

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 7977

Thursday, January 14, 2010

www.obantimes.co.uk

75 pence

West's skiing season off to a flying start

Injured golf course sledger rescued by groundsman

A GOLF course groundsman came to the aid of paramedics when they could not reach a teenage sledger injured on the course.

Fifteen-year-old Ally MacLean was sledging with friends on the fairway of the first hole at Glencruitten Golf Club, Oban.

He broke his ankle when he put his leg out to slow down and it got caught underneath the sledge.

The ambulance crew that attended needed assistance from greenkeeper Dougie MacIntyre because the ambulance could not negotiate the icy conditions.

Dougie took the paramedics and a stretcher to the casualty, and back to the ambulance, on his tractor.

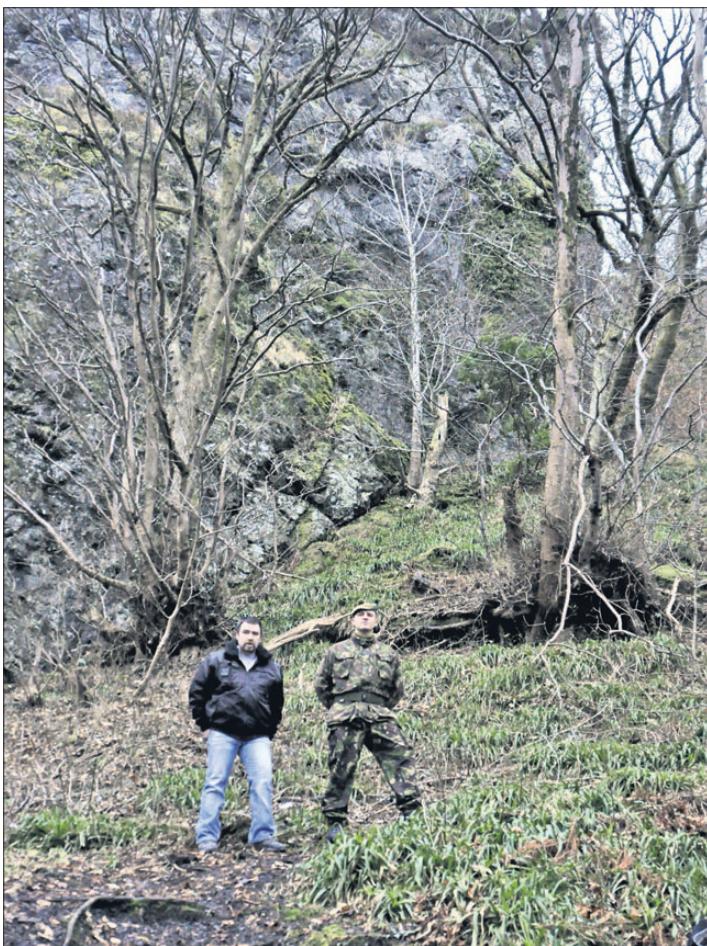
The teenager was taken to Lorn and Islands Hospital before being flown to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley.

12-year-old 'forger' pays for sweets with fakes

POLICE were alerted by an Oban shopkeeper after a 12-year-old boy tried to pay for sweets with a 'home made' bank note last Monday.

Noting the obvious forgery, the shopkeeper told the boy to leave but he returned, boasting that he had more notes at home and, concerned that he may have tried to circulate more, the shopkeeper called the police.

Police spoke to the boy and he is the subject of a report to the Children's Panel reporter.



Neighbours Iain MacIntyre and Vinnie Kennedy revisit the scene of Sunday night's dramatic rescue which involved police, ambulance, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue and Oban Mountain Rescue team 17-103fall01



From monarchs to mongrels



Oban men save teenager after 100ft cliff plunge

EXCLUSIVE

POLICE have praised the quick-thinking and actions of two Oban men who may have saved the life of a teenager who had plunged 100ft off a cliff in the town in sub-zero temperatures on Sunday night.

The pair rushed to the aid of the 17-year-old youth, named locally as Daniel Hopkins, after the teenager tumbled over the sheer cliff face, known as the Hydropathic.

Police said that the casualty was flown to Glasgow's Southern General Hospital, suffering from fractures to his left leg and right hand and wrist, damage to his spine.

He is also believed to have suffered severe facial injuries. Had Mr Hopkins not been found so quickly it was unlikely that he would have survived, they added.

Army reservist Vinnie Kennedy had just returned from pre-deployment training for Afghanistan and

was still in the uniform of Delta Company 7th Scots when he went out to collect a kit bag from his car parked at the rear of Combie Court on Oban's Glencruitten Road. He heard a heavy thud and moaning high above him in the darkness and realised that someone had fallen from the cliff.

Alerted

Mr Kennedy ran for a torch and also alerted his neighbour Iain MacIntyre, 36, who helped him search for the victim in freezing conditions. The men climbed to a ledge where they found the injured youngster in a semi-conscious state.

Mr Kennedy used his army training to medically evaluate the youngster's injuries while Mr MacIntyre climbed down to fetch a blanket from his van to keep the teenager warm.

Both men then took it in turns to talk to and comfort the now conscious casualty while Vinnie Kennedy used his mobile phone to call for an ambulance, detailing the victim's open leg fractures, back and arm pain and severe facial injuries.

'The police quickly arrived followed by an ambulance crew,' said Mr Kennedy.

'But it was impossible to move the lad and when a fire crew arrived they considered calling in a helicopter but had to rule it out as the trees restricted access from above.'

'They decided to call in Oban Mountain Rescue Team.'

'Given the extent of his injuries, I was sure the guy was going to die,' he added. Mr MacIntyre said: 'The boy in a bad way, he had taken a hard fall and wouldn't

have lasted the night if we hadn't found him.'

'He was lucky that he didn't impale himself on branches on the way down and that he came down head first or he would have done more damage to his legs and back.'

'I'm just glad we were able to help.'

Praised

Oban Mountain Rescue Team also came in for praise from the emergency services after taking less than an hour to get the casualty into an ambulance by moving him off the ledge in a basket stretcher.

Inspector Julie Edward of Oban Police said enquiries into the incident were continuing.

As The Oban Times went to press, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde confirmed that Mr Hopkins remains at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow where his condition was described as critical, but stable.

£8 million Euro funding bonanza for Argyll

ARGYLL and Bute is to get more than £8 million in European investment to boost the rural economy.

A cash injection for Tarbert Castle, once linked to Robert the Bruce, improved lochside facilities on Loch Long and the protection of a nature reserve on the Isle of Coll are among 102 projects to benefit from the Rural Priorities Fund.

Argyll and Bute will get £6.4m from rural priorities, which is jointly funded by the Scottish government and European agricultural funds.

REPORT by
CHRISTINE
MCCARTNEY

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Announcing themoney, Richard Lochhead, rural secretary for the Scottish government, said: 'Rural communities produce food and generate tourism - two of the key drivers powering the Scottish economy.'

Also announced this week, is a £2m share in European regional development and social funds for Argyll. Sustrans Scotland will get £500,000 towards the

Oban to Fort William cycle path and the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust's windfarm project gains £200,000. Argyll and Bute Council has also been allocated £1.2 million towards regeneration projects.

Both funding packages have been targeted at job creation and boosting economic recovery in rural areas.

Robert McPhail of Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust said a £748,000 grant for work at Tarbert Castle would create five full-time equivalent jobs and encourage tourism in the

village. 'We are delighted,' he said. 'The result reflects the great support we received from the community through letters and some 400 signatures.'

The money will be spent on cutting back undergrowth, securing the building and improving access, including to the nearby long-distance Kintyre Way walk.

A new pontoon and visitor centre will be built at Arrochar on Loch Long, making it possible for the village to welcome boats such as the PS Waverley and visiting yachts. Arrochar and

Tarbet Community Development Trust received £641,000 for the new facilities, which include exhibition space, showers and a laundry. Chairman of the trust Duncan MacLachlan said:

'This announcement continues the success story of our community.'

Rare orchids, bees and birds found on the Coll machair will get better protection thanks to a grant of £86,329 for the island's nature reserve. It will be spent on encouraging more breeding waders and enhancing the habitat through winter grazing.

Former janitor dies following fall

A FORMER janitor has died from a heart attack in Lorn and Islands Hospital after falling and injuring his head the previous day.

Donald MacAulay, aged 53, was taken to accident and emergency after a fall near the former Rockfield School, Oban at 9pm on Monday, in which he suffered a cut to his head.

He was treated in hospital and kept in overnight for observation but died at around 6am on Tuesday morning.

Mr MacAulay was a well-known figure in Oban and had been janitor at Rockfield and Taynuilt primary schools.

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FOUND IT

Elderly woman dies following Taynuilt crash

AN ELDERLY woman who was seriously injured following a road crash near Taynuilt has died in hospital.

Margaret Love, aged 72, from Fort William died last Thursday in Glasgow's Southern General Hospital. Her relatives have been informed.

Mrs Love and her 71-year-old husband were both taken to the hospital after their Fiat Seicento collided with a Toyota

Rav4 at Dalinamac Farm, Fearnoch, on the morning of January 2.

Her husband, who was driving the car, is currently in a serious condition at the hospital.

Road Policing Officers at Oban are continuing enquiries to establish the circumstances surrounding the crash.

Witnesses are asked to contact their office on telephone number 01631 510500.

Search continues for missing German

POLICE are appealing for help tracing a missing German tourist believed to be in the Tarbert area of Argyll.

Niloofar Polvandeh, aged 51, from Germany was last seen on the night of Wednesday January 6 by staff at the Stonefield Castle Hotel, Tarbert, when she went to her room.

Since then, despite a massive search, there have been no further sightings of her and police are becoming increasingly concerned about her safety and well-being.

Believed to come from the Middle East she is described as having a sallow complexion, around 5ft 4in height, of slim build, with shoulder length dark brown hair. It is believed

she was wearing a purple skirt and knee length boots when last seen.

Chief Inspector Judy Wilson, of Lochgilphead Police Office, is appealing for information.

'Ms Polvandeh travelled on a West Coast Motors bus to Tarbert on Wednesday,' she said.

'I am keen to hear from anyone who spoke to or met her, maybe sat with her on the bus before she arrived in Tarbert or anyone who may have any information about her whereabouts.'

If you have any information, please contact Lochgilphead Police Office on 01546 702200 or CRIMESTOPPERS on 0800 555 111, where calls can be treated in confidence.

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Beachd Ailein

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Tha mi a' sgrìobhadh seo is Art MacCormaig air an reideo a' gabhail "Hò ro 'illean", an t-òran aig Niall Peantan mu èolás fhèin 's an ol, agus an t-òran a' dearbhachadh nach è galair ùr a th' ann am baidhinn na dibhe! Ach gun teagamh 's e galair a th' ann agus tha mi fhìn air leth uasal às na daoine sin a fhuar smachd air trioblaid dibhe agus a tha comasach air cumail bhuaire. 'S eis eisimpleir a th' anna!

A' coimeadair air ais chun an àm seo an uiridh chi mi gun robh mi a' bruidhinn air mar a tha cosgais na dibhe air isleachadh chun na h-iùre's gum bheil cuid is "Bliadh'n Úr aca an còmhnaidh". Bliadhna air adhart agus tha Riaighaltas na h-Alba a-nise a feuchainn ri iuc cosgais deoch làdir a chumail cho àrd is nach bi e che furasta dhà daoinne ruigheachd air a ceannach. Leis a' bhuaidh a th' aig deoch làdir air sláinte, chan eil teagamh nach faodadh rud sam bith a chuireadh bacadh air ana-caitheamh na dibhe feum a dhèanamh dhan dùthach air fad, agus caomhnadh mòr dha seirbhais na sláinte. Agus cò air a dhèanadh seo cròn nan tachradh? Tha gun teaganamh gnoimhachas an uisge-bheatha cudromach dha econamaidh Alba ach chan eil dearbhadh gun toireadh an t-àrdachadh cosgais a thathas a' moladh uimhir a bhuaidh is nach biodh sin air a deaghach chothromachadh le leasachadh sláinte sluaigh.

Ach 's dòcha gur e aon chunnari mun seo gum faodadh Riaighaltas smachd a ghabhail air barrachd is barrachd phrisear bathair is gnàisich, a' c'riomadh saorsa agus taghadh an t-sluaign agus bunaitean dheimocrasaidh! Ach mar a tha an saoghal a' dearbhachd a h-uile latha ged a chuidicheas reachdas cha déan e leughas air trioblaid leithid tinneas dibhe: 's e foighlam agus eisimpleir a ni sin agus tha linnteán air an do dh' fhaireach e gu ruige seo! Ach bidh sinn beò an dòchais!

Many of you, like me, will recall how the sight of a bottle of whisky in the home was a rare event indeed because of its relative cost. Now cheap alcohol is a serious health-hazard according to experts, and the Scottish Government want to peg minimum prices in an effort to reduce consumption.

It is easy to understand how a reduction in alcohol-related illness could help the overall health and image of Scotland, and also make substantial savings to the Health Service. But some fear this could be a precedent for further Government interference in the costs of commodities, and an erosion of the basis of freedom and democracy.

Experience tells us daily that while legislation may help with such as alcohol problems, ultimately only example and education can cure it!

*Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
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Stephen Norris, new northern editor of The Oban Times

Driving restrictions relaxed to allow airport anti-freeze deliveries

AIRPORTS at Campbeltown and Islay were highlighted as potential trouble spots as European working time regulations were relaxed for hauliers transporting anti-freeze to airports.

The rules prohibit lorry drivers from working more than 90 hours in a fortnight.

Now drivers will be able to work for 10 hours in every 24, instead of only nine.

Inglis Lyon of Highlands and Islands Airports (HIA) said hundreds of thousands of litres of de-icer were being used to keep runways clear.

Mr Lyon, managing director at HIA, said stocks at Campbeltown and Islay airports had been running low but had since been replenished.

But he said keeping airports well stocked was a national problem with higher demand because of the prolonged spell of freezing temperatures.

Mr Lyon said: 'With disruption to rail, road and air travel in the southern part of the country it is vital this is addressed and flexibility given.'

Earlier the SNP MP for Moray, Angus Robertson, said deliveries had been delayed because drivers were having to park to comply with the restrictions.

The Oban Times confirms new northern editor for Fort William office

OBAN TIMES senior reporter Stephen Norris has been promoted to the post of northern editor of the newspaper.

Since joining the newspaper in November 2007 Stephen has worked from The Oban Times' Fort William office, rapidly becoming well known in his role as roving

reporter and photographer. Editorial director Stewart MacKenzie said: 'We are very pleased that the northern edition of The Oban Times is in such a safe pair of hands.'

'Stephen has proved a tremendous addition to our team and his drive and commitment make him

an obvious leader during an important stage in the continuing development of the west coast's favourite weekly newspaper.'

Wigtownshire man Stephen, who held the posts of chief reporter and editor of the Galloway Gazette before his move to Lochaber, is looking forward to new

challenges ahead.

He said: 'The Oban Times is the only newspaper with a truly regional reach in the West Highlands and islands. I look forward to developing the title over the entire area and ensuring the communities we serve continue to have a stake in everything we do.'

Hebrides become basking shark central

As many as 94 separate sightings recorded in one day



A basking shark pictured off Mull.

Picture by Colin Speedie and Swiss Shark Foundation.

Mr Speedie told The Oban Times: 'The biggest shoal we saw was 74 off Coll but the most impressive was a shoal of 50 off Hyskie.'

'The 50 sharks were all close together, we weren't more than 10 metres from any one of them.'

'It was like being in the mid-

dle of a herd of elephants and we had the fantastic backdrop of Barra and Rum in the distance – it was one of the most amazing experiences I have had in 20 years in this line of work.'

'There are very few places in the world you can see basking sharks like this. Film crews and photographers come from across the globe to the west coast of Scotland and it's something we should be very proud of.'

The west coast is important for sharks looking for a mate but it is also believed that the area has ample plankton.

The report also established that the sharks are particularly at risk during courtship, when two or more sharks swim along nose to tail or in contact with each other, in a trance-like state, and SNH is producing a leaflet for leisure and commercial boat users to help reduce accidental collisions.

Basking sharks are most often seen in coastal areas in the summer and autumn when plankton are abundant at the surface and this is how they get their name – from apparently 'basking' at the surface in calm, sunny weather.

They can grow up to 11 metres in length and seven tonnes in weight.

Lismore teacher to leave island

LISMORE Primary School's head teacher, Jennifer Kirkwood, is leaving in mid-February after just over two years at the island school.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'We are obviously doing all we can to ensure that a replacement is appointed as soon as possible. We have already put out a notice to all our schools, inviting applications from suitably qualified teachers for the temporary post of acting head teacher.'

