cold winter, Lochaber MSP Kate Forbes has called on the UK government to end the 'Highland energy rip-off' which sees customers in the energy-rich region facing higher fuel bills.

Currently Highland customers face a 2p electricity surcharge which leaves them with higher bills, despite the region

facing some of the highest rates of fuel poverty in the country.

More than half of all rural and remote households live in fuel poverty, with fuel poverty levels significantly higher in rural Scotland.

This leaves consumers in the Highlands facing bigger bills, despite the region being a key generator of renewable energy.

Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye,

Lochaber and Badenoch, said: 'Highland Scotland is energy-rich, with huge potential as a green energy powerhouse.'

'The SNP's commitment to establishing a publicly-owned, not-for-profit energy company will ensure the public greater choice and the option of a supplier whose only job is to secure the lowest price for consumers. But residents in the

Highlands face a completely unfair surcharge on their bills, despite the region facing among the highest rates of fuel poverty and often being most exposed to extreme weather.'

'If Theresa May is serious about tackling high electricity bills, it's time for her to end the Highland energy rip-off and tackle this surcharge as part of her price cap.'

Stornoway arts centre to trial Sunday openings

AN ARTS centre on the Isle of Lewis is to trial Sunday opening after reversing its decision not to do so last year.

Last September, An Lanntair arts centre and community hub in Stornoway decided against opening on Sundays, despite public support for the idea.

The decision was taken by the board because of 'operational challenges associated with opening on Sundays'. However, the management has this week decided to reverse that decision after com-

ing up with an alternative arrangement whereby the building will be open to the public on the last Sunday of the month until March.

The centre held public meetings throughout 2017 on the issue and there was considerable public support for the proposal.

Rev James MacIver of Stornoway Free Church is one of the church leaders on the island opposed to the idea of openings on the Sabbath. He believes opening on Sundays would have an impact on time attending church services.



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Reserves visit Fort in search of recruits

7 SCOTS – the local Army Reserves for the Highlands and Islands – are visiting Fort William later this month as part of a recruitment drive.

The Army Reserves, formerly known as the Territorial Army, are looking to sign up any would-be officers as they tour the West Highlands.

Sergeant Tommy Stewart, from 7 SCOTS, outlined how the Army Reserves offer a variety of roles and jobs all of which can be undertaken in people's spare time, while at the same time providing an income stream.

He said: 'The Army Reserves are volunteers who typically give 27 days a year.'

'One myth is that once you join you will be sent on overseas operations. Nothing could be further from the truth. An individual, if they so wish, may be able to serve with their regular counterparts on an overseas deployment, but this is an agreement made between the person, their family and their work.'

Tommy continued: 'Travel and adventure is still a big part of what the reserves do. In 2017, members of 7 SCOTS visited Singapore, Hong Kong, Sweden, Cyprus, France, USA and Gibraltar, taking part in events such as hockey, sailing, skiing and scuba diving as well as other activities.'

7 SCOTS will be hosting an event in Cameron Square, Fort William, on Tuesday January 23 from noon to 4pm and at the joint Cadets Drill Hall on Croft Road, Fort William, at 6pm the same day.

If anyone is interested, contact thomas.stewart214@mod.gov.uk.

Quietest year in a decade for Lochaber mountain rescuers

NEIL BO FINLAYSON
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

A LACK of snow and 'virtually no winter' last year may be the reason why Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team (LMRT) experienced its quietest year for call-outs in a decade.

Responding to only 78 call-outs in 2017, compared to the expected yearly total of 100, the team racked up more than 3,400 volunteer man hours in the last year, rescuing 82 people.

Although considered a relatively quiet year in terms of call-outs, 2017 saw the rescue team deal with five fatalities, three mountaineering incidents and two medical incidents on Ben Nevis.

LMRT, which is usually one of Scotland's busiest rescue teams, said the low number of call-outs is due to the fact there was 'virtually no winter last year, with snow in short supply until well into February'.

For the first time in 11 years, the lack of snow and mild winter resulted in snow disappearing



Team members after a successful rescue 25 years ago. The Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team is looking for former members to get in touch as it marks its 50th anniversary. Photograph: LMRT.

completely from Ben Nevis, the main port of call for the rescue team.

The team ended 2017 with a flurry as members responded to

two call-outs from injured walkers requiring help on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Some of the more testing rescues for the team in 2017

included the rescue of two men after they spent nine hours stuck on Tower Ridge on the north face of Ben Nevis during a climb in December.

The team also had to deal with some less orthodox mountain rescues, such as in November when 17 members of the team helped rescue a forester who was injured after a tree he was felling rolled off its stump and trapped him.

2017 also saw LMRT deploying a drone to help find a female climber who had injured a leg on Sgurr á Bhui. This use of aerial technology was the first of its kind for a Scottish mountain rescue team.

With this winter season set to be snowier than the last, LMRT issued a warning for those venturing into the snowy conditions: 'At the moment we are getting significant falls of snow above 600 metres which is resulting in considerable avalanche risk above 900 metres on the Ben. If you are heading out, be prepared and check the weather.'

Since its formation 50 years ago, the team has carried out more than 2,500 rescues in Lochaber.

If you were a team member during the last 50 years, or before, LMRT would like you to contact them to keep you informed of what is planned. Contact the team on info@lochabermrt.co.uk.



Earlier this year, 17 members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team helped rescue a forester who was injured after a tree he was felling rolled on top of him. Photograph: LMRT.



Caol man helps museum reach milestone

FORT William's West Highland Museum clocked up its highest number of visitors in 35 years when on its last day of opening in 2017, its 55,000th visitor walked through the door.

The visitor was Gary Elder, 50, from Caol, who was booking a table at a nearby restaurant

Left: Gary Elder from Caol was the museum's 55,000th visitor in 2017. Photograph: Iain Ferguson.

and decided to drop in – for the first time since a primary school trip in 1979. He was greeted at the door by museum manager Colleen Barker, also a former pupil of Caol Primary School, who delivered the good news and presented him with a book outlining the history of the museum and its many exhibits.

Gary said: 'This was a complete surprise and I am really pleased. Of course a lot has changed in

38 years. There is plenty to see and the new Commando room has lots of interesting exhibits.'

Colleen Barker said: 'I had been hanging about by the door waiting for our "special" visitor and was delighted to welcome Gary back after such a long time. He was a bit surprised and of course the story of his last visit was such a coincidence.'

'Entry to the museum has been free for some time, but almost

all visitors make a voluntary donation or buy something in our shop. The museum has a wonderful collection which covers not just Fort William, but the whole of the West Highlands. There is a particularly rich collection of Jacobite artefacts. There are also some textiles and unusual items, such as an original Penny Farthing bike and a huge aluminium ingot made in the Lochaber Smelter in the 1920s.'

Situated in Cameron Square, just off High Street, in a former bank premises, it is the most popular indoor attraction in Fort William. Staffed daily by a team of volunteers, the museum now attracts six times as many visitors compared to six years ago.

The museum is open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday throughout 2018 with no winter closing.

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Tarbert

PUPILS of Clachan Primary School were hard at work over the last few months, preparing more than 40 Christmas cakes for retired residents in the community.

The annual school tradition dates back more than two decades and sees the children bake, package and hand deliver cakes to elderly people in the village.

Head teacher Lucy Blake said: 'The project has a positive influence in the community and in the school.'

'The children apply their numeracy skills in context and think about how they can help others in the village.'

'The cakes are all individually wrapped and the children make individual name tags so they think about each recipient as an individual. We only have five pupils so they do a lot work.'

'It's a wonderful way of linking the children to older members in the community in a tangible way, while keeping traditions alive. The Christmas cakes are anticipated by the recipients.'

'For some older members of the community, buying a Christmas cake for one would be expensive and for others it is a link to the school where they and their family went as children.'