'The post of head teacher will be advertised.'

Green energy grants may balance public's high cost concerns

PEOPLE are being turn off from using green energy because the costs look too high.

Figures released this week show that the majority of households in the Highlands and Islands would consider fitting a solar panel or ground source heat pump to their home - but are put off by the expense.

Research reveals eight in 10 Highlands and Islands residents would consider fitting technology such as a solar panel to their home but are put off by what they believe will be a high cost.

A spokesman for the Energy Saving Trust is encouraging people to consider fitting green energy in their homes and looking at the many grants available to them.

He said: 'The average approximate costs of installing home renewable technology are: £4,800 for solar water heating, £9,500 for air source heat pumps, £11,000 for wood-fuelled boilers and £14,000 for ground source heat pumps.'

'And there are grants available to help with the costs.'

For more information on using renewable energy in your home or community contact your local Energy Saving Scotland advice centre on 0800 512 012 or visit the website at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland

MSP backs care call

CALLS for people to keep an eye on neighbours in the current cold spell have been warmly welcomed by Argyll and Bute's MSP.

Jim Mather said it was a good time for people to look out for each other.

'The present cold weather is persisting for much longer than we in the west are used to and, because of this I warmly endorse the calls from Scottish newspapers and the broadcast media for people to keep an eye out for neighbours who may be struggling in such circumstances,' he said. He also welcomed suggestions that folk look out for the elderly and vulnerable to see if they needed help with shopping, getting payment cards for electricity, prescriptions and other essentials and that shop-keepers and householders put down salt to help keep pavements safer.'

Argyll and Bute Sports Coaching 2010

6th and 7th February 2010 Dunoon

Two days of sports coaching courses and personal development in indoor, outdoor sports to help communities offer new opportunities in sports participation. Support courses for existing coaches in Child Protection, Nutrition, Working with Disabled Athletes and Children are also available.

Courses are suitable for Teachers, Youth leaders, Club Coaches, Parents, Community Leaders - in fact anyone with an interest in learning about sports coaching, and being willing to use their skills in their own community.

Courses are subsidised and cost from £30 full day (£20 half day) through support from Argyll College and sportscotland. All attendees will receive a delegates pack, refreshments and certificate of attendance. FREE Community Transport will be available from most areas of Argyll and Bute on a first come basis.

To book go to www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and follow link to Sports Conference, or e-mail sportscoaching@argyll-bute.gov.uk for a copy of the programme.

Book early to avoid disappointment!

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Corran Halls, Oban on Thursday 4 February 2010, 5-7pm
Community Centre, Lochgilphead Thursday 11 February 2010, 5-7pm

Planning to start your own business? Join our FREE two day workshop to help develop your ideas into a practical and effective plan to launch your business. Key elements covered include marketing, business planning, finances and IT for your business. The workshop will be held in:

Corran Halls, Oban on Wednesday 17 & Thursday 18 February 2010, 9.30am-4.30pm
Community Centre, Lochgilphead Tuesday 23 & Wednesday 24 February 2010, 9.30am-4.30pm

Becoming self employed? If you are considering becoming self employed or are newly self employed, you can attend this FREE workshop run by HM Revenue and Customs at the Corran Halls, Oban on Tuesday 2 February 2010, 12.30 to 3.30pm

For more information please call 0845 609 6611 www.bgateway.com or visit your local office

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Regional Press Closer to home

Charity shop takes £6,000 in first month

A CHARITY shop that raises money for good causes in the Oban area has made nearly £6,000 in its first month of trading – and as much as £1,200 in one day.

The Community Benefit Shop in the White Building on Oban's North Pier was opened in December last year to provide a home outlet for furniture and other items donated to the MacQueen Bros. Charitable Trust.

Removal company MacQueen Bros. collects and stores donated items at no cost and takes them to the shop or the company warehouse to be sold.

The Community Benefit Shop is entirely run by volunteers and is open six days a week.

Graham MacQueen of MacQueen Bros. said: 'We have made a tremendous amount of money considering we have just had a holiday season and terrible weather conditions.'

'I can't thank the volunteers enough for the work they do and the partnership we have with them is hugely successful.'

Statue ends up in Oban Bay

A 25-YEAR-old man has been arrested after picking up a stone statue outside the Caledonian Hotel, Oban, and throwing it over the shore wall into Oban Bay.

CCTV camera captured the incident, which occurred at 2.30am on January 9.

Police officers attended and found the man hiding behind a car and charged him with theft and breach of the peace.

The statue has been recovered from the water.

Seil car thief slips up

A THIEF was undone by icy road conditions after he crashed the car he had just stolen.

The 16-year-old crashed the red Nissan Almera in Balvicar, Seil, at around 3.30am, which alerted a couple in a nearby house.

The couple went out to assist the youth but he left the scene.

After finding the vehicle, police caught up with the teenager and he has been charged with theft of a car and various road traffic offences, including failing to provide a breath specimen.

Oban woman alleged to have bitten and kicked police

AN OBAN woman allegedly tried to bite, kick and punch police officers as they took her to hospital for treatment.

The 25-year-old had been arrested for a breach of the peace last Wednesday but was taken to hospital when police discovered her injuries.

At the hospital, she allegedly hit out at the police officers and swore at staff.

Former Oban man is jailed following 30-year-old sexual abuse claims

Probation refused by Sheriff as defendant continues to deny guilt

A FIFTY-six-year-old former Oban man has been jailed for 16 months after being found guilty of sexually abusing two boys, aged between 12-13 years, 30 years ago.

Gerard Forsyth, who worked with young people and in community education for 25 years in Glasgow, was convicted by a jury on December 3 of indecent practises against the two boys, both now 42 years old.

The offences took place in Oban Youth and Community Centre in Soroba Lane, where Forsyth was employed as a youth leader, sometime between March 22 1979 and August 20 1980.

The two witnesses had told the jury they had both been at sleep-overs in the centre, on separate occasions, when Forsyth had handled their private parts. Neither had spoken openly of the events since then until one made a statement to police in 2007 and the other was then interviewed by police after his name was mentioned by the first witness.

Defence advocate Catherine Smith told

Sheriff Douglas Small last Wednesday, when first offender Forsyth appeared at Oban Sheriff Court for sentencing, that her client still denied the offences had taken place.

A social inquiry report indicated that, while at a low risk of re-offending, he was not suitable for probation because of his denial of guilt or for community service because of a significant alcohol problem.

'I have spoken to Mr Forsyth this morning about participation in such a programme and he tells me he would be happy to do so,' added Miss Smith.

She argued that probation would force Forsyth to take part in any rehabilitation programmes and allow the court to monitor his progress but he would not have to go to prison.

Sentencing Forsyth, Sheriff Small disagreed: 'Mr Forsyth, these were extremely serious offences, particularly so because, at the time they were committed by you, you were in a position of trust.'

'You continue to deny your

guilt of these charges, Mr Forsyth, and I don't agree that it would be appropriate to place you on probation in these circumstances.'

'Both [witnesses] gave evidence at your trial of the traumatic effect your conduct had had on them and to what extent they had been effected by your conduct.'

'The social inquiry report is of the opinion that you would be unable to perform community service because of your problems with alcohol.'

'In all the circumstances and having regard to what was said on your behalf by Miss Smith and the full terms of the social inquiry report, in my opinion the appropriate sentence is one of 16 months in prison; eight months on each of the two charges, to run consecutively to each other.'

Sheriff Small also ordered that Forsyth, whose address was given as Kennishend Avenue, Thornliebank, Glasgow, would remain on the Sex Offenders' Register for 10 years from December 3 2009.



Former Oban man Gerard Forsyth was jailed at Oban Sheriff Court and placed on the Sex Offenders' Register for 10 years

Cold payments for North Argyll prove freezing farce

Pensioners miss out as temperature measured 100 miles further south

DESPITE freezing temperatures for more than three weeks in North Argyll only one pensioner has received the government's Cold Weather Payment.

He said: 'I enquired about it and was told I wasn't eligible. But it has been so cold that I thought we must be so I got in touch with Alan Reid MP. His secretary sorted out the payment on my behalf.'

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid said: 'The present situation is farcical when people who can't get out of their homes because of snow and ice aren't entitled to cold weather payments because the rules say it's not cold enough!'

'I am writing to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pointing out this discrepancy and saying that readings should be taken at Tarbert and Oban instead of Machrihanish for people living in these areas.'

Mr Reid has also requested that payments be backdated for this winter to take account of what payments would have been made if readings had been taken at the appropriate places.

The cold weather payments consist of £25 towards eligible customer's heating costs for each seven-day period of average sub zero temperatures. Temperatures are recorded at various locations throughout the country, which automatically triggers payments for those entitled.

Councillor George Freeman,

Argyll and Bute Council's spokesperson for housing and communities, said Cold Weather Payments were essential.

'This is crucial ongoing support from the Government, which will go some way towards helping some of the most vulnerable members of our communities to meet their extra heating costs.'

'We are in the middle of what is an extreme spell of weather, and it is very important that the elderly and other vulnerable people are not suffering unnecessarily by thinking they cannot afford to heat their homes.'

Eligible people will generally receive payments within a week of the payment being triggered.

Anyone who thinks they should have received a Cold Weather Payment but has not, should contact their Pension Centre or Jobcentre Plus.

Clothes thief given last chance

AN OBAN man has been told he is on his last chance to avoid going to jail after breaching a court order by committing a crime.

Michael MacPhee, aged 25, 4 Burnside Court, Miller Road, admitted stealing a t-shirt and jeans, later recovered, from an Oban shop, on August 19 last year.

Oban Sheriff Court heard last week that in doing so he had breached a Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) aimed at helping him to overcome addiction problems following a conviction for house-breaking.

After an appeal by defence agent Edward Thornton, Sheriff Douglas Small reluctantly agreed to allow MacPhee to continue the DTTO but told him he was getting 'no more chances'.

He ordered MacPhee to carry out 135 hours' community service for the shop-lifting offence.

Rail boost for over 55s

TRAVELLERS over the age of 55 will be able to take advantage of discount tickets on West Highland rail services between now and the end of March.

The extension to ScotRail's Club 55 promotion into this year has been welcomed by Argyll and Bute MSP Jim Mather.

'There are restrictions on most services prior to 9.15am on weekdays but these do not apply to travellers on the West Highland network to and from Mallaig, Fort William and Oban and intervening stations.'

He said the promotion last year attracted twice as many passengers as the previous year.

Oban Times
NEWS DESK
01631 568060

Police crack down on underage drinking



Sergeant Mike Woods and Inspector Julie Edward record the haul of confiscated alcohol 07_103drink02

OBAN POLICE confiscated and disposed of a total of 44 litres of alcohol from underage drinkers over the festive period.

The Festive Safety Campaign, carried out between December 22 and January 6, was a success with police seizing cases of cans of lager and cider, plus bottles of Buckfast tonic wine, vodka and other spirits from youths in and around the Oban area.

Over the same period police officers attended 51 calls relating to anti-social behaviour and disorder.

Inspector Julie Edward said: 'A number of these involved persons under the age of 18 years who were found to be under the influence of alcohol and any alcohol they had in their possession was confiscated for disposal.'

Additional police patrols over the festive period reduced disorder in the town centre and Hogmanay celebrations passed peacefully.

During the Road Policing Festive Campaign two drivers were found to be driving whilst over the prescribed alcohol limits in the Oban area.



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Lighthouse board sells books from rare library

A COLLECTION of rare travel books from the 18th and 19th centuries have been sold by the Northern Lighthouse Board, which has one of its main depots in Oban.

The lighthouse board has a library of books which have been collected by commissioners of the board since the mid-19th century.

Heritage trust

To help maintain the collection, outside the statutory remit of the lighthouse board, the Northern Lighthouse Heritage Trust was set up and the library has been transferred to it for safekeeping.

Douglas Gorman, from the lighthouse board, said: 'Following professional cataloguing the trust has identified an element of the collection it considers is relevant to, and part of, the Scottish lighthouse heritage.'

'This will be retained and conserved for future reference by those interested in that heritage.'

The remaining books in the collection, while of great general interest, do not, in the view of the trust, form an essential part of the lighthouse heritage and after consultation with the National Library of Scotland we decided to offer these for sale.

Support funding

'The proceeds of the sale will be used to support the future work of the trust.'

The collection for sale included works by Capt James Cook, d'Entrecasteaux, la Perouse, Matthew Flinders, Lord Anson, Capt Sir Edward Belcher, Sir John Barrow, William Scoresby, John Franklin, Capt. George Vancouver, Capt. Edward William Parry, Sir John Ross and François Péron.

The books were sold yesterday (Wednesday) through Edinburgh-based auctioneers Lyon and Turnbull.

Punch costs 21-year-old Oban man £800 in fine and compensation

A TWENTY-one-year-old Oban man who admitted punching a bar manager on his nose, breaking it, has been ordered to pay £500 compensation.

Oban Sheriff Court heard last week that first offender Graham Kirkham had been in a bar in Oban, on September 27 last year when he was asked to leave by door staff

because he was 'heavily under the influence' of drink. He had objected and asked to see the manager who told Kirkham that he had had too much to drink. 'He then

punched [the bar manager] on the nose with a clenched fist,' said Procurator Fiscal Craig Harris.

Defence agent Stephen Macleod said Kirkham, 23B

Shuna Terrace, accepted the assault was unprovoked but had not considered then or now that he was intoxicated. Fining him £300 and ordering him to pay compensa-

tion, Sheriff Douglas Small told Kirkham: 'This was an unprovoked assault on the manager and he didn't deserve to be punched by you.'

Kerrera bids for Village SOS funding

**REPORT by
MARIAN MILLER**

THE ISLAND of Kerrera is facing a busy New Year with projects long in the pipeline starting to emerge as achievable developments.

At the top of the list is a new community hall which Isle of Kerrera Development Trust is hoping to gain funding from the BBC and BIG Lottery's Village SOS.

Just before Christmas the island was announced as one of 28 villages short-listed around the UK for Village SOS, which will see six winners awarded up to £400,000 for their project and filmed over the course of the year as their project progresses.

Champion

As part of the reward for being short-listed, each community has been given up to £10,000 to put together a business plan working with a Village Champion.

Project officer for the development trust Louise

Moran explained that at a 'match making' process in Manchester potential 'village champions' had met with representatives from each project and through a process of elimination, three had been short-listed for Kerrera and had come to visit the island and meet the people.

'All three adored Kerrera and were keen to come,' she said.

In the end Christine Hope, aged 31, from Herefordshire was chosen as champion for Kerrera.

She was 23 when she set up an award-winning shop and post office in her village of Longtown after she came back from travelling to find no village shop and farms ravaged by foot and mouth disease.

She revitalised the village shop and post office, turned it into a profitable business and has recently opened up another shop.

Louise said: 'It was im-

portant she had a complete understanding of a farming community and farming as well. She is very involved in Young Farmers and represented Wales and England at the Scottish Young Farmers conference in Perth.

'Christine will come and live on the island for a year, if we are successful in being in the final six.'

Meanwhile she will help to produce the business plan and the second stage of the application to the BIG Lottery which have to be completed by March 3.

Christine said: 'This is an incredibly exciting opportunity and I can't wait to get started.'

'I was really impressed by the people I met on Kerrera who were all very positive and had already pulled together as a community, identified the need for change and are working towards achieving this.'

'I'll be going in to help them realise their ambitions

but I appreciate that we will all have a lot to learn from each other in the months to come.'

'I have experience in project management and a lot of transferrable skills to call upon for this project and I'm looking forward to building up the business case over the next few months and know it would be fantastic to be chosen as one of the final six.'

Meanwhile she will help to produce the business plan and the second stage of the application to the BIG Lottery which have to be completed by March 3.

Christine said: 'This is an incredibly exciting opportunity and I can't wait to get started.'

Louise said they had tried to balance their desire to give the tender to a local firm with what would be best for the island and in the end chose Stornoway-based Stuart Bagshaw, who designed the award-winning Blue Reef Cottages on Harris.

He has experience in designing low energy use buildings using renewable energy

sources and providing new skills for local people along the way.'

Louise said it was hoped when complete the building would be multi-purpose, providing workshops, perhaps a tearoom and accommodation to help bring in income to run the hall.

Kerrera brand

It would be situated at the pier head where the ferry crosses from Gallanach to the island and Dunollie Estates, which owns the island, had already agreed to a long-term lease on the land.

The community will learn in May whether or not it has been successfully selected as one of the final six for Village SOS but even if it doesn't much of the groundwork will have been done towards achieving the goal of a community centre and other funding sources would be pursued.'

Meanwhile the BBC is expected to visit the island to film a three-minute trailer which would be used if Kerrera makes it to the final.

Louise said that finally, after 10 years of consultation on the island and the production of the Isle of Kerrera Community Development Plan in 2008, the desires within that plan were beginning to come to life.

Planning permission has been granted for a road link-

ing the north and south ends of the island, which sits barely a mile from Oban and has virtually no public services, and there are plans for a community wind turbine and composting toilets for the many visitors to the island in the summer.

The community will learn in May whether or not it has been successfully selected as one of the final six for Village SOS but even if it doesn't much of the groundwork will have been done towards achieving the goal of a community centre and other funding sources would be pursued.'

Meanwhile the BBC is expected to visit the island to film a three-minute trailer which would be used if Kerrera makes it to the final.

'The BBC has been constantly re-assuring us that it is a supportive project to show what communities can do to pull together and achieve things,' said Louise.



The Island of Kerrera is hoping to gain a new community centre via Village SOS.

Beer bottle attack results in 200 hours' community service

AN OBAN man who hit another man on the face with a beer bottle has been put on probation for a year and given 200 hours' community service after appearing for sentencing at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Allan Beaton, aged 29, had denied assaulting his victim with a beer bottle at Corran Brae on July 25 last year but had been found guilty following a trial before Sheriff Douglas Small.

Beaton's defence during the trial had been self-defence of his friend, whom he thought had been attacked by someone else, but this explanation was not accepted by the sheriff.

Defence agent Edward Thornton said: 'Mr Beaton had not been involved in any prior incident and the evidence was clear that when Mr Beaton and his co-accused were asked to leave the party they did so with no bother.'

Sheriff Small told Beaton, of 17 D Corran Brae, Dunollie, Oban he was close to losing his liberty and was lucky that the bottle had not broken and his victim had not been seriously injured.

'I am persuaded that you should be given the chance to put yourself on the right path,' he said, ordering Beaton to carry out 200 hours' unpaid work.

Beaton's co-accused Simon Avni, aged 19, 5A Colonsay Terrace, Oban, had previously pled guilty to assaulting another man by punching him and had his sentence deferred until September 14 for him to be of good behaviour.

NEVIS RANGE Fort William

Nevis Range has Scotland's highest ski lift, accessed by the UK's only mountain gondola, which of course also attracts many non-skiing visitors all year round. In winter, a nursery area with easy tows and green runs, and longer blue runs for improving intermediates, is easily accessible from the top gondola station. The renowned back corries are only accessible by off-piste or black runs, and there are difficult reds both there and on the front face where a terrain park is also built at the summit once sufficient snow has accumulated. There is also sledging, snowshoeing and snowbiking for non-skiers.

A team of qualified ski patrollers are always on hand to provide information and assistance, along with a rescue and first aid service.

How to get here

7 miles north of Fort William, 51 miles north of Oban, 65 miles south of Inverness, just off the A82 Fort William to Inverness. It's Scotland's highest snowsports area and right near to Ben Nevis in the midst of stunning highland scenery.

Facilities

The UK's only Mountain Gondola whisks snowsports enthusiasts to 650m on Aonach Mor, accessing a further 11 ski lifts and 35 downhill runs. The Terrain Park, situated on the summit, offers something for every freestyle, from beginners' rails to expert s-rails and kickers. And if you're a winter climber, you can take the climber's lift, which runs at 8am every morning throughout the winter when the resort is open for skiing/snowboarding.

The Snowsports School at Nevis Range offers a variety of skiing and snowboarding lessons and packages to suit all levels of ability, from beginner to advanced. Each morning and afternoon, there are great value beginners all inclusive packages, which include ticket, instruction and equipment hire. There are a range of group lessons running each day, with the option of private lessons for one-on-one tuition. The resort also runs 'improver sessions' which you can find out more about on the website. A word of advice though: it's well worth booking in advance for all lessons as it can get very busy, especially at weekends and holidays, and local kids should sign up for Scottish ski club training.

At the Gondola Base Station you'll find the Pinemarten Coffee Shop with its hot soup and home baking.

If you just want to relax and savour the snowy mountainous landscape, then the Snowgoose restaurant & bar is open throughout the winter, selling freshly prepared hot food as well as home made soup and other snacks. Best of all, there's fantastic cakes and tray bakes, to accompany your espresso or latte! The bar is well stocked, and open throughout the winter, and on busy days, when the snow conditions are excellent, the bar remains open just a little bit later!

**"Winter at Nevis Range, Fort William:
Sledging, Skiing, Snowboarding, Snowblading,
Winter Climbing, Mountain Biking, Walking, or
simply relaxing in the Snowgoose restaurant &
bar, or the Pinemarten Coffee Shop... the list
is endless!"**



Lorn's same-aim groups come together

A GROUP to represent environment and conservation organisations in the Oban and Lorn area is in the process of being put together.

Last month a meeting was held in the Caledonian Hotel to discuss such a group, which was attended by representatives of 17 organisations. Included were Sustainable Oban, Scottish Centre for Geopolitics, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Association for Marine Science, Argyll and Bute Council, Seil Natural History Group, Hebridean Partnership, local fishermen and more.

The purpose is to create a voice –Lorn Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) – on the west coast of Scotland that represents those that support management of the natural environment in ways which favour long-term sustainability.

Agreement was reached to set up a committee, website and forum to represent the organisation.

The group was due to meet again last night (Wednesday). For more information contact Richard Wesley on 01852 300388 or email richardwesley@btinternet.com.

Drunk in charge skipper is fined £3,300 following ship's grounding

Cargo ship's captain was more than three times drink drive limit

THE MASTER of a cargo ship, who admitted being under the influence of alcohol when his ship ran aground in the Firth of Lorne, has been fined a total of £3,300.

Polish national Stanislaw Sowinski, whose address was given as 6 The Meadows, Billington, near Blackburn, had been due to return home to Poland the day after the incident on December 15 last year after two-and-a-half months at sea.

Admitted charges
Sowinski, aged 59, appeared on a deferred sentence at Oban Sheriff Court last Tuesday.

He had previously pled guilty to being the master

and on-duty navigator of the coaster *Fingal* on December 15 last year when his alcohol level was recorded as 121 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath. The legal limit is 35 microgrammes.

He also admitted a second charge of failing to navigate a safe course, maintain proper look-out and take evasive action to prevent grounding.

Procurator fiscal Craig Harris said the 80-metre coaster, which weighs 1,400 tonnes, was carrying timber from Corpach to Troon but when it entered the Firth of Lorne it began to steer erratically before hitting rocks to the

north of Jura.

Alcohol suspected

The first mate contacted the coastguard and Oban lifeboat and a Navy helicopter were launched. The ship became dislodged following a change in the current and was able to float but two ballast tanks had been damaged in the grounding.

Mr Harris said: 'Because of the erratic steering of the ship prior to the incident, it was suspected that Sowinski was under the influence of alcohol.'

'The ship was taken back to Oban harbour under the guidance of the lifeboat and was met by coastguard officials and the police.'

The court heard how Sowinski had been sacked by the Irish cargo ship company he was working for following the incident.

Very tired

Defence agent Edward Thornton added that it would now be difficult for him to secure employment, despite being a master mariner with 40 years' experience.

Mr Thornton said: 'He was on duty and felt very tired but couldn't ask the first officer to take over, as he had just gone off duty.'

'Between getting the vessel off the rocks and getting in to Oban he took three or four cans of beer because he was so upset at this blemish on his professional career.'

In September 2009, the *MV Fingal* ran aground off the Kintyre coast while carrying a cargo of timber and sparked fears that she may have leaked fuel oil into the sea.

'This was not his first time navigating in the area but he had not anticipated the tide running as quickly as it did, which is why the ship grounded.'

'He assures me that in his 40-year career this is the first time he has been involved in an incident of this nature.'

'Between getting the vessel off the rocks and getting in to Oban he took three or four cans of beer because he was so upset at this blemish on his professional career.'

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Lorn Lines



WALKING groups in the Oban area aim to encourage and enable people to start exercising and to make small changes to their lifestyle, leading to a healthier life.

The launch of the Oban & Lorn Health Walk Programme on Thursday January 21 takes place at the Congregational Church, Tweedale Street, at 10 am.

The walks will be short and informal and will be tailored to the needs of the group. Light refreshments will be served at the church hall after the walks are completed.

The programme will be led by trained walk leaders and the programme is supported by NHS Highland, Active Schools, Forestry Commission, and Home Start.

For families who have concerns about their children being overweight there is also a fun new programme being launched. The X Programme provides information and activities for all the family.

All this is available free of charge by contacting Lorn Medical Centre on 01631 570565 to find out where and when.



THIS year's Lorn Drama Festival looks set to break last year's record number of performances with 18 different plays, one up on last year, already committed to the annual event which will be held this year in the Corran Halls, Oban, between March 15 and 19.

Organisers hope to include a group from Oban, plus an 'overseas' entry from Mull.

The five evening performances offer a wealth of quality and variety and anyone requiring further information on any aspect of the festival should contact the festival secretary Martyn Gibson on martyngibson@phonecoop.coop.

OBAN'S Original Factory Shop helped to contribute to its parent company's record sales over the festive period.

'We gave customers exactly what they wanted this Christmas by making their money go further and giving them access to luxuries at affordable prices, even in these testing times,' said Gwen Cameron, Oban store manager.

The company as a whole, which has 130 shops nationwide, saw an increase in sales of 48.3 per cent and profits of 60 per cent for the four weeks ending December 27.



OBAN Police have praised the behaviour of Hogmanay revellers as they recorded only one instance of public disorder.

One man was arrested for disorderly and drunken behaviour in the early hours of New Year's Day at Lorn and Islands Hospital in the town.

He has been charged with an alleged breach of the peace and harassing accident and emergency staff at the hospital.

Teenager accused of firing ball bearing gun at 13-year-old

A 14-year-old boy told Oban Sheriff Court last week that an older teenager had shot at him with a ball bearing gun.

The boy, who was 13 at the time of the alleged incident, was giving evidence in a part-heard trial at the court last Tuesday.

Alistair Leiper, aged 17, whose address was given in court as 12 Forestry Cottages, Oban, is accused of

brandishing and pointing the gun at the boy in Lochside Street, Oban, on May 3 last year.

Fired twice
However, in his evidence the teenage victim stated that Mr Leiper had shot the gun twice and that he had to dodge a pellet from one of the shots.

Cross-examining the witness, defence solicitor Sandy Mitchell put it to him that the

accused had only held the gun up and had not actually fired it.

The witness replied: 'No. He fired it at me.'

'He was trying to scare me,' he added.

The witness admitted under cross-examination that he had asked for a shot of the gun after the incident.

The trial, at Oban Sheriff Court, was continued until February 15.

Oban street party organiser insists his focus is on refunds

Help offered to anyone who wants to organise next year's event

THE ORGANISER of Oban's cancelled Hogmanay street party says he has no plans to organise another New Year event and insists his focus is now on honouring refunds.

Neil Mackay said he had suffered a heavy financial loss following the collapse of the planned party in Tesco car park but is committed

to making sure those who had bought tickets get their money back.

Mr Mackay said: 'The refunds are now being attended to and I personally thank every one of those people for their understanding and consideration.'

When asked if he would take on another Hogmanay project, Mr Mackay said:

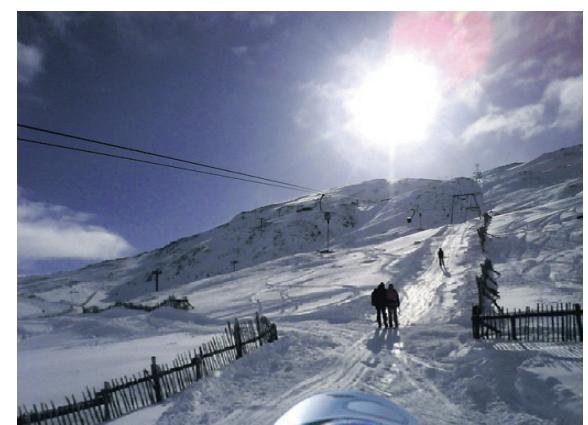
'Contrary to some comments I have heard, Oban has not come out of this with a bloody nose.'

'I have a lot of information and knowledge that I would be delighted to pass on to anyone who wants to take on the mantle.'

'You can never say never but I am not planning anything for this year.'



"Packed powder snow across the whole mountain and some of the best early season skiing Glencoe has ever seen"



GLENCOE MOUNTAIN RESORT Glencoe

With 19 runs and 7 lifts the centre caters for skiers and boarders of all levels. Complete beginners can enjoy the gentle plateau runs while experts can experience the incredible variety of terrain (which includes the longest and steepest runs in Scotland).

How to get here

Located on the A82 between Glencoe village and Tyndrum the Glencoe Ski Centre is nestled in the middle of some of the most spectacular scenery you are ever likely to see. 35 miles north of Oban and 90 miles north of Glasgow.

Facilities

Let the modern double seat chairlift whisk you to the heart of the ski area where the stunning views over Rannoch Moor and the Buachaille Etive Mor will take your breath away.

For beginners they have a dedicated team of BASI instructors who will look after you on the hill throughout your first experience of skiing or snowboarding in a truly amazing wilderness environment.

Skis, snowboards and sledges are available to hire from the shop and are fitted by specialist technicians, please arrive early to avoid disappointment.

Home baking is available in the Log Cabin.

Eigg wins £300,000

ISLE of Eigg residents are celebrating a very special New Year after being named joint winners of NESTA's £1,000,000 Big Green Challenge.

The green-thinking islanders scooped £300,000 at an awards ceremony in NESTA's London HQ yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon after judges voted their innovative schemes to cut carbon emissions the best out of more than 300 UK entries.

Maggie Fyffe, of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust, told *The Oban Times*: 'We are absolutely delighted. It's been a fantastic project to have taken part in. The money will go a long way to financing various projects.'

Building an eco-house for volunteers and students to stay in, and extending solar panel and home insulation schemes were planned, Ms Fyffe said.

NESTA chief executive, Jonathan Kestenbaum said Eigg had 'exceeded our expectations' in cutting carbon emissions by an impressive 32 per cent in the past year alone.

He added: 'The success of the project proves that when communities are incentivised, empowered and supported they become a compelling force in solving some of society's biggest challenges.'

Water woe in thaw

THE RECENT slow thaw has been a mixed blessing to the West Highlands after weeks of freezing weather. Kyleakin plumber Jonathan MacKinnon of DK Plumbing attended seven call outs for burst pipes on Monday and Tuesday alone.

Court business as usual at Oban

RUMOURS circulating in Oban about shorter hours or full closure of the Sheriff Court have been completed dismissed by the Scottish Court Service.

A letter to *The Oban Times* claimed that people were concerned about the future of the business of the court. The author, who wanted to remain anonymous claimed: 'Staff sickness and vacant positions have meant that the court does not open on time, and it is taking much longer for staff to respond to phone calls.'

A spokeswoman for the Scottish Court Service confirmed: 'It is business as usual at Oban Sheriff Court.'

'We have arranged staff cover for the current vacancies and business will remain at Oban.'

'People will still be able to pay their fines at the court.'



The Corran Ferry: could close for four weeks in the spring. 10_f03ferry01

Public to get say on Skye and Lochalsh hospital shake-up

BY STEPHEN NORRIS

NHS HIGHLAND is to hold a major public consultation event on redesigning hospital services in Skye and Lochalsh.

Letters have been circulated inviting all relevant parties to attend the invitation-only workshop in the Dunollie Hotel, Broadford, on February 12.

The event, originally scheduled for last summer, comes nine months after a heated 200-strong public meeting in Portree at which speakers attacked NHS Highland for its lack of consultation over plans many feared would see Portree Hospital closed and services centralised at the Mackinnon Memorial Hospital in Broadford.

'There is no room and no land available at Portree, whereas at Broadford the NHS already own the land to the south of the existing hospital, which has been earmarked for the new hospital and the new health centre.'

'It appears that the health centre will be put in place first, and then when funds become available the new hospital will follow.'

Health broadcaster and journalist Pennie Taylor will lead the February 12 event and a prominent national expert will

provide an overview of national policy and strategy.

The workshop follows a 'public engagement exercise' last autumn undertaken by Highland Community Care Forum and Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations for NHS Highland's Mid Highland Community Health Partnership. A report of this exercise will be considered at the workshop.