'The fact each cake is named individually adds to the sense of caring for each person. Christmas can be a lonely time too and we hope that by letting everyone know they are thought of, it is a way to show that we care.'

The initiative won the Active Participation in the Community Award from the Argyll College UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) last year.

Inveraray

Neil MacEachern's Scottish Dance Band.

THE DECEMBER meeting of Inveraray and District Accordion and Fiddle Club fell foul of bad weather which, unfortunately, prevented many regulars from attending.

Supporting players who braved the elements were Fyne Folk, with Sally Hall, Alex John MacLeod and Jake MacKay on fiddles and Agnes Liddell on keyboard. They played a couple of nice sets.

Young Calum MacDonald played his button box beautifully and kindly brought good wishes to the club from his tutor Fraser McGlynn.

Dalriada Ceilidh Band were back again this month with Myles Clark on accordion, Steve Hunter on guitar and Grant MacDougall on drums, and they also played nice selections.

Guest artistes were Neil MacEachern and his Scottish Dance Band with Neil on accordion, his wife Angela on fiddle, Tom Murray on keyboard and Dave Beattie on drums. They entertained the audience with an excellent selection in both halves, with two cracking solos from Angela on fiddle.

Because of the wintry weather, the evening was curtailed to allow the guest artiste to head for home. Chairman Niall Iain MacLean thanked all the artistes and the audience for making the effort to attend and conveyed the compliments of the season to everyone.

Next week, to get the New Year under way, the club welcomes back the ever popular Robert Nairn Trio from Acharacle.



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Andy Pearson-Greatrix works on his next painting in Appin Craft Shop.

Ferryman Andy moves back to dry land to focus on artwork

TO PEOPLE in Appin and on Lismore, he's known as 'Andy the ferryman', but renowned maritime artist Andy Pearson-Greatrix will be sticking to dry land this year as he turns his attention to painting.

Andy moved to Lismore to 'get out of the rat race' after spending 30 years living in Kent and working in London where he was a sought after artist, given his talent for painting dramatic and

detailed maritime scenes. After making the move, Andy took on a six-month contract working on the Lismore to Port Appin ferry to get to know the locals and learn more about the island and local landscapes.

But his hidden talent soon came to the fore, as Andy began to display his work on the ferry and receive visitors to his island studio at Crossroads.

Originally from Orkney,

Andy yearned for a return to island life and he and wife Emma chose Lismore because of the beauty of the local landscape.

'I have really enjoyed working on the ferry,' said Andy. 'But I am now at a stage where the painting is requiring my full attention.'

'I get commissions to paint vessels, or I often pick a story from history and research the boats to create an image.'

'I have been painting a lot of seascapes and landscapes. You have the best landscapes in this part of the world, as there are compositions everywhere you look.'

Andy set up a mini studio on Hogmanay in Appin Craft Shop, one of the few

places his work is on sale.

The small Port Appin-based shop, now in its third season, sells arts and crafts by 95 different artists.

Plockton

PLOCKTON Hall committee held its annual general meeting on Wednesday December 6 with the usual attendance.

Treasurer Kally Leiper submitted a satisfactory report detailing a profit on the year. All the office-bearers were re-elected with Kally agreeing to continue until April. She leaves Plockton with her husband John in June.

Charlie M MacRae, secretary since 1961, agreed to continue until a new secretary is found.

In the new year, 12 windows are to be replaced and the hall floor is to be painted with three new heaters added to the exhibition area. It was agreed to change the constitution so the date of the AGM could be changed.

RECENT deaths in Lochalsh included Sylvia Finlayson from Erbusaig, Evelyn MacRae from Kyle and Ian Begg from Plockton. Sympathy is expressed to their families and friends.

PLOCKTON Drama Club held a coffee morning in Plockton Hotel on Saturday December 9 which raised more than £300 for club funds.

AT A MEETING of Skye and Lochalsh Sports Council in Kyleakin Hall on Monday December 11, secretary Peter Gordon presented Charlie M MacRae with an inscribed salver and a cheque. Earlier in the year, Charlie retired after 32 years at the sports council, having been involved since its inception. In that time, Charlie served as chairman of the council for 18 years. An excellent tea was served and Charlie suitably replied.

CM MacRae.

Spean Bridge

TRUNK roads operator BEAR Scotland has been tackled again about the state of roads at Spean Bridge.

Local community council chairman John Fotheringham told the roads maintenance body last week that the community council's big issue was with roads disintegrating after being resurfaced twice three years ago.

'We now find the carriageway on the A86, at its junction with the A82, is seriously deteriorating and impacting on the A82,' Mr Fotheringham informed BEAR officials in an email.

He added that the resulting gravel from growing potholes was beginning to clog nearby drains.

'Similarly, the last 50 metres of the resurfaced section as you leave Spean Bridge to the north on the A82 is also deteriorating,' he continued. 'Here it is the north bound carriageway and although some minor remedial works have been carried out to the worst of the pot holes, it has not addressed the problem which with freezing and thawing will continue to disintegrate.'

'Although our priority is to get the offending sections repaired without delay, we would like to know why such deterioration should take place so quickly.'

Uist's third Fèis Chullaig hits all the right notes

NOW IN its third year, Fèis Chullaig, the Hogmanay festival organised by Ceòlas Uibhist, has gone from strength to strength.

Running between Christmas and New Year in South Uist, events including dances, family ceilidhs and music sessions saw the highest number of participants yet.

Originally starting out as a residential school in 2015 based on the successful summer school model, the event has become more community orientated, responding to local demand.

Featuring a strong programme focused on children and young people this year, the fèis opened with crafts, story and dance in the Lochboisdale Hotel on December 28, followed by a traditional music session led by Alana MacInnes and Shona Masson.

Eòrisgeidh was the setting for events on Friday December 29. These included cockle picking on the morning tide, further bilingual children's activities, a piping recital featuring students of Iain MacDonald of Glenugie and a dance in Talla Choimhearsnach Eòrisgeidh played by Kilpeddar Sound.

The traditional Hogmanay ceilidh in the 19th-century Grogarry Lodge, complete with cocktails and fresh seafood hors d'oeuvres in a cosy setting, was exceptionally busy on Saturday, with around 50 people arriving to hear authentic local music. The relaxed evening was

followed by an energetic dance in Talla an lochdair, driven by the mastery of Trail West, one of Uist's favourite bands.

Around 250 adults spent the night dancing Strip the Willow and enjoying Gaelic sing-alongs. On Hogmanay, droves of families packed into the Borrodale Hotel for a children's ceilidh, which saw talented youngsters singing, dancing and playing the button box and pipes. With Penny Burgess as bean an taighe, the tradition of the Hogmanay boys was brought into the hotel.

The Duan Callaig was recited by local primary children and several lit caisean, from Smerleit and Eòrisgeidh, were passed around the lounge for a New Year's blessing.

The fèis was brought to a close with a lively tradi-



Fèis Chullaig, the Hogmanay festival organised by Ceòlas Uibhist, has gone from strength to strength.

A fine fellow of my acquaintance, whose mansion is but a short jog from the Mill, was telling me about chilly domestic incident at New Year. It was a cold and frosty morning and he was about to receive a telling off from his wife for something he had or hadn't done. In order to better berate her man, she went through to the bathroom to put in her false teeth. However, you'll be glad to know he didn't get a snappy reprimand because her wallies were frozen solid in their glass. It certainly qualified both of them for the 'Lochaber Wallies of the Year' title.

■ A Ballachulish reader rang up on Thursday

to point out a howler in the paper. Somehow a proposed hot food takeaway had become a hot 'foot' takeaway' in the text of the story. Still,

I felt better on Saturday when watching the Channel 4 racing. Their turf correspondent, a calamity man if ever there was one, was giving an appreciation of a 'Racing Lord' after whom one of the Sandown races had been named.