Mid Highland CHP General Manager Gill McVicar told *The Oban Times*: 'I welcome the fact that we've reached this stage and look forward to taking further.'

'This is the only workshop that has been arranged at present. A decision as to whether further workshops are needed will be taken at the meeting on February 12.'

Community landowners to meet minister

WEST Highlands and islands community landowners have secured a meeting with Minister for Environment Roseanna Cunningham to discuss setting up an all-Scotland body to represent the sector.

The move follows a conference in Harris last September, where 20 of

the largest community landowners in Scotland met to discuss joining forces.

Many present felt the Scottish Government no longer considered land ownership and land reform a priority and agreed to commission a

spokesman for Stòras Uibhist, the Knoydart Foundation and the North Harris Trust will attend.

Highland and islands demand for heating fuel rockets

FUEL delivery companies are working around the clock as the demand for heating fuels has soars in the Highlands and islands.

Not only has the recent cold snap caused an increased demand for fuel, the snow and icy roads have made it impossible to reach a lot of customers as their oil, gas and coal supplies run dry.

George Lane of Oban Coal Company is working 14 hours a day, seven days a week, to try to get coal to everyone who needs it but impassable side roads have put him a week behind schedule.

Drivers for Brogan Fuels and Gleaner Oils have been given an exemption from the usual cap on their working

By EUAN PATERSON epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

hours and have been clocking up plenty of overtime as they attempt to clear the backlog of waiting customers. Brogan Fuels' Oban depot manager Scott Wilson said: 'It has been better this week as the snow and ice has begun to thaw but we are only managing about 70 per cent of our deliveries because of the road conditions. The main roads are fine but trying to drive a large tanker on side roads and up driveways is an absolute nightmare at the moment.'

A spokesman for Gleaner Oils said the demand for fuel has risen this winter but said Argyll had been 'lucky' compared to more northern parts of the country.

He said: 'Argyll has not been affected as badly because of the lack of snow. Once you get to Fort William the amount of snow on the road increases. There is defi-

nitely a north-south divide in the Highlands.'

Some island communities have been cut off from suppliers for days due to impassable roads. About 100 properties on Skye had no heating or hot water last Friday, after the biomass system at Home Farm, Portree, stopped working.

A spokesman for Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association said the problem was caused by the cold weather affecting a sensor that triggers the heating.

Both Scottish Power and Scottish and Southern Energy said it was coping with the demand for electricity and that it was 'business as usual'.

Assurance over West End plans

THE CONSORTIUM developing the former Grand Hotel and McTavish's Kitchens site in Fort William's West End says the project remains safe - despite one of its major shareholders hitting the financial rocks.

Kilmartin Property Group went into receivership last week, but lead partners in the Fort William development, Edinburgh-based Ashford Property Group, is confident its £7.5m plans for a 60-bed Travelodge and retail outlets will go ahead.

Ashford director Andrew Smith told *The Oban Times* the joint venture company that owns the site, Kilmartin Ashford LLP, is not affected by the Kilmartin Property Group receivership. 'Furthermore the project is funded by our bankers and not HBOS who were Kilmartin's backers,' he said. 'I am in discussions with the receivers of Kilmartin Property Group and anticipate matters will be concluded swiftly. Ashford remain fully committed to the project and we hope to be able to proceed in early course.'

Residents fight ferry shut-down

By STEPHEN NORRIS

ARDNAMURCHAN and Morvern residents have pledged to fight proposals to suspend Corran Ferry sailings for four weeks this spring while Nether Lochaber slipway is repaired.

Sunart, Achارacle, West Ardnamurchan and Morvern community councils say the move is 'dangerous' and are campaigning to force Highland Council to think again.

Their joint declaration follows last Thursday's heated public meeting in the Sunart Centre, Strontian, when furious locals condemned the closure plan.

Highland Council says it is 'not feasible' to run the ferry during repairs essential for the lifeline service's future.

The community councils claim 'few, if any' contingency plans are in place for emergency services using the single-track A861 diversion - 37 miles to Fort William and 45 miles to anyone travelling south of Corran - along Loch Eil-side.

Police, fire and ambulance crews would find it 'impossible' to access 'inevitable' incidents along the road which, they say, could not handle the estimated 1,000 extra vehicles per day. The ferry handles the greatest number of vehicle movements of any ferry in Scotland - more than 30,000 in May and June 2009.

'An emergency situation is on the cards,' said the councils. 'Shutting down the Corran Ferry link is not an option. We have reliable professional advice that there are other options, which would not require any lengthy period of closure.'

Prices of delivered goods

would go up, tourism revenues would collapse, there would be 'gridlock' on the A82 and people commuting to work would face huge increases in travelling costs.

They warn: 'It is doubtful if anyone, other than those who live here, fully realise the problems this closure will mean for the people of our vulnerable communities. This is an issue of public safety and economic stupidity.'

'The closure of the Corran Ferry to us is equivalent to shutting down the Forth road and rail bridges, the M1 or the London ring road for a month. It would not be tolerated there and it should not be tolerated here.'

More than £650,000 of urgent remedial work is required at the slipway.

Disruption

Chief structural engineer Dave MacKenzie said it had deteriorated significantly over the past 15 years and 'everything possible' would be done to minimise disruption during the 12-week contract, which includes the four-week closure.

Mr MacKenzie said the proposed timescale was 'realistic' and any contractor would face heavy penalties for delays. Community representatives want night work only over a longer period while the ferry continues to run.

The council is 'considering' the A861 diversion issue and has met emergency services to develop 'alternative contingency plans'.

The council is 'sympathetic' to local needs, but administration leader Dr Michael Foxley said a four-week closure would have 'a

very major negative impact' on Ardour, Morvern, Sunart and north Mull communities.

'We need to ensure that the disruption to the travelling public is reduced to the absolute minimum,' he said. 'Morvern takes an hour to get to Corran prior to travelling on to Fort William or Glasgow.'

'We especially need to re-examine the option of night only working or providing a very limited service.'

'When the proposed tender goes out we need to ensure there is 24/7 working by the company by including the absolute minimum time limit for closure and punitive damages if this is exceeded.'

'In the tender we need to ask for options from companies to reduce the extent of full closure and/or allow for limited access by the smaller Maid of Glencoul ferry. It is vital to miss the key tourist season of late June to early September.'

If closure cannot be avoided, very limited vehicular access at Corran, a free passenger-only ferry from Ardour to Nether Lochaber or a temporary slip at Ballachulish, a free shuttle passenger ferry from Camusnagaul and a secure link for pupils and teachers attending Ardnamurchan High School all had to be considered, said Councillor Foxley.

New and extended passing places, limitations on large coaches and wood lorries and signs to prevent convoys and allow overtaking would be also needed on the A861. Highland Council plans a further meeting on the issue in Strontian.

Charity promotes Burns at home

A LEADING cancer charity is urging people to stay at home to celebrate this Burns' Night this year and raise money for charity.

Macmillan Cancer Support is asking people to hold their own Burns Suppers and raise money to help those affected by cancer. By holding your own Burns Supper you can avoid the current frosty conditions and ask friends and family to join you, in return for a donation.

The charity is also campaigning for cancer patients under 60 to be entitled to Cold Weather Payments.

Carnasserie roadworks finally get under way

WORK to widen a single-lane stretch of the A816 at Carnasserie finally got under way on Monday January 11.

Drivers could face delays of up to 20 minutes in getting past the site as work takes place, though contractors will try to keep these to a minimum and avoid peak periods.

The stretch of road, one mile north of Kilmartin village and close to the Ford road junction, has been reduced to one carriage with traffic lights for almost four years, following the collapse of a retaining wall at the side of the road. It will now be widened on the landward side, cutting into the hillside, to allow two-

way traffic to resume. The damaged retaining wall will also be strengthened.

The works are scheduled to last around 10 weeks and will be carried out by George Leslie Ltd.

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, transport spokesman for Argyll and Bute Council, said: 'This section of road has been operating as a single lane for a significant period of time.'

'I am sure that all those who use this road will be delighted as I am that the upgrading is now going ahead, and I look forward to the traffic lights being permanently removed next spring.'



Lochaber College UHI students hand over their donation to Lochaber MRT. Students raise £600 for local good causes

STUDENTS from Lochaber College UHI have raised £600 for local charities during their studies.

First years on the adventure tourism management degree course had to organise an event and put together a sponsored indoor 'bouldering' event in Lochaber Leisure Centre, a ceilidh in the Ben Nevis Inn and a lecture with outdoor adventure specialist Clive Rowland from Nairn.

Combined, the events and raffles held during them raised £600 for local good causes.

By popular vote students chose to divide the cash equally between Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team and the Mallaig branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Both had previously welcomed the group during the course and given first-hand experience of their activities.

Course member Kate MacFarlane and fellow students presented the donation to Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team on a fact-finding visit to its new headquarters at Ben Nevis Estate on Monday.

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Man smashed bus shelter with bottle

A YOUNG Kinlochleven man with a promising career at sea ahead of him smashed a Fort William bus shelter roof with a bottle.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard Nathan McDade, of 1 Lovat Place was 'juggling' the bottle inside the shelter on July 4 last year when it hit the roof, bringing down a cloud of glass splinters.

A young woman received cuts to her leg and needed 11 stitches for her wounds.

McDade, aged 17, admitted culpably and recklessly throwing a glass bottle at the shelter roof next to Morrison's, smashing it to the danger of persons inside and to the injury of the woman. Defending, Hamish Melrose said first offender McDade, currently on a three-year course in marine engineering at Glasgow Technical College, was 'showing off' and his actions were 'not deliberate'.

Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'It was an extremely stupid thing for you to do. The girl might have been more seriously injured than she was. I hope this is the last time you appear in a court, Mr McDade.'

The teenager was fined £300 and ordered to pay £350 compensation to the girl.

At the Belford Hospital accident and

Joint project sees Arisaig Jacobite sign replaced

SIGNS on a plinth next to a Lochaber sea loch depicting the Jacobites' 'last stand' at the last naval engagement in British waters has been replaced, thanks to a joint effort between Arisaig Community Council and a local councillor.

The original sign on the plinth, which stands in a lay by at the Prince's Cairn on the A830 at Loch nan Uamh off the A830 near Arisaig, was badly vandalised over number of years and eventually disappeared altogether.

After Arisaig and District Community Council petitioned their Highland councillors for funding, Councillor Bill Clark took up the request and organised the manufacture and design of the vandal-proof glass fibre replacement.

The community council approved the English and Gaelic text and Felicity Nightingale of Fort William did the artwork.

The full £1,746.28 cost came from the councillors' discretionary budget.

Less than a fortnight after Culloden, two French privateers sailed into the loch carrying arms, gunpowder, brandy and gold.

Armed with muskets, pistols, swords and dirks, more than 400 supporters, largely local Clanranald MacDonalds, occupied the hillsides.

On May 3, three English ships anchored close by to the rocky islands at the head of the loch. After hours of bombardment and casualties on both sides, the English ships retreated.

Despite protests from the MacDonalds, the gold was removed to Loch Arkaig in Lochaber for distribution among the clans.

According to local legend, some remains buried in the hills to this day.

At present the sign has been taken away again to be made more vandal proof.



The new sign on the plinth at Loch nan Uamh.

Group holds talks on energy saving

LOCHABER Environmental Group (LEG) is holding a series of public discussion evenings and events across Lochaber on energy-saving ideas.

LEG gave a presentation to Kentallen Duror Community Council on Tuesday and will follow that with an eco minimalism and school build talk and tour from Samuel Foster of Gaia Architects at Acharacle Primary School tomorrow (Friday) from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Jeff and Alex Forrester of Resipole, Salen, will hold an open day for a viewing of their state-of-the-art 6kw wind turbine on Sunday January 17 from 1pm to 2.30pm. A brief presentation and discussion on Lochaber's domestic renewable energy and the 'Renew' initiative follows at Ballachulish Community Council's meeting in the pavilion on Tuesday January 19 at 7pm. Finally, a film showing of 'The 11th Hour', starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Mikhail Gorbachev and Stephen Hawking, will be given at the Sunart Centre, Strontian, on Saturday January 23 at 7pm.

For more details visit www.lochaber-environmental-group.org.uk/events.asp or call 01397 700090.

Youth scalded drinking companion with boiling water

Three-year sentence for 'barbaric' attack

A FORT William youth who scalded his drinking companion's genitals and body with boiling water from a kettle has been sent to a young offenders' institution for three years.

Sean Hutton, of 10 Douglas Place, sat in the dock with his head bowed as gruesome details of the late night assault emerged.

Hutton, aged 18, had earlier admitted assaulting Anthony Scott by throwing boiling water over his body to his severe injury and permanent disfigurement at Orchy Villa, Alma Road, on October 9 2008.

Mr Scott had been sitting on the toilet with his trousers and shorts down when Hutton forced open the door and began pouring the scalding water over him, Fort William Sheriff Court heard.

The pair were among a group of friends who earlier met up with group of girls, including a 13-year-old, while out to buy more drink. On the way back an argument broke out where Mr Scott challenged Hutton over 'not appropriate' suggestions about the 13-year-old, Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie said. Later in the Villa, Mr Scott asked Hutton to leave. He was in the toilet when Hutton yanked open the door and started 'flicking' him with water from the kettle, which he had heard being boiled seconds earlier.

'He tried to shut the door, but he realised that boiling water had been put over him,' Ms Wylie said. 'It appeared to cover him from the neck down to below his knees, mainly on his left side. He started screaming in pain and the accused ran away.'

Describing the assault as 'truly horrendous and barbaric', Sheriff Douglas Small jailed Hutton for three years, to be followed by two years supervision following his release.

He also ordered Hutton to be detained for a further four months and 26 days for breaches of court compensation and probation orders for offences in 2008.

Asked by one of the girls why he had done what he had, Hutton was reported as claiming the victim 'is a woman beater', said Ms Wylie. 'He did have other burns, but these have healed. Doctors described it as being a painful injury.'

Mr Scott, who had lived in Kinlochleven, had 'not surprisingly' left Fort William immediately to stay with a relative in England. Defence counsel John Slavin said he understood it was the complainant's inappropriate comments about the 13-year-old that were the 'background' to the argument. He said: 'There is nothing that excuses this behaviour. But the remorse he has shown since being taken into remand on December 10 has been genuine.'

Describing the assault as 'truly horrendous and barbaric', Sheriff Douglas Small jailed Hutton for three years, to be followed by two years supervision following his release.

He also ordered Hutton to be detained for a further four months and 26 days for breaches of court compensation and probation orders for offences in 2008.



Sean Hutton is led away to begin his sentence.

10_f03hutton01

Bus driver narrowly avoids losing licence

A FORT William bus driver has narrowly avoided losing his licence after his poor driving caused his bus to hit a bridge parapet.

Ian Cowan, of 6 Angus Crescent, Fort William, admitted driving the bus without due care and attention or with reasonable care for other road users on the A82 at North Road, the A830 and the B8006 at Lochyside on September 7 last year.

Along the way Cowan crossed the centre line of the carriageway, struck the kerb, drove too fast for the road layout and hit the railway bridge at Lochyside, damaging the bus and the bridge. One passenger was slightly injured in the collision.

Fining first offender Cowan £300 and ordering eight penalty points to be placed on his licence, Sheriff Douglas Small told him: 'The manner in which this bus was being driven was extremely alarming to the passengers on board.'

Relief as thaw begins

PUNISHING frosts at last relented in the West Highlands this week, bringing welcome relief for thousands.

Almost four weeks of severe weather saw temperatures down to almost minus 20°C accompanied by continuous snow cover.

Even at Bunree on Loch Linnhe near the Corran Ferry snow was reported lying on 25 consecutive days from December 19, while at Tulloch Bridge the mercury fell as low as minus 17°C.

The slow thaw began on Monday and is expected to continue.

Got a story for **The Oban Times**? Call our reporters on 01631 568000.

The Big Freeze.



Don't get caught out.

With no let-up to the current big freeze, we thought we'd remind you of some simple things you can do to protect your home, yourself and those around you.



If you can't heat all your rooms, make sure you keep your living room warm during the day. Keep your heating on at a low temperature overnight too, so your pipes don't freeze. It also helps to wrap the pipes in your loft or basement with insulation.



Keep yourself warm by wearing lots of thin layers. When you go out, take extra care and wear footwear with a good grip.



If you have to use the car, check the forecast and your fuel and allow extra time for your journey. Put a shovel and a piece of carpet in your boot. (The carpet is for putting under your tyres if you get stuck.) Remember to de-ice your car properly and if the weather's really bad, try not to use the car at all.