And he actually said: 'Lord ----- has achieved

immorality among the English!'

■ The frost took its toll on several cars on

Monday morning. They wouldn't start. So it was gratifying to note an AA van, flashers

flashing, towing another vehicle along Belford Road at 9am. The other vehicle was an AA Landrover.

■ They've been doing a roaring trade in

nearly new clothing in one of our charity

shops. Apparently it has sold a complete outfit

of suit, shirt, tie, socks and shoes to a young

man to wear to a wedding for an outlay of just

£10. And he was very well 'groomed' too. Who

needs the January sales?

■ Friday night at Sammy's. No, it wasn't

the wedding reception, but a well lubricated

customer came in and requested a 'take spy supper'. And that's what he got. To steak away.

■ The regional council has been doing good work in Monzie Square this week raising the kerbing which tops the three steps up into the square from Cameron's coal office to where the cars are parked. So, hopefully, gone are the days when folk arrive at our office on the opposite side of the square and ask if we'd give them a hand to lift their car out as they'd driven over the edge of parking area.

■ Well now, are you the Mr Fort William, Mrs Fort William, Miss or Ms Fort William whom consultants are seeking as the 'vital, bright spark' to ignite our town's fortunes. You'll have gathered that such a person is required to champion the Gearasdan's cause in the revolutionary new movement to be known as 'Forward Fort'. The contract is to focus on a project 'hit list' to deliver developments to the Fort within a predetermined timespan. Are you still with me? If so, are you prepared to step forth for the Fort? Forward, then!

■ There was a nice touch at last weekend's

Belford Hospital get together of past and present

staff. The entire company of 106 signed a

get well card to a former staff member who

couldn't be present. And it was despatched to him at Freeman Hospital in Newcastle where he recently underwent a major operation. Aye,

Sam Galbraith was well remembered at the 'do'.

■ Archie Paterson has come up trumps at

Claggan Park. Archie, having read recently in

a Sunday paper of various bakers who supply

pies for consumption at their home football

grounds, has decided to do just that for Fort

William Football Club. From now on, at each

home game, Archie will be donating three

dozen pies to be sold at Claggan Park for club

funds. So get in the queue next Saturday.

■ Monday evening's Fort William Round Table (FWRT) Charter Dinner in the Grand went off with panache. However, just before grace, the Round Table chairman felt obliged to intervene lest any embarrassment accrued to one open-neck shirted gentleman who was standing at reception. 'I hope you don't mind, but it's black tie and formal dress tonight,' he said. To which a slightly bemused, casually but smartly dressed Mickey Whitehead responded: 'Well, if it is, it's the first time the Ben Nevis Race Association (BNRA) committee meetings required dicky bows. Yes, FWRT and BNRA both had meetings that night. I now await word as to whether competitors in this year's Ben Race will be required to wear strippit trousers.'

■ Recent anecdotes about Dougie Grant have prompted Billy 'Sooty' MacLeod to provide a follow-up. Dougie liked a dram in the Fort on a Saturday afternoon. But he never ventured further than the public bar of the Alex so he could get back to the town park quickly if there was shinty or football on there. On this particular day it was football. A Fort select were playing a Commando select. Dougie arrived and asked Sandy Leishman the score. '9-1', Sandy replied, despondently, on either side of his memorable shout of 'C'mon Fort William, C'mon!' It wasn't necessary for Sandy to confirm which team had netted one over the eight. Not surprising as the Commandos, of course, were super-fit and had several professional players in their ranks. Dougie, however, put it all down to a different reason. Said he: 'Our Gearasdan lads aren't getting enough lard to grease the rims of a pair of specs, but these Commandos are living off the fat of our land.'

RETRO Roamer

More Roamerisms from the 1980s

customer came in and requested a 'take spy supper'. And that's what he got. To steak away.

■ The regional council has been doing good work in Monzie Square this week raising the kerbing which tops the three steps up into the square from Cameron's coal office to where the cars are parked. So, hopefully, gone are the days when folk arrive at our office on the opposite side of the square and ask if we'd give them a hand to lift their car out as they'd driven over the edge of parking area.

■ Well now, are you the Mr Fort William, Mrs Fort William, Miss or Ms Fort William whom consultants are seeking as the 'vital, bright spark' to ignite our town's fortunes. You'll have gathered that such a person is required to champion the Gearasdan's cause in the revolutionary new movement to be known as 'Forward Fort'. The contract is to focus on a project 'hit list' to deliver developments to the Fort within a predetermined timespan. Are you still with me? If so, are you prepared to step forth for the Fort? Forward, then!

■ There was a nice touch at last weekend's

Belford Hospital

Viewpoint



Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times

A freezing weather blows in every winter, the cold and wet conditions take their toll on our roads across Lochaber and the Highlands.

However, this year there is widespread concern and the appalling degree to which road surfaces across the region have deteriorated – and how quickly they have become dilapidated.

We have had numerous reports from our readers of damage to their vehicles caused directly by the disintegrating roads, whether that is as a result of potholes or stones being thrown up by other cars, vans and lorries.

It is probably more down to basic good fortune than anything else that we have not seen people hurt in accidents caused by the issues. As a few worried people pointed out on our social media, it is especially frightening for those on two wheels.

So, what is to be done about the problem?

The answer is that BEAR Scotland, which is the statutory body responsible for trunk roads such as the A82, and the Highland Council, the authority tasked with maintaining other roads, need to act with urgency to carry out an aggressive programme of repairs.



Days gone by – 1967

Iain Thornber from Morvern sent us this great photograph he took in 1967 of the MV Ben Kiel, the six-car, twin-screw Corran ferry built in 1959 by James Nobel of Fraserburgh. Iain said it was replaced in 1973 by the MV Lochaber and is believed to have been scrapped at Crinan in 1977.

MacPhail



ANGUS MACPHAIL
angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk

ON DECEMBER 6, one of the most respected men in Argyll was laid to rest. Murdo MacLeod and his construction company, formed in partnership with his brother Kenny, was one of the county's biggest employers and his positive effect on the area went well beyond the direct impact of providing jobs and housing.

I have written about Murdo in this column more than once, and I have covered the subject of mortality many times. There will almost certainly be a full obituary dedicated to this very significant figure and details of his life and achievements will be contained in that.

Instead, I would like to dedicate the following poem to him. As we stood at Kilevin Cemetery as Murdo was laid to rest, his identical twin Kenny at the head of the grave, there was strong atmosphere indicating clearly to those present that a mass of great energy had left the world. What was also felt was that being buried was a man who, despite adversity and setbacks, had run his chosen race and won, had lived his dreams and had left his mark.

Run The Race

I will not hold the sorrow for the race I didn't run,

For shying from the starting blocks and cowering from the gun. The shame to fall a thousand times will never match the pain The harrowed fret and deep regret of impotent refrain. All, we have a race to run, for each can be found The ones I'll try before I die, I'll know once in the ground; But try I will to climb life's hill, and if I stumble down Back up I'll get and onward set, despite the laughing crowd. The choice we have to run or watch is not a simple call To watch the race go by is safe and easy for us all; You'll never lose if you refuse to make yourself join in The penance though, you'll always know you're never going to win. To stand upon the sidelines is the often taken choice; To make some fun of those who run with narrow sneering voice; Or even worse, the twisted curse that in mankind is found The secret want, for those in front to fall and hit the ground. The race it brings on many things that make life more extreme But depths of low they better show success's golden gleam To not retreat when nearly beat then

fight to reach the front It gives the soul the furnace coal to flourish in the hunt. To climb the hill with morals ill, you haven't climbed at all And further on by ways of wrong, the further you will fall; Attain your goal with truthful soul, integrity and trust For peace within the life you win, the road it need be just. Think of those who've made no mark, upon the world we know Who never grasped or followed dreams and have no dreams to show. When comes their way the final day, and death they know they'll face - Every one will wish they'd run and not just watched the race. Compare now those who shaped the world and strived to run the race Who grew to steer their ship of life, their destiny and place; When they look back along their track, upon their dying day These giant ones again would run along their chosen way. So follow dreams and see the world, and grab life by the throat Don't live by dull convention or your life will miss the boat. Live for love and friendships' glow and chase ambition's taste We only get one shot at this – don't let it go to waste.



Ewen Campbell: 'Connel is shocking and they had the cheek to put up a sign saying "temporary road surface" as if they were working on it! No, just poor quality products/laying.'

Stuart Chalmers: 'Connel is the worst. V poor workmanship and some serious damage to cars inevitable, especially when holes filled with water and therefore hidden.'

Bob Gibson: 'Connel road is like a farm

track. Drivers are all over the road trying to avoid the potholes, dangerous or what.'

Jenna MacCuish: 'From miller road junction right up to drummore road entrance is horrific. I weave all over the road to TRY and miss the giant holes – road tax.....for wot?!!!!'

Mark Cringeon: 'I've lost 2 children and a dog down the potholes in Connel does that count?'

Jan Roberts: 'As you drive into Connel is terrible.'

Emma MacDonald: 'Argyll square!'

Laurie Cameron: 'Also stone point inveraray is awful.'

Anna Daley: 'Hit a pothole and wheel rim seriously damaged as a result. Tyre

went flat. Had to replace wheel and tyre! Expensive and directly a result of the pothole.'

Steve Letford: 'Connel and Connel Bridge.'

Eszter Domina: 'The road in Connel is really bad just now. Maybe the use the potholes to prevent speeding?!!'

Wendy Mowbray O'Ryan: 'Outside Inveraray is dreadful A82.'

Laura Cumming: 'Connel is the worst. But the roads in general are getting so bad. The Connel road is like a track road!'

Tom Hayward: 'Not looking forward to my mot soon, certain I'll need to make repairs to the suspension.'

Laurie Cameron: 'Main road connel.'

Press policy

WE AT The Oban Times endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

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, 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.

NHS Highland should hang head in shame

Sir,

As secretary of Sunart Community Council at the time of the last attempt by NHS Highland to engineer circumstances whereby it could bring about the closure of the essential residential care facility at Strontian's Dail Mhor care home, I was involved in the battle to expose its agenda and to secure the continued operation of the home.

It is no surprise, therefore, to read (*The Oban Times*, December 21) that the current community council chair has found NHS Highland to be 'disrespectful' in its latest attempt to bring about closure of the home for the reason of the building being 'not fit for purpose'. Its job is to make it fit for purpose and we all know this is merely a term coined to offer justification for the shocking plan to close it.

As it did last time, NHS Highland unashamedly tried to deceive the community with assurances about its commitment to delivering the best possible care system for local elderly people while promising to consult with the community as to how best to achieve that.

The truth is that the six-bed unit is expensive to run and it wants to close it in favour of any other variety of non-residential uses. While such additional uses may be desirable, they cannot be allowed to cloud the acute need for residential facilities at Dail Mhor, and if a six-bed facility is not economically viable, then NHS Highland must increase the size of it, not close it.

I venture to guess that if any of the well-paid NHS Highland managers who are responsible for this lived in a remote area along with their elderly relatives, they might just think it not such a good idea to have those relatives placed in care facilities so far away from the support of their families, where visiting becomes an expensive and time-consuming ordeal that cannot be undertaken very often.

I know the phrase is used more often than it should, but I think 'they should hang their heads in shame' is entirely appropriate.

Alan Thomson,
Kilcamb Paddock, Strontian.

Public toilets are vital for tourism industry

Sir,

Argyll and Bute Council, in its annual exercise of making what it calls its policy savings, lists 32 options to save in excess of £1.8 million.

I was a member of the council for 22 years, and it was always the tactic of the administration to nominate 'unthinkable' options and then withdraw them days before the budget meeting in response to public outrage.

On reviewing the current proposals, one which is unthinkable, unacceptable and which would devastate the tourist industry in Argyll and Bute is the proposal to close 36 of the 57 public toilets. At a time when Scotland is increasingly becoming a global tourist destination, and questions are being asked on how the current infrastructure can cope with the burgeoning demand, a move like

Beachd Ailein

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CHAILL SAOGHAL NA GÀIDHLIG for cheatharnach nuair a chaohail Iain MacLeod Diardaoine seo chaidh, agus bidh ionnrainn mhòr air fhéin agus air a chuid obrach dhan Ghàidhlig agus dha dualchas.

Ach 's ann dhan dlùth-theaghlaich a th' air am fágail a tha ar priomh smaointinn agus co-fhaireachadh an toiseach is a bhantrach Cairistiona, a mhac Calum, agus a nighnean Mairi is a cèile Kevin, agus peathraighean lain is an cuid theaghlachan uile, a' feuchainn ri cothachadh ris a' chall dhluich sea nam measg. Tha sinn a' guidh neart agus furtachd dhaibh.

Thug naidheadachd bàis Iain orm smaoineachadh air cho tric a' tha iomaireathan a ráidh cho mòr an urra ri aon neach agus glè thric chan eil mothachadh air ire na saothrach sin chun an caillear an duine sin. Saorladh mi gum bi sin gun teagamh fior a thaobh Iain oir bha e' cur air adhart cor na Gàidhlig ann an iomadh dòigh agus bha e' dèanamh sin gu socair modhail ach cuideachd le

this is completely wrong and would lead to Argyll and Bute being considered a no-go area for many tour operators and their customers.

All 36 councillors should consider this when making their budget decisions. Do not close these toilets and remove infrastructure that is key to supporting our tourism industry.

Robert MacIntyre,
Serpentine Road, Rothesay.

Litter louts need to learn a lesson

Sir,

It's good to see that Sammy's chip shop in Caol helps to keep its neighbourhood litter-free by having printed on takeaway boxes: 'Keep Coal tidy – please dispose of this box with consideration.'

Sadly, some customers living outside Caol are taking the message quite literally and tossing out the boxes from their vehicle when in another area, as found recently on the side of the A82 near Spean Bridge.

Sammy's cardboard boxes are perfectly good for recycling, so what is the problem with these people? Will replacing Caol with Scotland provide a clear message that all areas beyond Caol do not want Sammy's boxes?

Several deer have been hit in locations where different kinds of takeaway leftovers are usually found, so one can't help wondering if this is attracting them.

It's about time these persistent litter louts, who usually dump in the dark, begin to realise the risks other people take removing it.

A Robinson,
Spean Bridge.

Columnist displays a very insular view

Sir,

I always enjoy reading the views of Martin Laing in his *At Random* weekly column in *The Oban Times*.

However, I am amazed at his views regarding VisitScotland appointing the services of an English-based PR company.

Surely in this technological age, the physical location of a company is of decreasing importance. As long as the PR company is doing a good job, which in contacting *The Oban Times* it appears it was, what is the problem?

Or are we saying that no English tourism organisation should ever appoint a Scottish PR company for a similar role, even if it was thought to be doing a better job?

I seem to me to be a very insular attitude.

Ian Johnson,
Stirling.

West Coast salmon need protection

Sir,

I am in total agreement with Iain Jenner of Nether Lochaber Community Council about the expansion of the Loch Leven site.