Let's all look out for each other. Why not offer assistance to less able neighbours? Do they need their paths cleared or errands run to the shops or chemist? Maybe they just need some company if getting out is a problem. Go on, pop in, say hello.

For more information, phone your local council, see the listing in your local directory or go to scotland.gov.uk/weatherwise



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Kyle of Lochalsh
Your correspondent is Charlie MacRae: 01599 544359

Community council

PLOCKTON and District Community Council met in Plockton Hall on December 8.

Among the items discussed were:

Vandalism: There had been instances of vandalism in the village, all of which had been reported to the police. A residents' watch has still not been formed in the village.

Roads: Complaints had been received about the condition of Harbour Street and it was hoped work promised last May would be done soon.

Railway station: The community council expressed its concern at the general condition of the railway station at Plockton. It was very untidy, platform edges needed repaired and litter from Plockton High School pupils was a major problem. The road to the station also needs repaired.

National Trust: The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) had held a drop-in meeting at Plockton with around 30 people attending. It hopes to improve the path to the coral beach. The NTS had informed the community council of Scottish Water's plans to branch the dam at Loch Lundie and lower the water level by two metres.

Scottish Water had not informed the community council.

Plockton pontoon: Inquiries are to be made to see if the Plockton pontoon presently owned by the community council could be transferred to Plockton Harbour CC.

NHS workshop on February 12: The community council felt strongly that the present facilities in Broadford Hospital should be maintained.

New Burnside houses: It was suggested a letter should be sent to the new tenants of Burnside welcoming them to the community when the houses are allocated later this year.

The next meeting of the community council is on March 1 in Plockton Hall.

Plockton weather

DURING December there were three inches of rain with 9cm of snow falling on December 19.

The warmest day was 10°C

Diamond wedding smiles



Bill and Cathie celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary in Aberdeen.

FORMER Oban couple Bill and Cathie Peoples recently celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary.

Friends and family joined the couple at the Marcliffe Hotel at Culz in Aberdeen, where they now live, to celebrate 60 years of marriage.

The couple's son Jim, daughter-in-law and children from North Berwick and daughter, son-in-law and children from Nottingham all reunited for the party.

Among the guests were family friends from Taynuilt, Campbell and Florence Anderson and Jean and John Reid.

Cathie from Taynuilt and Bill, originally from Dumbarton, married in Oban on January 11 1950.

The couple left Oban in 1959 when Bill, who worked as an insurance agent in the area, was promoted to a regional manager in Aberdeen.

and coldest day was -4°C. During 2009 Plockton had 64 inches of rain compared with 72 inches in 2008. Fort William had 88 inches in 2009.

Party fun

ON DECEMBER 23, 31 children enjoyed a Christmas party in Plockton Hall.

Services stopped for three months

LOCHALSH Church of Scotland have stopped their services in Plockton and Kirkton for the months of January, February and March to save on expenses.



Bill and Cathie on their wedding day.

Prize draw

THE ANNUAL Christmas prize draw held in Plockton Hotel took place on Christmas eve.

First prize of £300 was won by Morag Amos and second prize of a Nintendo Wii was won by octogenarian Seonaid MacKenzie.

New Year celebrations

ON NEW Year's Eve, large crowds gathered at Plockton carpark to watch the bonfire being lit on the island by rockets from the shore and then enjoyed the fireworks display. A dance followed in Plockton Hall organised by Mr and Mrs Terry Heaviside which raised £1,600 for Computers for Africa.

Lochaline
Your correspondent is Alistair Scouler: 01967 421285

Achabeag future

THERE was a lively and frank exchange of views at a recent meeting in Lochaline hall to discuss what the estate hopes will be a major township two miles west of Lochaline at Achabeag.

The chairman, Hugh Raven of Ardtornish Estate, welcomed 34 people and went on to summarise the consultation process that had been going on between Ardtornish Estate and the local community since 2001 concerning the provision of land for housing in Morvern.

This had culminated in the present proposal to develop the Achabeag township.

Sally Semple, the architect, stated that because there were no outstanding public objections following public consultation, the current outline design had been accepted by the planners in the draft local plan, so Achabeag is deemed to be in the local plan and will not feature in the public enquiry into the Draft Local Plan for Lochaber which is scheduled to take place early in 2010.

The architect continued by describing the site and how the development would be phased. In all, the design consisted of 15 detached houses for sale, four terraced and two detached affordable houses, and a commercial unit and two community shelters.

When asked: 'What is an affordable home?', Hugh Raven stated that he had read the Highland Council guidelines and found them hard to understand. When queried about the community shelters, he replied that they would be of basic wooden structure for an as yet unspecified use.

It was suggested that the development would turn out to be nothing more than two 'Kirk Braes', with electric lighting and Tarmac running the rural aspect.

Hugh Raven countered this by quoting a Scottish Government Planning Advisory Note which advises against the use of street lighting and Tarmac wherever possible in rural areas.

The chairman was reminded: 'Morvern is a wilderness area and shouldn't it be kept that way? Do we really need to have more people in Morvern?'

But he disagreed strongly with this assertion by citing the 2001 census which showed that among all the wards in Lochaber, the Ardnamurchan and Morvern ward was the only one to have seen a population increase. But within these areas, while all centres of population, even smaller locations like Laga and Kingairloch had increased in size, the population of Lochaline had decreased by seven to eight per cent, so, he stated: 'It is therefore

of the highest importance to reverse this trend by bringing more people to live and work in Morvern.'

Morvern Heritage Society

THE MAIN feature of Morvern Heritage Society's last meeting of the year in Lochaline Hall was an illustrated talk by society member Brian Mullins entitled: 'My Stroll Round the Morvern Coast', which he accomplished over a six day period in early April.

The 59-year-old plumber and artist is an experienced mountaineer having conquered all of Scotland's 284 Munros and more than 160 of the Corbetts but, be that as it may, he stated that the Garbh Shlios area above Loch Linne in south east Morvern, which he reached on the fifth day, was, in his opinion, the roughest ground in Britain.

But he was well compensated for this when he reached the summit of Glais Bheinn with its remarkable views to Ben Nevis in the north east, round to Ben Cruachan and Ben Starav in the east, Colonsay, Jura and Arran to the south, and to the north west, the summits of the highest hills in the southern Western Isles, Skye and the Small Isles.

Brian Mullin's sponsored walk raised £2,000 for the Maggie's Cancer Care group in gratitude for the care and kindness that his partner Vicki received following her successful treatment for breast cancer.

Hugh Raven countered this by quoting a Scottish Government Planning Advisory Note which advises against the use of street lighting and Tarmac wherever possible in rural areas.

In all, from Morvern's adult population of around 320, this makes a total of £6,969 raised in 2009 for various cancer charities.

Islay
Your correspondent is Susan Campbell: 01496 850215

Frozen Islay

THE OLD country saying, 'as the days grow longer, the cold grows stronger' certainly has held true since Christmas on Islay.

While Islay often has a few days of frost and still weather, usually it's a relief to get such weather as a

break from wind and rain. Unusually, the freezing temperatures have been here for a fortnight at time of writing, with no respite from the cold in the immediate weather forecast.

While some snow has fallen, it has mainly been the effects of sleet or hail showers falling on already frozen ground which has caused icy conditions on Islay's roads.

Argyll and Bute Council has been sending gritting lorries out to keep the main roads which link the ferry ports and villages passable, but the island's rural roads have largely been left ungritted. Some people in the country areas of Islay have been unable to drive safely to reach the main roads, leaving people housebound for a week or more.

It's a good idea to keep the store cupboard well stocked at this time of year. Now that the schools have

gone back for the new term, road gritting has increased to allow buses to safely transport pupils.

Gaelic choir rehearsals

CÓISIR Ghàidhlig Ìle, Islay's senior Gaelic choir, with Iseabail Mactaggart, conductor, is due to restart weekly choir rehearsals today (Thursday) at Bowmore Village Hall.

Ladies' and men's choirs will also restart practice on Thursday evenings.

New members are welcome, and this is a great time to join as everyone will be starting together to learn this year's Mod pieces and other Gaelic songs.

Music and Gaelic tuition is given at every rehearsal and practice CDs will be provided. For further information, contact the choir secretary on 01496 850537.

Concert celebrates ten years of course

A CONCERT will be held later this month in Glasgow to celebrate the tenth anniversary of a unique music course based in the Outer Hebrides.

The achievements of the Traditional Music and Gaelic course run by Lewis Castle College UHI in its Benbecula campus will be celebrated in a concert bringing together around 50 staff, students, former students and top traditional musicians on January 29 in St Andrews on the Square.

The performers will form two ensembles and two choirs in what promises to be a lively showcase for their own compositions and a highlight of the Celtic Connections festival.

The course, run at FE and HNC level, is unique in combining the teaching of traditional music and recording techniques with Gaelic, and has been responsible for developing and launching a steady stream of musicians and composers into the music world from its earliest days.

Originally set up as an opportunity for local people to build on the success and interest generated by South Uist's music and summer school Ceolas, the course quickly earned an international reputation, attracting students from all quarters of the globe.

Dr Will Lamb is a founding tutor and FE course leader. He is an expert in sound engineering; a musician; and distinguished academic

in linguistics, Celtic studies and Gaelic.

Dr Lamb said: 'The course really punches above its weight. It produces a high number of students who go on to the Traditional Music course at Strathclyde University, and we get very positive feedback about their level of skill.'

Anna Wendy Stevenson, one of the course's music lecturers, said: 'It is great to see people who have never composed before composing good music. We see ourselves as facilitating good musicianship rather than imposing any particular ethos.'

Other in-house course tutors include top piper and artistic director of Ceolas Iain MacDonald and Kenna Moffat of South Uist, Gaelic teacher and consultant on the history, folklore and culture of the Highlands and Islands.

Former students of the course include current nominee for BBC traditional music best up and coming musician Matheu Watson who at 19 has already toured 88 countries with the Fred Morrison band and plans to come to Uist to record his first album this year; BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year finalist James MacKenzie; Skippinish piper Seonaidh MacIntyre and many MOD gold medallists in all areas.

Tickets for the concert are available from the Celtic Connections site or the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow.

Alistair calls it a day after 31 years

TARBERT Loch Fyne man Alistair Kernahan, one of Caledonian MacBrayne's longest serving officers, retired from the MV Hebridean Isles on Wednesday January 6 at Kennacraig.

Over 31 years, Alastair worked on many vessels and routes but is particularly well-known to travellers to Islay, Colonsay and the Small Isles.

He has enjoyed his life at sea and is known to many of the regular customers as a personal friend. He is pictured signing off ship's articles as he retires, with the good wishes of all his colleagues afloat and ashore for a long and happy retirement with his wife Cathy.

Send your district news to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Around the Rurals

Taynuilt

PRESIDENT Jessie Servant welcomed 20 members of the Taynuilt branch of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute (SWRI) to the annual Christmas dinner in the Taynuilt Hotel on December 16.

A delicious meal was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and thanks go to the hotel staff for making everyone so welcome.

Thanks also to Campbell Anderson for playing Christmas music.

A whist drive in Taynuilt Village Hall, organised by Taynuilt SWRI on December 11, raised £125 for branch funds.

Kilmore

THIS year's festive celebrations were in two parts. First there was a visit to a pantomime - Robin Hood and Babes in the Wood.

Then, on December 10, there was a party with games, good food and a visit from Santa who had a present for everyone. A lovely time was had by everyone.



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Members of Argyll Youth Theatre who performed in The Highland Famine. 07_103youth01

History of Mull comes alive at Corran Halls

SMALL but appreciative audiences made the effort to go to Argyll Youth Theatre's production of Willie Orr of Benderloch's play The Highland Famine.

Clearances

The play was to have been performed for three nights at the Corran Halls in Oban but because of a lack of ticket sales last Thursday, this was turned into a further dress rehearsal with a special audience.

Keith MacKeanie and his daughter, Freya, from North Connel had come to see the play because of Keith's connection to the story set in the now-deserted township of Shiba on the Ross of Mull.

The township emptied following the Highland potato famine in the late 1840s, early

1850s, which led to rent arrears escalating, evictions and many of the population emigrating to Canada.

Keith still has a letter his great-great-great grandfather, Neil MacDonald, aged 99, wrote petitioning the then Duke of Argyll to grant him to stay on as a tenant after 60 years of faithfully paying his rent.

'He wrote the letter on June 1 1847 but he was evicted and died in November 1847,' said Keith, adding that he was intrigued to see the play but had not been able to return on the Friday or Saturday.

'The play was factually accurate,' said Keith, who knows former Oban High School history teacher, actor and playwright Willie Orr.

'He even brought in Factor Mor; children a generation older than me used to be told that Factor Mor was coming to get them if they didn't behave, instead of the Bogeyman.'

Wealth of talent

Willie, a shepherd at one time on the Ross of Mull, told *The Oban Times* that he had written the play for a group of youngsters he was working with while at Oban High School having done some research for Tom Devine's book *The Great Highland Famine*.

He had completed the play after retiring from the high school in 2005.

'I had originally thought of doing it with adults but gave the script to Gwyneth [Neal] to read and she asked if the young people could do it,' he said.

A former professional actor himself, Willie helped with some of the acting direction.

'The core of youths at the youth theatre have a wealth of talent,' he said, adding that he was very pleased with their performance of his play, which received very positive and warm feedback from the audiences.

Gwyneth, who runs Argyll Youth Theatre, said around 25 of the group started rehearsing the play in September, with junior members singing at the start.

She thanked all those who helped behind the scenes, including Pauline Carson for the music, Sandra Owens, Marlene MacDonald, Jane Carson, Danielle Hay, Nicola O'Brien and Heather Irvine.

Old pipes to be aired at Netherlorn recital

A SET of bagpipes will be played for the first time in around 40 years at the first Netherlorn Piping Society recital of the year.

Oban Pipe Band pipe major Euan Dewar has been given the honour of playing the pipes at the recital, one of the society's monthly club nights, next Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls.

In what is a first for the society the programme is open to anyone who wants to play, as well as confirmed performances from experienced pipers, such as Angus MacColl.

An Tobar moves for a night

MULL venue An Tobar is moving, but only for one night, to the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow.

Head line performer Colin MacIntyre will be playing on Tuesday January 19 during the An Tobar Sessions in the prestigious Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

Joining Colin on stage will be protégés of the Tobermory centre: Aidan O'Rourke and the David Milligan Trio with music originally recorded and performed on Mull.



A large local cast will perform Rumpelstiltskin in this year's Taynuilt village panto. The performance by Taynuilt and District Drama Society (TADDS) will be on January 21, 22 and 23 in the village hall. In a twist on the traditional tale, boastful dressmaker Bess Dress makes an exaggerated claim that her daughter, Iona, can spin straw into gold and so the poor girl finds herself thrown into prison to either spin gold for the greedy Queen Lottie or else be executed. Faced with such an impossible task Iona has no choice but to accept help from an evil magician and in return promises him whatever he asks. Tickets for the panto are on sale in Taynuilt Post Office.

Skipinnish rounds off big year at Celtic Connections

THE DYNAMIC duo, Skipinnish, will top a year of celebrations with a 10-year anniversary concert at top music festival Celtic Connections later this month.

Andrew Stevenson from Achinacarry and Angus MacPhail from the Isle of Tiree, first formed Skipinnish in 1999, and in the following 10 years have had great success, not only as an award winning ceilidh band, but

also as a record company, and most recently with their music venue, the Skipinnish Ceilidh House in Oban.

Skipinnish has celebrated its 10th year by releasing a fourth album 'Live from the Ceilidh House', creating its own whisky, and hosting a black tie celebration in the Ceilidh House. The concert takes place on Sunday, January 24 at the ABC theatre on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street

and will feature Skipinnish with some very special guests. Joining the duo will be a top line up of artistes on the Skipinnish Records label, fiddle virtuoso Archie McAllister, Gaelic singers, Rachel Walker and James Graham and award winning celtic folk/rock group Skerryvore.

Tickets are available from the Celtic Connections website www.celticconnections.com.

OBAN MUSIC SOCIETY CONCERT 18th JANUARY
On Monday 18th January the

Amadeus Duo

will be playing at the Glencruitten Church Centre. Margaret Preston (Flute) and Alina Bzhezhinska (Harp) will be playing music by Chopin, Debussy, Liebermann and others as well as their own arrangements of Scottish traditional tunes. The concert starts at 7.30 pm and tickets are available at the door for non-members - £8 and £7 for concessions. Children and students are free.