As has been reported by SEPA, the data regarding water quality in the local

environment, I ask the question: is the sea lice issue taken in isolation of the fish farm? The surrounding area and wild fish are all affected by the use of chemicals. Is the West Coast wild salmonid of lesser importance to the total rod revenue and jobs than the East Coast? Our West Coast rivers may be of a smaller size but the wild salmonid that they support are of just as important to the gene pool of the wild fish that still exist but for how much longer is a great concern.

The need to look at the whole structure of the wild fish stocks and the fish farm industry in a holistic review to protect both interest is now well overdue.

Kevin Smith,
Chairman,
Ballachulish Community Council.

Poetic account of the clearing of Inniemore

Sir,
I read with interest Iain Thornber's article on the Clearing of Inniemore in your issue of December 7.

In 2015, when the European refugee crisis was at its height, I wrote a poem on the same subject. I offer it to your readers as a follow-up which may interest.

Refugees 1824-style
(The township of Inniemore in Morvern)

Christina* from Edinburgh,
How vicariously cruel you were

To the smallholders evicted.
Those on whom you forced the flitting

Had lived there for generations,
A friendly neighbourhood
Of some fifteen to twenty homes,

Some seventy-five Camerons.
Both old and young, fit and infirm,

You deprived of the protection
Of their kebars over their heads

From heat of the sun and blast of the wind
And the drenching rain from off the ocean.

Christina from Edinburgh,
You saw not with your careless eye

The mischief that you wrought:
The water poured on hot hearth stones hissing;

The cuinneag dry of milk from cow and goat;

The lame seannamhair, carried by her son,

In a creel up the steep Bealach na Sgairn;

The uncomprehending children walking

Beside those bearing their few possessions;

The pause and the keening at Cnoc nan Carn

As your victims looked back at their loved homes,

Once the creathall of a happy tenure,

Seeing them already stripped and despoiled.

Soon the whistle of the Saxon shepherd

And the bark of his dogs were on the brae.

That was cruel, so cruel, Christina.
You had the power then, but not today.

* Stewart.

Michael G Kidd,
Ceann Paic, Taynuilt.

Ailean Caimbeul

leidheadh. Saoil dè tha an dàn dhan dualchas sin ann an 2018 ma-thà? Dè an taic as èifeachdaich a b



Argyll mourns Hugo after tragedy on Loch Creran oyster farm

A DUNBEG businessman who died following an incident at Loch Creran on Sunday has been described as a 'great husband' by his widow.

Hugo Vajk, 62, who owned the award-winning Caledonian Oyster Co Ltd with his wife Judith, was working when a member of staff found him in the water.

The Frenchman, who moved to the area in 1995 with Judith to set up the farm, was subsequently airlifted

to the Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban, but later died.

Judith said: 'He was a great husband and he was a well respected oyster farmer. He knew his job inside out.'

'He wasn't Scottish, but he loved living up here and he loved spending time with his children. He loved sailing. He was a member of Oban Sailing Club. He raced on a boat called the Hot Toddy with Alison MacNab.'

The circumstances of the incident

are still unclear, but reports have been sent to the procurator fiscal and a post-mortem is to be carried out.

Judith added: 'He was just working at low tide. We are not really sure. He ended up in the water and [a colleague] could not get him out. We are all just shocked about it.'

A Police Scotland spokeswoman said today: 'At 4.40pm [Sunday] police were alerted to a report of a man in the water at Loch Creran,

near Benderloch. A 62-year-old man was airlifted to Oban hospital where he later died. Inquiries are ongoing to establish the circumstances of the incident.'

Oban RNLI, Oban's Coastguard Rescue Team and the Coastguard's Prestwick-based rescue helicopter also attended the incident. Oban lifeboat left her berth by 4.35pm.

As the lifeboat proceeded the UK Coastguard broadcast a mayday relay

to request the assistance of any other vessels also in the area.

The RNLI volunteer crew arrived on scene shortly after 5pm. Mr Vajk was quickly located and was recovered from the water by the lifeboat crew soon after.

The lifeboat then liaised with the rescue helicopter to drop a winchman onboard, who then lifted Mr Vajk on to the helicopter for transfer to hospital.

Public slam the 'shambolic' and 'disgraceful' roads

DAVID MCPHEE

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'SHAMBOLIC' and 'disgraceful' are just two of the words used to describe the road through Connel.

This section of the A85 is littered with potholes and has been referred to as a 'farm track'.

BEAR Scotland, which is responsible for the trunk road, says resurfacing is scheduled to start in February, but it is keen to bring this forward.

In a Facebook post highlighting the issue, Bob Gibson said: 'Connel road is like a farm track. Drivers are all over the road trying to avoid the potholes, dangerous or what.'

Aidan MacDougall said: 'Going through Connel is like off-roading at the moment.'

Neil Munro stated: 'Connel is a shambles cracked windscreen from stones thrown up from passing van.'

Pamela Cumming added: 'We were visiting Taynuilt from Aberdeenshire for a week and couldn't get over the state of the temporary surface at Connel - a disgrace.'

Cars being damaged. Imagine if there were more motorbikes on the road with the potholes filled with water that you don't see until you're in them - that could be serious accident.'

However, this isn't the only area that has been criticised.

Charlie Jack suffered a buckled wheel after hitting a 'six-inch deep' pothole near Barcaldine.

Charlie said: 'The roads are in a poor condition and they are not being sorted. I was driving and I saw what looked like a broken verge, and it was too late to avoid - there was a really big bang when I hit it. And by the time I got to the road end the tire was flat. I went to the garage and they tried to put air into it, but it was too badly buckled.'

'It does not look bad, but I stopped to take a photograph and it has to be a six-inch drop - it's like a cliff edge at the far end.'

Charlie, who drives a bus for a living, added: 'I have never known the roads the way they are at Connel. That never used to happen - the way they break apart.'

Speaking about the trunk roads, a spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'We're aware of the defects on the A828 near Culcharan and A85 near Connel

Glencruitten Road, and Longdale Terrace, all Oban, as well as Dalavich were also highlighted as problem areas.

Oban Community Council chairwoman Marri Malloy said: 'In the 32 years I've lived in Orchy Gardens there has never been an update [and] the road is a disgrace.'

'Also the bottom of Lonan Drive there's a big hole - enough to drown a large animal. This has been reported for years to the council but nothing has been done. If your car went into this hole, it would cause serious damage. Time something was done about the roads in Oban.'

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'We carried out repairs to Argyll Square and other areas around Oban last week. Areas across the network which have deteriorated will be repaired as soon as possible as part of our ongoing maintenance programme.'

Speaking about the trunk roads, a spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'We're aware of the defects on the A828 near Culcharan and A85 near Connel

and have been monitoring various sections on the routes, with teams working to carry out temporary repairs to the locations. We will be working to permanently repair any defects as quickly as possible.'

'Resurfacing is programmed in February near Connel. However, we will try to bring this forward. In order to complete these resurfacing works safely, we will require a road closure.'

'We'll need to consult with stakeholders and residents before doing so, and in the meantime we'll keep monitoring the route. Where required we will install signs to alert and slow down motorists until these permanent repairs are completed.'

'We also constantly review our programmes of larger planned maintenance works so that, where possible, and subject to budget, resurfacing projects may be brought forward to target areas showing significant deterioration.'

Members of the public can report problems on trunk roads through Transport Scotland on 0800 028 1414, which will then pass the issue on to the appropriate contractor.

Life's a beach for happy couple



Fiona and Tam married in Hope Kitchen. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

TWO Oban volunteers tied the knot on Friday after meeting on a beach clean last year.

Fiona Campbell-Smith and Thomas Ferris were joined by friends and family in Hope Kitchen, where the couple married.

Fiona and 'Tam' met last April while taking part in the charity's monthly tidy-up.

Speaking about the ceremony, Hope's manager, Lorraine MacCormick, said: 'It has been absolutely beautiful. It's the nicest wedding I have ever been to. The atmosphere was brilliant. I am blown away at how nice it was. They were two lost souls until they met each other.'