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Corran Halls, Oban
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7.30pm

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7.30pm

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Oban Music Society starts year in style

ON MONDAY, January 18 Oban Music Society welcomes Margaret Preston and Alina Bzhezhinska for the first concert of the year.

Scottish composers

The pair have had a busy season performing an eclectic mix of both classical and new works by Scottish composers.

Margaret was educated at Aberdeen University and then moved to Trinity College London to study the flute under William Bennett and Lenore Smith giving concerts in the prestigious Wigmore Hall and Purcell Rooms. She now plays with a number of groups such as the Aberdeen Sinfonietta and the Yggdrasil Quartet.

Their programme in Oban includes works by Chopin, Debussy, Oswald, Liebermann and Lutoslawski as well as a selection of traditional Scottish tunes arranged by themselves.

The concert is at 7.30pm in the Glencruitten Church Centre and non members of the society are very welcome.

Alinaisaninternational



what's on

Various >

Ballet West Classes
Tel: 01866 822641

Ballet, Jazz Body conditioning

Various >

Kundalini Yoga
Energie Fitness
Tel: 01852 300174 for details

Kundalini Yoga

Mondays >

Pilates
Rockfield Primary Campus
6.30pm

Pilates

Mondays & Wednesdays >

Pilates
Energie Health & Fitness Club
Monday 11am / Wednesday 7pm

Pilates

Thursdays >

Beginners Tai Chi
Church of Scotland Centre
7.45pm Tel: 01852 500361

Beginners Tai Chi

Saturdays >

Gymnastics with Nikki
Oban Primary Campus - Suitable for all ages 12-4pm
tel: 01631 770656 or 01355 904714

Gymnastics with Nikki

Thursday 14 January >

Beginners Tai Chi
Church of Scotland Centre
7.45 - 9.15 pm
Glencruitten Road

Beginners Tai Chi

January 29 & 30 >

Ballet West
Corran Halls
Nutcracker

Ballet West

January 18 >

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Amadeus Duo



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TODAY!

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APPIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY THE 51ST HIGHLANDERS:

Dr. Iain McNicol

Saturday 16 January

Port Appin Hall 2.30pm

www.appinhistoricalsociety.co.uk

Reg. Scottish Charity

No. SC029411

Netherlorn Piping Society CLUB NIGHT

(Come along and enjoy performances by top local pipers)

Argyllshire Gathering Halls

Wednesday 20th January 2010

7.30pm

Adm: - Adults £3 Children - Free

All proceeds go towards development of piping in Oban & Lorn.

LORN GARDEN CLUB

Join us for our January meeting

And enjoy a talk by David Croucher entitled

A HISTORY OF RHS WISLEY GARDEN

Lorn Resource Centre

Sorbo Road, Oban

Tuesday 19th January

7.15 for 7.30

followed by refreshments.

All Welcome

OPERA RECITAL SEIL ISLAND HALL

With former Scottish Opera Soprano

Ann Archibald and guests

7.30pm Saturday 13th February

Admission £10

For tickets and further information

Tel: 01852 300573

All proceeds to Hall play area

An Communn Gaidhealaich MEUR CHRUACHAIN (Cruiachan Branch)

4th Winter CEILIDH

Saturday, 16 January in Taynuilt Village Hall at 7.45pm

Piper Eric Law, Folk Group Gleuda with singers Donnie MacKenzie, Alison Lamonty, Catriona Laird, John Oswald, & Jim Hanson; Deirdre MacDonald - Fiddle; Robert Robertson - Accordion; Jake Mackay - Mouthorgan; Eilidh MacInnes Dancers; Fean Taighe: Cameron Fletcher.

Admission £3; (£2 for Members & Children 5-16 yrs) including Tea.

Warm Welcome Extended to All (Funds collected promote

The Gaelic Language, Music and Culture)

www.thehighlandtheatre.co.uk for full listings and future presentations

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The Highland Theatre

George Street, Oban, PA34 5NX - Box Office: 01631 562444

From Friday 15th January

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Cert 15 120 min

DAILY 6.00, 8.45

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Cert 12A 128min

DAILY 8.30

ST TRINIAN'S 2 THE LEGEND OF FRITTON'S GOLD</h

The Oban Times

& West Highland Times

A tangled web of e-credit

RECENT high-profile business collapses, such as the clothing retailer D2, book store Borders and Edinburgh-based holiday company Globespan, have illustrated how fragile certain sections of the Scottish economy really are.

It appears that a thin web of credit supports a multi-million pound business jigsaw which is highly dependant on each piece supporting the other.

In the case of Globespan it also highlighted how dependant some frontline companies are on a network of service providers. Therefore, as again brought sharply into focus by the Globespan collapse mid-December, the company that you give your hard-earned cash to, may not be the same organisation that you are actually purchasing from.

Globespan went under being owed £35million by online transactions firm E-Clear yet the real losers were an estimated 3,400 holidaymakers left stranded and more than 550 people made redundant at the company's headquarters in Edinburgh plus its grounded airline FlyGlobespan.

E-Clear are currently being sued by administrators for the failed airline and a High Court in London has given the firm until the end of this week to show it can access money it withheld. E-Clear have to provide evidence it had access to the £35m.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) which was appointed as administrators of Globespan is seeking an order against E-Clear that would put it into administration.

As online sales play in increasingly important role in the nation's commerce perhaps the financial web that supports e-commerce needs to be strengthened and regulated before the collapse of businesses, like Globespan, becomes common.

Glasgow Letter

Cold start to 2010

YOU KNOW how cold it is and how difficult it is to get about when local Highland associations cancel their functions.

Often in this column I have commented on how hardy those who attend ceilidhs in Clydebank are but this recent severely cold spell was even too much for them!

It also resulted in the cancellation of the Glasgow Skye's family ceilidh which was due to be held on the same weekend.

One can only sympathise with the secretaries who spend huge amounts of time organising such events and then have to spend just as much time notifying of its cancellation.

One event which did survive the conditions was the ever successful and popular Highland Ball run by Comunn Taobh an Iar in Milngavie Town Hall.

As might be expected the number attending was slightly down on last year, but a crowd of about 130 enjoyed an excellent buffet together with ceilidh dancing to John Carmichael's Band and songs from Janet Campbell who fortunately managed to make the journey from Mull.

Pipers for the evening were Graham Richardson and James MacLean.

Gaelic classes

GLASGOW City Council's Culture and Sport Gaelic classes will resume in Sgoil Ghaidhlig Glaschu on Monday January 18.

Last term the 40 learners made up eight classes and while they will all move on to the next level another 30 have expressed interest in starting.

The classes are free to all residents of Glasgow and to parents of children attending Gaelic Medium education.

For further information contact eddy.cavin@csglasgow.org.uk or telephone 0141 276 1525 or 07919 014612.

A few weeks ago I also mentioned that Altram was hoping to set up Gaelic classes in Glasgow with a view to introducing children to the language as early as possible.

These classes would therefore be suitable for

adults, both learners and speakers, who are likely to be involved with very young children.

For more information contact finlay@cnsa.org.uk or telephone Finlay MacLeod 01542 836322 or Catherine 0141 226 5222.

Scots' Night

THE SCOTS' Night run by the Women's Guild in St Columba's Church will take place on Monday January 25 at 7.30pm.

There will be traditional fayre followed by a ceilidh.

Diary dates

Thursday January 14: Celtic Connections, Opening Concert, Royal Concert Hall, 7.30pm.

Friday January 15: Blair Douglas and the Outside Track, Oran Mor, 7.30pm. Perth Gaelic Society ceilidh, St Matthew's Church Hall, Tay Street, 7.30pm.

Saturday January 16: Stirling branch of An Comunn Gaidhealach ceilidh, Lesser Albert Halls, 7.30pm. Skye Night with Arthur Cormack and friends, St Andrew's in the Square, 7.30pm. Clann Gaidhlig ceilidh, Community Centre, Bishopston, 7.30pm. Highlander's Club, Partick Burgh Hall, 7.30pm, Charlie Kirkpatrick's Band, Bodega, City Halls, Recital Room, 8pm. West Highland Safari, Tron Theatre, 8pm.

Thursday January 21: Maggie MacInnes and James Graham Trio, St Andrew's in the Square, 7.30pm. Ceol's Craic, Centre for the Contemporary Arts (CCA), 8.30pm.

Friday January 22: Glasgow Uist and Barra Association, New Year Dance, Glasgow University Union, 9pm to 1am. Ceol's Craic, CCA, 8.30pm.

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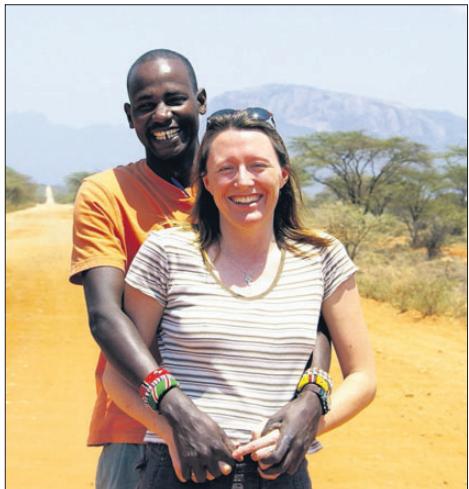
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Daring Kenyan adventure for Argyll woman



How one Ardfearn woman ended up living in the Kenyan bush, helping small villages out of poverty through the development charity she runs with her Maasai husband

EMMA Redfern was as shocked as anyone to find herself living in a village in the Kenyan bush, walking miles to collect water, milking goats and with a Maasai husband, Lipan Kitonga.

'This is a woman who only months before was wearing a very nice suit from somewhere expensive and had a very nice haircut and ordered my food from wherever,' she said. 'And now I'm sitting in a dark, smoky hut.'

Pastoralists

Sitting around a fire on a cold day in Ardfearn, Mid Argyll, she talks about the charity that she and Kitonga have set up in rural Kenya. He is feeling the cold and has covered his traditional bright red robes with a fleece. 'I was raised in normal Maasai house, a cow dung house with livestock,' he said. 'My own community is pastoralist. We keep livestock and move around.'

After spending her teenage years in Ardfearn, where her family still

live, Emma became a successful businesswoman in Edinburgh, running her own online marketing company. Though she spent her spare time volunteering, Emma felt she wanted to be doing something more. A study trip to Il Ngwesi in the northern Kenyan bush – her first time in a third world country – introduced her to her husband-to-be and a new way to help small, rural communities.

'I was doing game drives and guiding people on walks, and that's how we met,' recalled Kitonga. He had been involved in setting up Il Ngwesi tourist eco-lodge and Walking Wild safaris – companies that villagers had a stake in. The profits have gone back to the community, which chose to spend them on education, water projects, a cow dip, increasing wildlife security and supporting tiny businesses run by women and young people.

It's worth emphasising that these people fall into the bracket of some of the poorest people anywhere in

the world,' said Emma. 'If anybody got a dollar a day they would be pleased. They still live in traditional mud huts, there's no electricity, no water. They haven't got savings in the bank. That's not to say their traditional lifestyle isn't good and healthy, but there are too many people and too little land and they do need to start thinking of different ways of doing things.'

Business development

The pair saw the experience of Il Ngwesi and thought their own business expertise could help other villages to change their fortunes, by focusing on small businesses rather than charity. So the DARE Foundation was born – Development Assistance for Rural Enterprise. They believe the rural communities they work with have skills and ideas to develop small projects bringing income into their villages, but need advice and support to unlock them. Emma's example is tourism, one of the main economic opportunities around

northern Kenya's national parks. 'But if you've never been on holiday, it's very difficult to know how to do it,' she said.

There are no short-term programmes, but DARE works slowly and painstakingly to build up a relationship with communities. The support is tailor-made to what local people want to do and their level of experience.

The first community they helped, a rural settlement in the Isiolo district, set up a cultural village, showing visitors traditional Maasai crafts, homes and food. Once the people gained confidence from the success of this project, they took on bee-keeping, guided safari walks and growing aloe vera for sale. The businesses provided jobs and an income for villagers, as well as funding increased security and a pre-school so young children can get an education without having to walk two hours per day through dangerous bush.

Despite their combined

experience, Emma and Kitonga know they don't always have all the answers: 'One of the things we do is bring communities together. If at all possible, we avoid us being the ones standing there lecturing,' said Emma. Kitonga added that sometimes villagers were sceptical at first, because they had seen different charities come and go, but they soon realise DARE is different.

However, they cannot simply think about enterprise in isolation. 'If a woman is spending most of her day walking 15, 20 miles to get water and bring it back, she doesn't have the time to run a business,' said Emma. 'If people are fighting, if people are terrified that their livestock, their children, their families are in danger, if they are constantly having to move because of insecurity, they can't focus on long term plans for the future.' They recognise these pressures and help address basic needs too.

While life is very different

for Emma now, she wouldn't

go back. 'I'm much happier. My life now can also be very stressful but it seems to be in a much more worthwhile way,' she said.

'When we are here and we go out with my western friends, we are a western couple. When we go back to the village, we are a traditional couple. I wear all the dress and the beads and I don't say anything rude to my husband,' she added

with a slight twinkle in her eye. 'I do my absolute best to fit in.'

Pleasure and privilege

The village has welcomed her as one of them, though she does admit she hasn't mastered all the skills essential to a traditional Maasai wife. 'There's a very particular way of catching a goat and holding on to it and milking it and I couldn't even catch it,' she said, remembering

her first months in the village. 'These women were falling around laughing as I was attempting to hold on to a goat.'

'But they are very generous and supportive of me. They very much include me and don't treat me like some guest. It has been a great pleasure and a real privilege. I don't know how many people get to be absorbed into a community like that.'



When Emma is in the Maasai village, she tries her best to fit in.



Left - A cultural exchange which DARE set up so two rural communities could share their experiences.



Right - Emma meets with a women's basket weaving group. DARE supports small businesses like this to create alternative incomes for villages.

For more information about the DARE Foundation, or to make a donation, visit www.darefoundation.com. The Isiolo pre-school project is looking for education materials for children under seven, including books, art materials and musical instruments. Items can be left in Ardfearn for shipping to Kenya; contact Emma on emma@darefoundation.com for details.

30 Years Ago

Those Were The Days
The Oban Times



Thursday 10 January 1980

Kilchoan fears ferry axe
A village was this week fighting to prevent its way of life being axed.

Caledonian MacBrayne plan to cut the Mingary to Tobermory ferry service which connects the isolated village of Kilchoan with Mull.

At a meeting on Monday night the local community council took a decision to find a compromise. Feeling is running high in the area over the proposed axing of the service which is thought to be the final straw for the village with an already poor provision for communications.

At present the villagers who have their own transport are the only ones able to make the journey to Fort William, 73 miles away, and return the same day. Those relying on public transport have to stay overnight in the town. Many villagers prefer to make the five mile crossing to Tobermory for their shopping since Kilchoan itself has only one shop.

Caledonian MacBrayne claim that the service is uneconomical and want to close it, while villagers claim and

closure would be 'a disaster' for the community.

Barra airstrip fears

Some concern has been expressed by Loganair over the deterioration of the Traigh Mhor, Barra, which serves as an airstrip for the island. For some time the beach has been changing, mainly due to the extraction of shell outside the landing area.

They commissioned a survey of the beach by Professor G Barrow, Strathclyde University, which showed that there had been considerable changes to the beach geography since a previous survey by him in 1965.

Communities to meet

over Oban - Connel road

Further developments in the campaign for safety measures on the Oban-Dunbeg road may result from a meeting of four community councils this month. The joint meeting was revealed at Oban Community Council on Monday night.

The campaign was launched last year after a series of accidents. In a head-on collision in July three people died.

Dunbeg Community Council set the ball rolling by asking Strathclyde Police for accident statistics. They have not been forthcoming, however, and the Chief Constable has advised the council to write to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Argyll MP John MacKay has also been involved in the issue.

On Monday, the Oban council heard that their counterparts in Connel and Taynuilt are keen to add their voices and a combined meeting of the community councils is being set up.

Mull Mod to be open

At a recent meeting of the Mull Provincial Mod Committee it was decided that this mod, which has hitherto been confined to natives of Mull, Tiree and Coll, should now be open to all competitors. This decision was arrived at because of the interest shown in the mod by people outside the mod area, and the relative lack of interest within the area during the past few years - a position in no small way attributed to the lack of a Gaelic teacher in the island's primary schools.