Fiona spotted Tam and asked him to accompany her to her daughter's wedding.

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

Fiona wore the same dress to her wedding as she did on their first date as 'Thomas took a step back when he first saw it'.

Thousands opposed to caviar farm

SANDY NEIL

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AN ANIMAL rights group has sent a 5,000 signature petition opposing Scotland's first caviar farm to Argyll and Bute Council.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) argues that the 'intensive' caviar farm would 'keep sturgeons confined in stressful, unnatural conditions before subjecting them to a cruel, bloody death' - claims denied by the applicant.

Planners are considering The Fynest Caviar Co's plan to build a closed containment aquaculture facility for the production

of sturgeon' by Loch Fyne at Ardkinglas Sawmill, Cairndow.

The £4 million project aims to turnover £3.64 million over six years, displacing some of the £22 million of caviar and caviar substitutes imported into the UK annually, and to hire seven full-time employees, including a general manager and technical staff.

The Edinburgh-based company hopes to have Scottish caviar on the market by Christmas 2020, initially producing per year 1.5 tonnes of caviar, which can sell for over £1,000 per kilo, and growing up to three tonnes annually.

The current UK market con-

sumes 19 tonnes per annum, some of which is produced by the UK's only existing caviar farm in Devon. The Fynest Caviar Co hopes to take a bite of the £22 million of caviar and caviar substitutes imported annually.

But 5,000 members of the public have signed PETA's petition urging the council to reject the plan. A spokesperson said: 'In addition to causing cruelty to fish, a farm of this kind would likely have many negative effects on the local area, including increased traffic from goods vehicles and the obstruction of scenic views by new buildings.

The generation of environmen-

tal pollutants such as ammonia could also potentially have a detrimental impact on wildlife.'

PETA director Elisa Allen said: 'Thousands of compassionate people have spoken, and Argyll and Bute Council should heed their concerns for animal welfare, the environment and the health of the community. PETA is calling for the proposal to be rejected, sparing sturgeons immense suffering.'

'Deprived of the opportunity to engage in natural behaviour, they're highly susceptible to stress and aggression. Many also sustain physical injuries because of the intense crowding. At the end of their miserable

lives, they're transferred to an ice bath, where their gills are cut and they're left to bleed out - a slow, painful way to die.'

One of the Fynest Caviar Co's three directors, Fraser Niven, responded: 'The company is committed to providing the best care and attention to the fish stock. The fish represent the key asset of the business and will only provide the premium product if this care is maintained. We are employing a highly experienced team of professionals who have established well respected and highly regarded facilities across the world.'

'I would also refute the nega-

tive claims on the impact of the business to the local area. This decision to locate in Argyll is a positive reflection of the reputation of the area for providing Scotland and the wider markets with the highest quality food and drink products and in particular the skills of the local people in the aquaculture sector.'

The plans detail three timber-clad buildings, lower than the existing sawmill, totalling a footprint of 2,400m². The two main buildings will house the hatching, breeding and growing stages, while a third includes a shop for visitors to sample and buy the caviar.

Worker racially abused over ticket

WHEN an Argyll and Bute Council employee issued a parking ticket on George Street in Oban, he was met with a barrage of abuse, some of it racial.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes, sitting at Oban Sheriff Court on Wednesday, was told that a body-cam worn by the worker captured David Macdonald Forrest racially abusing him and telling him to 'get a real job'.

When Forrest said that his girlfriend had only parked the car there for minutes, the council employee tried to explain, but Forrest started to shout and swear at him.

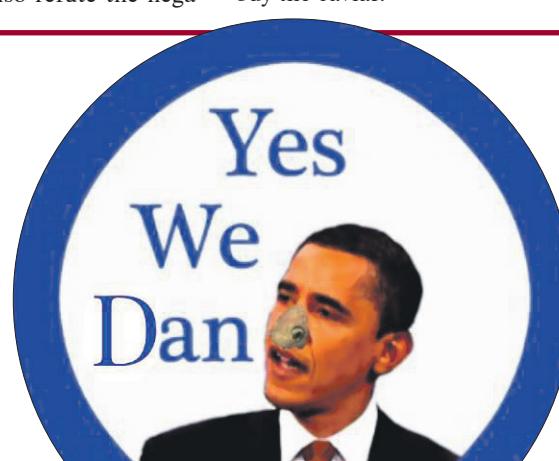
Forrest, 33, of 7 Ross Crescent, Lochgilphead, admitted acting in a racially aggressive manner on July 29 last year, by shouting, swearing and uttering the racist comments.

In Forrest's defence, it was said he had been depressed since losing his job as a fisherman, and had been suffering from alcoholism, a problem he is now addressing, and that he took full responsibility for his actions and did not know why he said the things he did.

Sheriff Hughes had previously called for reports on Forrest and sentenced him to a community payback order with 150 hours of unpaid work to be completed within nine months and a supervisory order for 12 months during which time he was to undergo treatment for alcoholism.

'This is a disgraceful way to behave,' said the sheriff and, referring to Forrest's previous convictions, added: 'This is your last chance.'

The sheriff ordered Forrest to return to court in three months for a review of the order.



Clockwise from top left: he is starring for Dan United; Daniel gives Barack Obama a campaign slogan; fronting the band Goldplay; and urging President Trump to 'Make Lochgilphead great again'.



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Greenock keeper Neil Flack can't keep Ally McKerracher's header from looping into the top corner of the net during last Saturday's Scottish Cup fourth round replay at Glencruitten. Match report and photos Derek Black

High school pupils taught a lesson

Oban Saints	2
Greenock HSFP	0
Scottish Cup - 4th round replay	

IT WAS a case of third time lucky for Oban Saints last Saturday as their Glencruitten pitch was declared playable, if still slightly frosty, to allow their twice previously postponed Scottish Amateur Cup fourth round replay against Greenock High School Former Pupils to finally go ahead. The tie must still have been in doubt up until the eve of the match when the seemingly endless rain finally decided to relent for a spell. Full marks to Argyll and Bute Council groundsman Ian Hay for preparing such a good playing surface under trying conditions.

Oban Saints manager Alex Craik made five changes to the starting eleven which came from behind twice to force a 2-2 draw at Batter Park, Greenock, five weeks previously.

The visitors also welcomed back some regulars who had missed the previous match, making four changes to their starting eleven and naming a strong four-man bench.

Referee Thomas Lacy got proceedings under way on a crisp afternoon with the visitors kicking off attacking the Mossfield end where the low sun threatened to pose problems for Saints keeper Graham Douglas. Saints were first to threaten in the third minute after Willie Gemmell had cut out a Kenny Munro cross from the left intended for strike partner and

scorer of the High's second goal in the previous match Craig Boyd. From the clearance from Graham Douglas Myles McAuley nodded down to Keith Millar who sent Scott Maitland scurrying up the left wing. Maitland fed skipper Donald Campbell 22 yards out, who opened up his body for a curling shot across Neil Flack which beat the High keeper's left hand but bounced inches wide of target.

In the eighth minute referee Lacy rather harshly adjudged Paul Carmichael to have fouled Craig Boyd in winning a header 35 yards from goal. Saints knew what to expect from the resulting free-kick but fortunately Greenock dead ball expert Barry Munro sent an excellent effort just wide of the junction of post and bar.

The 10th minute signalled the beginning of a spell of Saints pressure starting when Matthew Kelly and Donald Campbell combined well on the right for the skipper to send a cut-back to Ally McKerracher, whose first-time shot was saved by the legs of Neil Flack at the expense of a corner kick. McKerracher's delivery from the right was headed behind at the back post by Stuart Higgins. The second delivery was cut out at the front post by Lewis Graham with the third effort again failing to clear the front post but falling kindly for Scott Maitland, who struck the crossbar with a left-foot effort from the corner of the six-yard box with Neil Flack rooted to the spot.



Donald Campbell.

The visitors forced their first corner kick in the 16th minute with Thomas MacFarlane getting up well at the back post to head Barry Munro's delivery from the right just over the Saints crossbar.

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side responded with another flurry of chances which saw Neil Flack get down well to save from Craig MacEwan before Myles McAuley and Scott Maitland linked up well on the left setting up Ally McKerracher for a shooting opportunity which he sent wide of Flack's left-hand post.

Craig MacEwan then cut in from the left and teed up Donald Campbell who smacked the outside of Flack's left-hand upright with the keeper beaten.

Barry Munro's 29th minute corner kick from the left after Steven MacLeod had headed behind a Craig Boyd cross was only partially cleared, allowing Lewis Graham to nip in ahead of Ally McKerracher and send a decent effort over the top of the Saints cross bar.

The High couldn't clear their lines and Saints kept the pressure on with Craig MacEwan winning a free-kick 25 yards from goal on the left. Willie Gemmell's flighted delivery picked out Craig's clever back-post run with last season's top scorer cushioning a half volley a foot wide of Neil Flack's left-hand post.

The visitors enjoyed their best spell of the first half after 37 minutes when Willie Gemmell produced a solid block to deny Kenny Munro after the High danger man had beaten Paul Carmichael on the bye-line to turn and fire in a left-foot shot from eight yards.

Munro was put through again two minutes later by namesake Barry with Graham Douglas bravely smothering the ball at the feet of the High striker.

Saints' dead ball expert Willie Gemmell had two opportunities before the half-time interval, with the first being deflected off the Greenock wall and over the crossbar before the second from 22 yards beat the four-man wall but bounced wide of Neil Flack's right-hand post.

With nothing to show for their first half supremacy Saints knew they had to maintain the high tempo in the second half and were immediately back on the attack after the restart. Greenock goalkeeper Neil Flack, a Scotland cricket international, twice denied Donald Campbell inside the opening two minutes, firstly blocking with his legs at the near post and secondly diving full length to his left to fingertip a net-bound effort around his left-hand post.

Saints eventually made the breakthrough in the 51st minute when an audacious piece of skill from Craig MacEwan left Stuart Higgins for dead just short of the bye-line on the left of the Greenock Box. The trick gave MacEwan time and space to measure a dinked cross over the heads of David McLean and Lewis Graham for Ally McKerracher, who beat Robbie Davis to loop a header from eight yards into the postage stamp corner beyond the despairing dive of Neil Flack.

McKerracher threatened to double his tally two minutes later, bursting through the inside-left channel before being denied to a vital interception by David McLean.

McKerracher threatened to double his tally two minutes later, bursting through the inside-left channel before being denied to a vital interception by David McLean.

Two-time Scottish Amateur Cup winners Greenock weren't about to give up their place in this season's competition without a fight and tested Graham Douglas in the 57th minute with a deflected Kenny Munro shot which looped up into the grateful arms of the Saints keeper.

There was a brief stoppage on the hour mark for treatment to



17-year-old Daniel McCuish showed up well on his home debut for Saints.

Greenock midfielder Michael O'Donoghue before inspirational skipper and last season's player of the year Kevin Brown almost hauled his side level in the 65th minute, exploiting a rare slip in a solid performance from the Saints defence to send a free header wide of target.

From the goal kick, Saints raced to the other end where Donald Campbell passed up yet another good opportunity, again shooting wide of Neil Flack's left-hand post.

Saints gaffer Alex Craik decided to freshen things up in midfield, introducing Kerr Newbigging for his first appearance of the season at the expense of Kevin Brown. At the same time

the High brought on veteran of many campaigns Chris McAllister to bolster the attack in favour of Craig Boyd. McAllister soon set about making a nuisance of himself and headed a deep Kevin Brown cross from the right wide of target.

An accidental clash between Paul Carmichael and Barry Munro left the Saints man nursing an ankle injury from which he couldn't recover, forcing the introduction of Craig Campbell in a straight swap at the back in the 75th minute.

Graham 'Sugar' Douglas kept his clean sheet intact with a sensational save to deny Kenny Munro, who cut in from the right and unleashed a fierce 78th-minute left-foot shot which Sugar threw himself to his right to parry away at full stretch.

Craig MacEwan's first match back since sustaining a cracked rib in the third round replay against Falkirk Community on November 11 came to an end in the 80th minute when he was replaced by Daniel McCuish making his home debut.

McCuish was quickly into the action showing no sign of being overawed by the occasion and linking up well with Kerr Newbigging to send Ally McKerracher through for a left-foot shot from the corner of the six-yard box which cleared the head of David McLean but unfortunately also the crossbar.

McKerracher blazed over again with five minutes remaining on the clock after Donald Campbell had skilfully taken down a Kerr Newbigging diagonal ball on the corner of the 18-yard box.

Saints finally made the tie safe in the 89th minute with a swift counter-attack from a Greenock free-kick cleverly won by Chris

Football

McAllister 10 yards inside the Saints half. With everybody expecting a straight ball into the box, David McLean rolled the ball short to Kenny Munro, who was immediately closed down by the quick reactions of Ally McKerracher, who slid in at full pace to dispossess the Greenock striker.

Saints then broke quickly with Daniel McCuish threading a perfectly timed pass for Donald Campbell to race through a one-on-one with Neil Flack. The Saints skipper rounded the Greenock keeper and, from a tight angle, clipped the ball left-footed into the unguarded net for Saints' second goal.

Referee Lacy, whose job was made easy by both sets of players, brought another cracking Scottish Amateur Cup tie to an end after three added minutes, signalling Saints' progress to the fifth round and another away tie with familiar foes East Kilbride Rolls Royce which will take place this Saturday with a 2pm kick-off. Venue still to be decided.



Saints keeper Graham Douglas brought off a great save in the 78th minute.

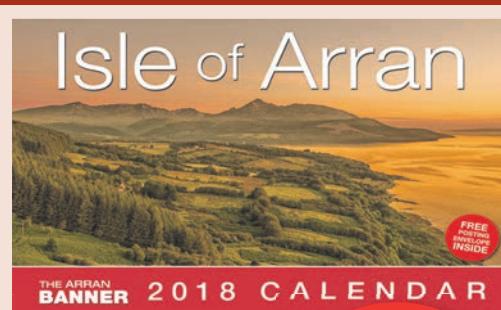


Greenock striker Kenny Munro gets a shot on target despite this tackle from Paul Carmichael. The shot was blocked by Willie Gemmell as Steven MacLeod and Graham Douglas look on.

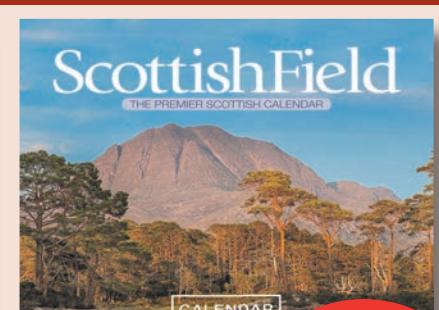
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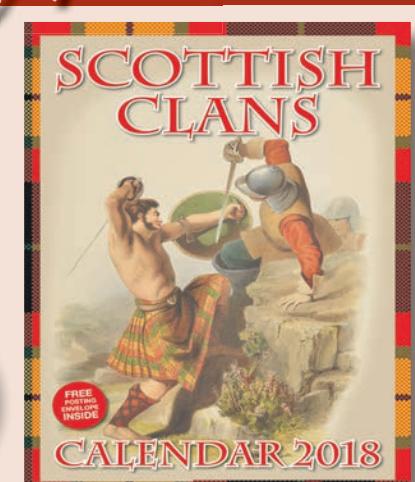
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Jags suffer defeat away to Bellaire

Bellaire	5
South Lochaber Thistle	2
Greater Glasgow AFL	

SOUTH Lochaber Thistle started the new year with defeat at the hands of Bellaire AFC after a trip to Greenock last Saturday.