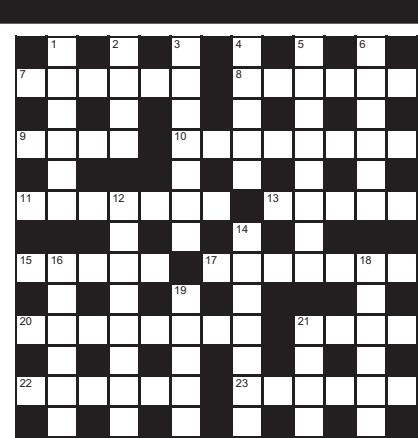
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

Across

- 7 Transpire (6)
- 8 Thicket (6)
- 9 Lip movement (4)
- 10 Sacrifice (8)
- 11 Not written by hand (7)
- 13 How to add after copy (5)
- 15 Drench (5)
- 17 Thin and slippery (3-4)
- 20 Assets (8)
- 21 Deposit (4)
- 22 Foot protector (6)
- 23 Say it! (6)

Down

- 1 Personify (6)
- 2 Confound (4)
- 3 Given a sign (7)
- 4 Song altered tree round Sunday start? (5)
- 5 Hanging on this at the rear (8)
- 6 Barely make (3,3)
- 12 Settle snugly (8)
- 14 Take advantage of (7)
- 16 Feral feline (6)
- 18 Take one away (6)
- 19 Pussyfooted (5)
- 21 Instrument made from turtle shell (4)



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Crofters Commission to take hard line on absentee crofters

THE PROBLEMS of absenteeism and neglect of croft land will be tackled head on this year through direct action say the Crofters Commission.

Drew Ratter Convenor of the Crofters Commission said: "Commissioners take

'We are taking a strong line on regulatory issues and will be robust in dealing with the challenges which will arise from the absentee action.'

With absenteeism running at 10 per cent and increasing numbers applying to remove land from croft tenure, Envi-

ronment Minister Roseanna Cunningham has endorsed the initiative.

Ms Cunningham said: "Crofting is a vital part of Scotland's social, geographical and cultural make-up yet its very existence is under threat. Nine out of ten re-

spondents to the recent consultation on crofting reform cited absenteeism as the most important problem faced.

"Without people living and working the land the full value in terms of economic, environmental and social benefits crofting could potentially bring to communities is not being met.

'The Crofters (Scotland) Act requires the Commission to consider all the circumstances of absentee cases, including the general interest of the crofting community. 'I have asked Commis-

sioners to conclude cases of absenteeism that have existed for 10 years or more. This will ensure we focus resources on resolving those long outstanding cases first. The crofting community as a whole will benefit from this direct action.'

From monarch to mongrel of the glens

'It is possible that a new type of deer with new ecological impacts will emerge,' warns Professor

DEER in Kintyre may soon be among the first in Scotland to be known as the 'Mongrel of the Glens' rather than the 'Monarch of the Glens' title the majestic red deer stag has enjoyed for generations.

Mixed breeds
Scotland's wild red deer are changing shape due to breeding with a foreign species and a new study, which was based in Kintyre, has found that 40 per cent of the deer in certain areas of Scotland are of mixed breeding.

'The new finding is a concern because

intermediate-sized animals may not be so choosy who they mate with, leading to further hybridisation,' says Professor Josephine Pemberton from the University of Edinburgh, head of the laboratory which undertook the research.

Professor Pemberton said that the change in size may affect the species' ecology, for example what each eats and when females breed.

'It is possible that a new type of deer with new ecological impacts will emerge,' warns Professor Pemberton.

'To date, it has not been clear what the practical effects of hybridisation on Scottish red deer are,' she said.

Mongrel

'Our research fills this gap in knowledge and suggests that 'the mongrel of the glens' is a real possibility.'

Researchers previously found Japanese Sika deer, brought to Scotland in the 19th Century, have bred extensively with native deer, but it was unclear then how crossbreeding would affect the species. Now, research by some of the same scientists clearly shows that hybridisation is causing the native red deer to become smaller and sika deer to grow larger.

The study, published in the Journal of Animal Ecology, was carried out on the Kintyre Peninsula by a international team of researchers from Scotland, New Zealand and Australia.

Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) occur in many of the habitats in Scotland that the native red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) populate.

Although it was already known that sika crossbred with red deer, it was thought the overall impact on the native species was low.

The two species differ greatly in appearance: red deer are larger than sika,

usually standing 30cm taller at the shoulder and are, as the name suggests, predominantly reddish brown in colour.

Red deer stags can also grow antlers with 12 points or more but sika antlers rarely exceed eight points.

Despite the fact that sika are smaller in size, the two species can mate giving birth to hybrids that are fertile.

These hybrids are at present a rare occurrence, with scientists estimating that between 0.01 to 0.02 per cent of deer in most areas where the species overlap are hybrids.

However, it has been found that in some areas as many as 40 per cent of deer are of mixed breed.

Researchers fear such crossbreeding may permanently alter wild deer on Scotland's mainland.

Scientists used genetic analyses and measurements of deer anatomy to obtain their results and the new data reveals for the first time that hybridisation is causing a decrease in weight for red-like hybrid females, and an increase in weight for sika-like female and male deer.

'Red-like' and 'sika-like' deer are considered to be red or sika deer respectively, but at some point in their ancestry have crossbred showing traces of hybridisation in their genes.

It is also changing the shape of the jaws of both variants.

It is possible that a new type of deer with new ecological impacts will emerge.

Legislation already exists to protect the red deer on many of Scotland's islands from crossbreeding with sika deer, but mainland red deer remain at risk.

Even though the hybrid deer may not gain any selective advantage from being a crossbreed, hybridisation may continue, researchers warn.

Kintyre prime stock sells well at UA Stirling

UNITED Auctions sold 4,714 prime sheep including 3,707 hoggs and 1,007 ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday with sheep from Kintyre fetching high rates.

Texel hoggs from Kinneil Mill sold to £108, and to 240p per kilo from Longfaulds.

Cheviots from Kilcrogall sold to £93.50 and 234p per kilo with Mules from Glenelgervie selling to £93 and to 221p per kilo from Gartvaugh.

Texel ewes from Oatfield sold to £160 with Mules from Whitehouse to £129.

Blackface ewes Dyke and Gibbsley sold to £85.

Prime lamb trade rises 7p per kilo at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 70 prime cattle and 415 prime sheep at Dingwall last Tuesday.

Prime bullocks averaged 169.1p (-1.2p) and sold to 180p per kg for a 560kg Limousin cross from Mid Craggach, Kirkhill, and £1,232.25 for a 775kg South Devon cross from Drummond, Evanston.

Prime heifers averaged 173.3p (+2.1p) and sold to 188p per kg for a 550kg Charolais cross from Easter Strath, Killen, to Fraser Brother Butchers, Dingwall and £1,194.60 for a 660kg Limousin cross from Woodend, Killearnan.

Old season lambs averaged 195.9p (+7.2p) and sold to 217.6p per kg for 34kg Texel crosses from Dunain Mains, Inverness, and £94.00 for a 44.5kg Texel crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge to Green Fine Meats, Grantown.



Inter-breeding with a foreign species may alter the characteristics of native red deer

Clock is ticking on crofting reform consultation

'Scotland's crofting communities deserve workable and sensible laws' - Maureen Watt, MSP

THE PUBLIC has until February 4 to comment on the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced to the Scottish Parliament at the end of last year.

The Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs and Environment Committee is seeking views on the general principles of the bill.

The Scottish Government has produced a policy memorandum to accompany the Bill stating there is 'widespread concern that crofting is in decline as a consequence of persistently high levels of absenteeism, growing levels of neglect and the continuing removal and development of land from crofting tenure'.

The Bill's intentions include changing the constitution of the Crofters Commission to make it more representative of, and accountable to, the people it regulates and to give it greater flexibility to develop regulatory policy; the creating of a new Crofting Register to replace the existing Register of Crofts, which will be the responsibility of the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland; the establishment of a new process for addressing absenteeism and neglect on croft land, placing a duty on the commission to take action in respect of absenteeism and neglect by both tenant and owner-occupier crofters; and changing the grounds on which the Commission may reject an application to decroft.

Committee Convenor Maureen Watt, MSP said: 'Scotland's crofting communities deserve workable and sensible laws that are capable of meeting 21st century challenges. Our role will be to scrutinise the Bill carefully to discover whether it fulfils that role.'

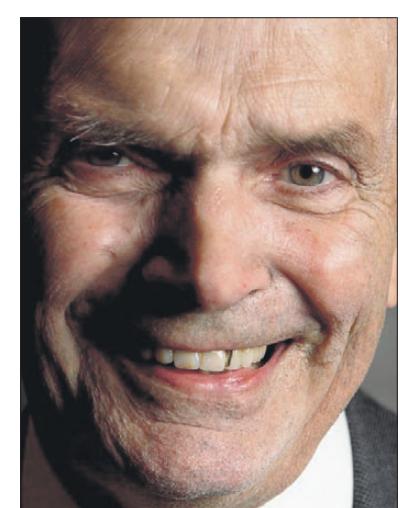
'Committee members are looking forward to hearing from a wide selection of organisations and individuals from across Scotland's diverse crofting regions. We intend to make visits to crofting communities during our scrutiny, meeting people who would be directly affected by the Bill, to help us raise any issues or concerns with the Scottish Government and suggest measures to ensure that crofting reform achieves its stated goals.'

However, not everyone views the new proposals as progress.

Highland MSP John Farquhar Munro rejects outright the proposed Crofting Bill on the grounds that it robs the Crofters Commission of any real power. The Bill waters down proposals to bring in directly elected members, and confer power to Edinburgh ministers and civil servants.

He claims it also introduces a registration clause which compels crofters to register their croft at the Registers of Scotland for which a fee will be charged. This is in addition to the cost of a title sheet which will require each croft to be mapped and surveyed.

Mr Munro said: 'I'm afraid it is very disappointing that the Government has watered down proposals to bring democracy to the Commission after the completion of the Bill.'



'We may well be better with what we have.'

'The Minister may argue that it is her intention to bring democracy to the Commission after the completion of the Bill.'

'This is too little too late.'

'Elected members of a new commission need to be set in statute on the face of the bill and be able to appoint their chairman.'

'This would ensure that power remains with crofters in the Highlands not ministers in Edinburgh.'

'Further scrutiny of the bill finds that crofters will be legally required to register their crofts with Registers of Scotland if they decide to buy, transfer, or make any changes to the croft. Not only will there be a fee attached to registering the croft, but a title sheet will be required needing detailed plans and boundaries — which will no doubt need the employment of surveyors at great cost, and likely give solicitors and the Land Court a good deal of business.'

'We may well be better with what we have.'

The Committee welcomes views both on the general principles of the Bill and on any important points of detail found in it. Submissions can be written in English, Gaelic or any other language.

The Committee prefers to receive written submissions electronically in Word format, and prefers that responses do not exceed four A4 pages in length, if possible. These should be sent to: rae.committee@scottish.parliament.uk or posted to: Rural Affairs and Environment Committee, Room T3.40, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.

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85 new jobs for Argyll

ENVIRONMENTAL assistants for a village hall are among 85 new posts to be created in Argyll and Bute, thanks to funding announced this week.

Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy MP told a National Jobs Summit in Glasgow that two projects in the region had been awarded funding from the UK Government's Future Jobs Fund. The scheme targets long term unemployed people and aims to create new jobs, particularly in green industries.

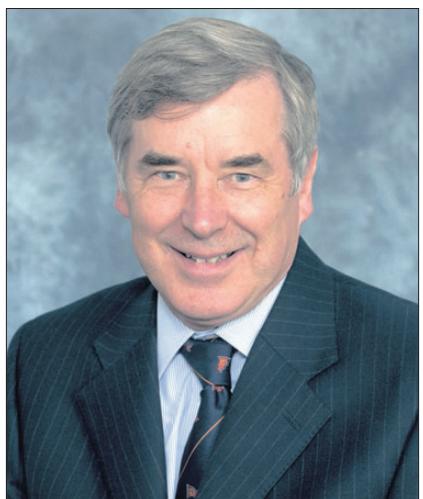
Argyll and Bute's Employability Team will create 50 new jobs, including village hall environmental assistants, research assistants and in practical trades. It will also provide opportunities in the team's project craftwork workshops throughout the region, which focus on practical skills.

Argyll Training will be able to offer 35 new jobs, 23 of which will go to 18- to 24-year-olds with the other 12 posts reserved for those over 25 who have been out of work for a year or more. The new positions will include 15 in green sector roles, an administrative assistant for a social enterprise, a cultural heritage assistant and a marketing assistant.

Under the scheme, the new jobs must last at least six months and be in place by 2011.

Announcing the job-creation money, Mr Murphy said: 'These jobs are designed to give people who have been out of work a long time and particularly young people, the experience and confidence that will help them find long-term work, and that will be essential to help Scotland move out of recession.'

The Future Jobs Fund was announced in the UK Budget in 2009 and contributes a maximum of £6,500 per post to employers to encourage them to create new posts targeted at long-term unemployed young people and others excluded from the jobs market. It also prioritises building skills and experience for environmental industries.



Chief executive of the David MacBrayne Group
Lawrie Sinclair will retire in June 2010

David MacBrayne Group chief executive to retire in June

THE CHIEF Executive of the David MacBrayne Group, which includes ferry operators CalMac Ferries Ltd and NorthLink Ferries Ltd, will retire from his post at the end of June 2010.

Major restructure

Lawrie Sinclair announced the decision last week, ending 10 years as the head of the company.

Prior to its major restructure in October 2006, Mr Sinclair had been managing director of Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd since 2000, and oversaw its separation into Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd and CalMac Ferries Ltd.

He then led the company's successful bids to provide lifeline

ferry services for both the Northern Isles and the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services contracts.

His contract was due to end in April 2010, but he has agreed to extend it by a few months to manage the handover to his successor.

David MacBrayne Chairman Peter Timms said: 'For the last 10 years Lawrie has successfully steered the company through some of its most challenging times, and has done much to transform it into a modern commercial business which puts the needs of its customers first.'

Mr Sinclair said: 'My time with CalMac has been one of the most challenging and rewarding times

of my life, and I leave with very mixed feelings.

'However, I do believe that as we approach the retendering of the contracts for both the Northern Isles and Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services, the time is right to pass the baton onto someone else to take the David MacBrayne Group forward.'

Prior to joining CalMac, Mr Sinclair enjoyed a successful career in shipbuilding and repair,

cumulating in being appointed managing director at three different yards from 1981 to 2000.

The search for Mr Sinclair's successor will begin immediately with advertisements being placed in the national media.

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'And if the product is suitable, it can be purchased locally, with the promise of local back-up.'

Mr Hendry and former co-owner of West Highland Mobility, Andrea Hobson, thanked all their customers for their business and wished the new owners all the best for the future.

More information on the company can be found at jprehealthcare.co.uk

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MSP calls for businesses to make use of apprenticeship grants

AN MSP is urging Argyll and Bute businesses to avail themselves of a government grant and take on an apprentice.

Argyll and Bute MSP Jim Mather is encouraging businesses and employers to take part in the government's Invest in an Apprentice scheme whereby they will receive a £1,000 payment for taking on an apprentice.

Encourage

He said: 'A £1,000 grant to encourage and enable businesses in Argyll and Bute, together with the rest of

Scotland, to take on an apprentice will maintain the momentum required to help Scotland come through the recession with a vital trained workforce.



Jim Mather MSP

I would therefore urge take-up of this opportunity to build on

the skills base in Argyll and Bute.' The Scottish government have allocated £4 million this financial year to offer the grant to all employers who take on an apprentice of any age between January 11 and March 26 2010.

The scheme is part of ScotAction, a government initiative set up to help individuals and businesses through the recession.

For more information contact Skills Development Scotland on 0808 100 8095 or visit their website.

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Ambitious bid to revitalise Morvern gets underway

By STEPHEN NORRIS

A BOLD move to revitalise Morvern by securing land for community initiatives is underway after a local group circulated the area's entire population of 400 with its action plan.

Morvern Community Land Acquisition Steering Group (MCLASG) last week sent out a questionnaire and explanatory fact sheet on its ambitious programme to all Morvern's 200 households.

Members hand delivered the information round Lochaline, while more remote households were sent the circular by post. Respondents are being asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' by January 31 on a list of initiatives, and on whether they agree to the group pursuing the proposals on behalf of the Morvern community.

People are also being asked to contribute their own ideas.

As exclusively revealed in last week's *Oban Times*, acquiring land for local projects is at the heart of the Morvern

revival plan. MCLASG wants to open discussions with local landowners to discuss possible areas of land that could be sold or offered to local people, to establish new crofts – crofting is almost entirely absent in Morvern – and the community to register an interest in and acquire land under the community right to buy scheme.