With both sides in the mood for goals, the score ended up 5-2 to the hosts, meaning South Lochaber suffered defeat for only the second time in the Greater Glasgow Amateur Premier League this season.

The Jags sit in sixth place, on the same points total as Boswell and Carradale, who sit just above them in the league.

The Lochaber side are in league action again this Saturday as they take on Glasgow side Busby AFC at home in Kinlochleven with a 2pm kick-off.

Lochaber Rugby Club postponement

Rugby

LOCHABER Rugby Club's fixture away to Wigtownshire RFC on Saturday was postponed due to a frozen pitch.

The Banavie side's last outing was in November, so the squad will be keen to get their league campaign back up and running.

Lochaber's next fixture is due to take place this Saturday (January 13) away to Police Scotland Glasgow RFC in Glen Nevis.

Lochaber sit in sixth place in BT West League Division 3, with four wins from eight matches and a points difference of 32. They sit just two points off Shawlands FP RFC in fifth place and three points off Cowal RFC in fourth.

Winning lottery numbers

Lottery numbers

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 12, 14 and 18. There was no winner this week. There will now be £800 available for the lotto drawn today (Thursday January 11).

The numbers drawn in the Caol Regeneration lotto were 6, 7 and 14. There were no winning tickets this week. There will now be a jackpot for £1,200 for next Thursday's draw.

The Caol Community Centre bingo lotto numbers for this week are 9, 15 and 18. There were no winners this week. That means that next week's jackpot is £400.

The Ballachulish Shinty Club lottery numbers for this week were 15, 16 and 18. There were no winners this week. Next week's draw will have a jackpot of £400.

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The Fort William squad, management team and coaching staff pictured before a recent game. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Fort misery continues as Broch relish seven heaven

Fraserburgh	7
Fort William	0
HIGHLAND LEAGUE	

FORT William Football Club's first outing of 2018 ended in a heavy defeat as four-goal hero Paul Campbell helped Fraserburgh to a 7-0 victory.

Buoyed by their narrow defeat to Lossiemouth at the end of December, the Fort were looking to enter the new year in style with a long trip north to Fraserburgh.

However, the Lochaber outfit faced a rampant Fraserburgh side who were looking to keep pressure on league leaders Cove Rangers.

The home side got off to a blistering start with James Beagrie netting after just five minutes, settling the Broch into the match early on.

The Fort responded with resilience and made the remaining 40 minutes of the first half an uncomfortable affair for Fraserburgh.

Going in at half-time, the visitors faced a big challenge to overcome the one-goal deficit, especially considering Fraserburgh have the second best defensive record in the Highland League this season.

Just six minutes after the half-time break, the Broch doubled

their lead thanks to a Gary Harris strike. James Beagrie followed this up with his second goal of the afternoon in the 57th minute.

But, again, the Fort battled back and staved off the worst of the Fraserburgh pressure. Their doggedness could only keep out the home side for 20 minutes, however, as Paul Campbell struck in the 74th minute to bag his first goal of what would be a man-of-the-match performance from the forward.

Making the most of Fort William's tiring defence, Campbell added his second and third goals in quick succession, completing his hat-trick in a devastating nine-minute spell.

A fourth goal of the game came for Campbell in the 90th minute, rounding off a memorable afternoon for the Broch striker.

The victory means Fraserburgh cemented their position in second place in the Highland League, and continues their good form in the run up to their glamour tie at home to Rangers in the Scottish Cup in two weeks. The win was the Broch's 2,500th Highland League game and their 1,100th Highland League win since their addition to the league in 1921.

Fort

The result, however, leaves Fort William rooted to the bottom of the Highland League, having picked up a solitary point from their opening 19 matches.

The Fort sit two points behind fellow strugglers Strathspey Thistle with one game in hand.

Fort William are in action again this Saturday (January 13) at home to Claggan Park against Forres Mechanics.

Forres lie in seventh place in the Highland League and are in fine form having won their last five matches.

Thistle continue winning streak in indoor league

AFTER 10 rounds of competition in Sammy's Indoor Winter League, Doghouse Thistle are the favourites for the title this

year, sitting top of the league table with 30 points and a 100 per cent win record. Thistle are three points clear of Fiorentina



Michael Ellis (right) of Fiorentina Turner tackles Alex Kennedy of Lisbon in the 10-4 match which sees Fiorentina just three points behind Doghouse in the league table.

Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



League top scorer Dave Forbes (left) of Doghouse Thistle in action against Sean Clark of Borussia Dortmund, who were defeated 4-0. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Turner in second place who are maintaining a long winning streak to keep pressure on the table toppers.

Further down the table, Portowcy, Dortmund and The Goon Squad are in joint third place, all sitting on 18 points.

David Forbes looks certain to finish the league as top scorer, having netted an impressive 36 times so far this season.

Results from week ten of Sammy's Indoor Winter League: Doghouse Thistle 4, Borussia Dortmund 0; Fiorentina Turner

10, Snorting Lisbon 4; Portowcy 8, HW Energy 1; Gozos 4, Expected Toulouse 1; Balla 4, The Young Team 1; The Goon Squad 0, Arse N All 3.

Indoor football

The top scratch average is held by Ben Weller (The Empire) with 158 followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 153 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 152.

Lochaber 10-pin bowling results

10-pin bowling

AFTER week six of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William both the scratch and the handicap divisions are still very close at the top.

The Empire still lead the scratch division with 25 points followed by Alleycats in second place on 24 points and Council on 22 points. Council are the new leaders of the handicap division with 22 points followed by The Empire on 21 points and Alleycats on 20 points.

Individually, the best scratch game of the week came from Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 185. Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) had a 176. Pam also had the week's top two-game scratch series of 324. The week's high handicap game of 230 and the top two-game handicap series of 435 both went to Brenda Rennie (The Dominos).

The best team scores of the week all came Alleycats, who swept the board with the top scratch game of 640 (the season's high), the top handicap game of 833, the top two-game scratch series of 1165 and the two-game handicap series of 1551.

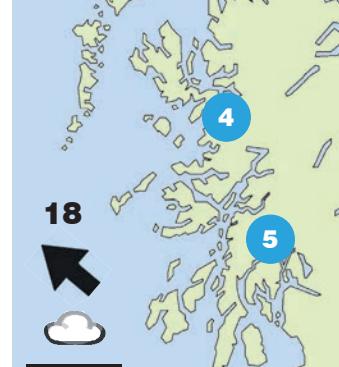
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WEATHER

Thursday	Sunny intervals Winds light South Easterly Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds strong South Easterly Temperatures 4°C to 5°C.
Weekend Outlook	Cloudy on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds strong South Easterly Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday January 4, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	
Thur	05.58	1.5	12.20
Fri	01.20	2.9	07.04
Sat	03.16	3.2	09.27
Sun	04.00	3.4	10.20
Mon	04.40	3.6	11.02
Tues	05.19	3.8	11.40
Wed	05.56	3.9	12.16

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



Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

Mallaig	+0.25
Portree	+0.55
Tobermory	+0.16
Dover	+5.30
Ardrishaig	-5.35
Campbeltown	-5.30
Crinan	-0.47
Islay Port Ellen	2.00
Lochboisdale	+0.30
Ferry Crossings/Sea States	
Oban to Barra/South Uist	
Oban to Coll/Tiree	
Kennacraig to Islay	

Moderate
Moderate
Moderate