The group also wants a 'yes' vote to pursue buying land for local business use, for affordable housing for local people and for renewable energy schemes.

MCLASG secretary Malcolm McNeill told *The Oban Times* community support was vital to give their Morvern revival plans impetus.

He said: 'We are looking for a 'yes' vote authorising the steering group to move ahead. We are hoping to get a 'yes' to all questions. If we get that we will set up some tight deadlines for moving ahead. We don't want to be waffling on for another year.'

'It's important we get a good response. If we get a poor turnout it does not look so good. We have to encourage folk to come out of their slumber and think about what we can do in the long term. We are also hoping to get some good ideas coming through.'

'There's plenty of space for folk to put in their own thoughts.'

'Unfortunately, nobody's coming in on a white charger to fix things – we have to do it ourselves. In parts of West Ardnahurchan over 50 per cent of the houses are holiday homes.'

'If you go to Kilchoan in winter there's a feeling of emptiness about the place and we don't want Morvern to go the same way.'

In its mission statement, MCLASG warns Lochaline Primary School's roll is predicted to drop below the two-teacher threshold in the coming years and pledges to produce a timescale of action within three months if a 'yes' vote

is forthcoming. Actions and timescales will reflect 'the seriousness of Morvern's situation'.

The group states: 'We are seeking the support of the people of Morvern to progress with our aim, which is to secure land for the people of Morvern. The land will be held in trust to ensure that the community prospers for the foreseeable future.'

'Securing land for the community would enable... the creation of crofts, the establishment of allotments, the setting up of a renewable energy company to ensure any profits generated are invested in the long-term future of Morvern and its population, local people to purchase or lease land on which to start or develop businesses and housing plots to be made available to local people at discounted rates.'

'Unfortunately wealth has remained in the hands of a few large businesses and individuals. This has been seen recently

with the forestry grants from the Sunart Oakwoods project where £750,000 was spent in Morvern in a three-year period from 2005. Much of this money went into the hands of large landowners, several of whom received six figure sums. If the community had its own land the community at large would be able to benefit directly from such grants.'

A financially sustainable community 'is no pipe dream', says MCLASG. 'By investing in revenue generating projects we believe that the community will become financially self sufficient in a very short period of time and generating a surplus that can be reinvested in the community in projects that the community wants.'

They add: 'By opening dialogue with landowners, some of whom have a strong social agenda, we can make them aware that transferring land to the community can be an extremely satisfying and morally fulfilling course of action.'

Man to stand trial on nose bite charge

THE TRIAL of a Glasgow man accused of biting the nose of another customer in a Spean Bridge hostelry has been continued at Fort William Sheriff Court.

It is alleged David George Leslie, of 169 Croftspair Road, Springboig, assaulted the man in the Commando Bar of the Spean Bridge Hotel on April 4 last year by biting him on the nose to his severe injury, permanent disfigurement and permanent injury.

Mr Leslie is due to appear again in court on February 24. A trial date of March 15 has been set.

Heating grants available

SMALL and medium-sized businesses in the West Highlands are being urged to apply for grants to install renewable biomass heating.

The Scottish Government has announced the latest funding round under the Scottish Biomass Heat Scheme (SBHS) and £3.3 million is available Scotland-wide. SBHS provides grant aid for the installation of biomass heating systems in business premises and district heating demonstrators.

The application closing date is February 12 2010.



The Underwater Centre is wreathed in mist at the pierhead at Fort William. 10_f03fog01

Fort William man who attacked fiancee with a knife is given probation

A FORT William man who pulled a knife on his fiancee and punched her has been shown mercy by a sheriff.

Admitted guilt

Gerard John Cameron admitted assaulting Jacquelyn Nolan by punching her on the face and cutting her clothing with a knife to her injury, of being in possession of a large knife in a public place, possessing a small knife in a public place and breaching

the peace by brandishing two knives in a threatening manner, all at or near Moray Place on December 5, 2009.

Alison Wylie, prosecuting, told Fort William Sheriff Court Cameron punched Ms Nolan in the face and burst her nose during a row around 12.30am.

Armed with two knives, Cameron 'slashed' the front of Ms Nolan's jumper, cutting himself on the hand

in the process. Blood was dripping onto the kitchen floor and Cameron told her to get out in 30 seconds or her would 'slash her'.

Ms Nolan phoned her son to come and get her. It was pretty clear to him that his mother was distressed and he was concerned for her wellbeing,' said Ms Wylie.

Ms Nolan ran into Lundavra Road - her son arrived to find his mother gone. Cameron was sitting in

the common stair well with the knives and challenged the son and his friend.

The young men locked themselves in their car, then found Ms Nolan and went to the police station.

Ms Nolan thought Cameron could have 'taken to the hills' and a dog handler was called out.

Police found him at home around 3.50am and arrested him.

'There's nothing I'd like to

say until I see my lawyer. I believe I have done nothing wrong, I think someone is having a sick joke,' he told police.

Asking Sheriff Douglas Small not to jail his client, Hamish Melrose said: 'My information is that it was a bread knife and a chip knife. He went with the police without any difficulty. He has got everything to lose here. He has a supportive fiancee and plans to get married.'

Sheriff Small took into account Mr Melrose's plea and a letter of support from Ms Nolan for her fiancee, and sentenced him to 15 months' probation and 180 hours' community service.

He told Cameron: 'If you do offend you will be brought back to court and it is very likely you will be given a custodial sentence given the nature of these charges.'

Assault charge for Oban man who carried off his girlfriend

A MAN who fell out with his girlfriend on a night out in Oban tried to carry her home over his shoulder, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday.

Joseph Beaton, of 31B Kerrera Terrace, Oban, pleaded guilty to pushing and hitting his partner, lifting her up and carrying her against her will, as well as assaulting two men who came to her aid. The incident happened in Argyll Street on October 25 last year.

Procurator fiscal Gillian Clime said a pleasant evening took a bad turn after the couple had been drinking for some time. He became aggressive towards his partner and was asked to leave a town bar, but met up with her in the street shortly after.

'He slapped her across the face twice, lifted her off her feet

and put her onto his shoulder, effectively to carry her off,' she said.

'She screamed for help and two local male members of the public came forward to assist. They managed to pull her away from Mr Beaton and thereafter, the accused lashed out with punches towards the two men.'

Defending the 24-year-old, Duncan Durbin said: 'This was a rare night out for the couple, they have three children. Mr Beaton is a hard-working man; it was most out of character for him.'

Sheriff Douglas Small admonished Beaton for the assault on his partner and fined him £270 for trying to punch the bystanders who tried to help her. 'I sincerely hope I will never see you back in court again,' he added. 'I don't think I will.'

Four times normal burst pipes keep Scottish Water on their toes

SCOTTISH Water is working around the clock this week as it receives record numbers of calls reporting burst pipes, caused by freezing temperatures.

The water agency experienced 305 burst pipes in one day across the country – more than four times the normal number.

In the month of December the Scottish Water contact centre took 15,000 more calls than for the same month in 2008.

Customer Service Delivery Director for Scottish Water Peter Farrer said: 'We have teams working day and night, often

walking miles along the length of a pipe in a field covered in snow to locate a burst, and then working in sub zero temperatures to fix it.'

Mr Farrer also appealed to homeowners and particularly those who own holiday homes, which are often empty at this time of year, to do all they can.

'We are asking [customers] to ensure their homes and premises are kept warm and that empty properties are checked,' he said.

He added: 'We are asking people to be patient as we work to manage the high level of calls.'

Teenager admits stabbing father

AN OBAN teenager has admitted stabbing his father with a knife.

At Oban Sheriff Court on Monday, Colin Penrose, aged 18 of 5A Kinloch Place, pleaded guilty to committing the assault while on bail on November 15 last year.

Sentence on the accused was deferred for the preparation of background reports and he was remanded in custody until February 1.

Man jailed after guesthouse raids

A HOMELESS man has been jailed for five months after being found by the owners of two Oban guesthouses on their premises.

Oban Sheriff Court heard last week that John McIntyre, aged 32 of no fixed abode, was discovered coming downstairs in one guesthouse and in the back yard of another, after climbing a wall. He admitted entering the two buildings without lawful authority, inferring he intended to steal, on December 15 last year.

Defending, David Watt said McIntyre had left Furnace to come to Oban a few days before the incident to look for work. After hearing some bad news about his family, he got drunk to console himself. 'He was desperately upset and extremely drunk,' added Mr Watt. 'He told me he had no recollection of entering either guesthouse. Clearly he regrets both offences.'

Passing sentence on McIntyre, Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'The reason for the custodial sentence is because of the nature of the offices and your record of previous convictions which indicates that you have been convicted of crimes of dishonesty on seven previous occasions.'

Village set to take part in RNLI fund-raiser

STAFF at Ballachulish Visitor Centre will again do their bit for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) on Friday January 29 when they take part in SOS day, the RNLI's national fund-raising day.

Centre manager Stewart Broland and his team are co-ordinating a range of activities including a 'brew for the crew', suduko, an SOS word search for children, a sweepstake and a raffle. All winners will receive a prize, while donations on the day will also be welcome.

Mr Broland said: 'Our first full charity event was in 2008 when we raised £450 for the RNLI. It just seems such a good cause to help, possibly one overlooked or forgotten, that we decided to give it our best shot again in 2009 when we achieved £705.'

'Everything they do is funded by donations, with not a bean from the government, so we are out to smash our highest target of £1,000 this year.'

Bike security marking comes to Oban store

MEMBERS of Oban and District Crime Prevention Panel will be at Tesco Oban on Saturday to engrave security markings on pedal bikes.

The members will be there from 10am – 1pm and are inviting members of the public to bring their bikes along.

Police constable David Paterson said: 'An engraver will be used to mark the frame of each bike with their postcode, which is a very worthwhile security measure for bike owners.'

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Lucille Michie mans the coffee pots while the table groans under the weight of home baking. 07_03coffee01

Children 1st host first coffee morning of the year

IT'S the first official charity coffee morning of the year and it's one of the busiest.

Under the leadership of Ishbel Banks, Oban, the ladies of Oban and Lorn rally round in the kitchen and dining room of the Regent Hotel to raise funds for the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (RSSPCC) – Children 1st.

The cold weather led to some stalwarts being unable to volunteer their services or attend as usual but others were encouraged to step in and help out and the dining room was very busy during the hour-and-a-half the coffee morning was on.

A baking stall and raffle helped to raise the figure of £920 on the day, a little less than last year's £1,000, but more donations are expected to come in.

Mrs Banks gave her thanks to the Regent Hotel and all those who helped to make the event possible.

SCOTTISH Water is working around the clock this week as it receives record numbers of calls reporting burst pipes, caused by freezing temperatures.

The water agency experienced 305 burst pipes in one day across the country – more than four times the normal number.

In the month of December the Scottish Water contact centre took 15,000 more calls than for the same month in 2008.

Customer Service Delivery Director for Scottish Water Peter Farrer said: 'We have teams working day and night, often

Fort pensioner punched husband

A SHERIFF has admonished a Fort William pensioner after she hit her husband in a drink-fuelled altercation in the early hours of New Year's Day.

Margaret Ward, aged 67, admitted punching Daniel Ward on the body and throwing a place mat at him at the family's home at 3 Kincardine Place.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court police turned up at the address at around 1.50am after receiving a report of a disturbance.

Officers noted the couple 'had been affected by alcohol' and were told a row had broken out after Mr Ward informed the couple's daughter phoning from Australia after the bells that 'your mother's being a bit difficult'.

'This was a red rag to a bull,' said Ms Wylie. Mrs Ward swore at her husband, punched him and threw a place mat at him, which 'he managed to duck'.

Defending, Mr Dewar said: 'Mrs Ward is totally ashamed of her behaviour and has assured me it will never happen again.'

Admonishing the pensioner, Sheriff Douglas Small told her: 'I think the stress of appearing in court is sufficient for you.'



'Ice' work if you can get it: the men busy on community service at Kilmallie Hall.

Offenders help winter clear-up effort

OFFENDERS convicted of minor crimes are playing their part in the winter clear up in the Fort William area.

Four young men, supervised by the criminal justice service within Highland Council's social work service, have been clearing snow and ice under their community service orders.

Pavements and footpaths around Kilmallie Hall, where elderly people attend for lunches, housing association sheltered housing units and shopping areas are all being cleared.

Community service officer David MacKay said: 'We try to find offenders unpaid work within the community which benefits society.'

'With the recent snow we approached the council's TEC Services to offer some help in pavement clearing around elderly and vulnerable people's homes which would help them get out and about.'

'TEC Services have supplied us with some grit to carry out the work and they are doing a great job.'

Highland Council leader Councillor

Michael Foxley said: 'This is a great support to our more elderly people in Fort William who can often be concerned about leaving the house when it is snowy and icy underfoot. I am sure this will make a huge difference for many people in the area in keeping them mobile and allowing them to go about their daily business.'

'I would urge people to watch out for elderly and vulnerable members of the community – help them with snow clearing and not to assume that someone else will look out for them.'

Drunk football man battled with police

A CAOL man who went on a drinking spree after a five-a-side football tournament battled with police trying to calm him down in Fort William High Street.

Alexander MacInnes, aged 25, of 18 Torlundy Road, hit the town after his team won the competition at the Nevis Centre on March 23 last year. But his drinking got out of hand and staff at the Ben Nevis bar phoned police to ask for help with 'an intoxicated male' whom they had asked

to leave the premises. Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court that officers found MacInnes on the street about 10.30pm and warned him about his behaviour. Initially he was co-operative, but then became 'aggressive' and was arrested.

'He can't recall much because of the state he was in,' said Ms Wylie.

Defending, Stephen Kennedy said MacInnes admitted he deserved to be arrested because of

his conduct. 'He has expressed remorse and apologised to the police after the incident.'

MacInnes admitted causing a breach of the peace by acting in a disorderly manner by shouting and swearing, resisting police officers in the execution of their duties and struggling violently with them during the altercation.

Fining MacInnes a total of £570, Sheriff Douglas Small warned him unless his behaviour improved he would end up in custody.

A85 safety meeting

ARGYLL and Bute's new head of road policing is meeting with road maintenance company Scotland Transerf today (Thursday) to discuss the safety of the A85 between Tyndrum and Oban.

Inspector Hugh O'Neill says the section from Fearnoch to Muckairn, near Taynuilt, is of particular concern.

A number of drivers have gone off the road on the mile stretch between the two sites.

Oban Forward hosts BIDS meeting

OBAN Forward has invited representatives from 500 businesses in Oban to attend a meeting to establish a Business Improvement District Scheme (BIDS).

Should those in attendance vote to have a BIDS, the scheme will raise a six-figure sum per annum through a levy on every business, approximately £10 per £1,000 of their rateable value.

This sum will be used to make improvements to the town that are over and above council services.

At the meeting to be held on January 28 in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls a steering committee will propose the BIDS and each business has one vote, with a simple majority verdict required.

John MacGregor of Oban Forward, who chaired the initial BIDS meeting in Oban, said: 'This is an extremely attractive opportunity for Oban to spend a six-figure sum within the town centre every year. We urge you to attend and use your vote.'

Oban Forward had initially planned to extend the BIDS scheme outwith Oban to its surrounding areas but concluded that this would not be a viable option.

Berneray bard's remains to be brought home from Australia

Perhaps a historic first for the Western Isles

THE BODY of a Berneray bard who died destitute in Australia in 1933 is to be exhumed and brought home.

The Australian authorities have granted permission to Iain Archie MacAskill's great-niece, Alina Simpson, who has been working for months on the necessary paperwork to allow the exhumation.

Iain Archie, born in Berneray in 1898, fought in the Great War, served in the Glasgow police and returned to the family croft on the island before emigrating to Australia aged 26 to farm.

But the venture and his health failed, and without any means

of returning to Scotland he expressed his love for Berneray in Gaelic words and song.

Ms Simpson, 31, of Thornwood Avenue, Glasgow, resolved to raise the £6,000 needed to bring him home. Various events have already brought in £3,000.

Ms Simpson has also obtained permission from Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar to have Mr MacAskill's body laid to rest in Berneray cemetery, beside his parents.

She said: 'When we heard that the Australian authorities had granted us permission we were delighted. I will be going over at my own expense to Kar-

rakatta cemetery in Western Australia with some other family members to be there for the exhumation. I feel it's important to make sure it's done appropriately and respectfully.' It is hoped a piper will play during the exhumation.

Mr MacAskill's remains will be placed in a zinc-lined coffin and brought back to Glasgow where they will be received by a local undertaker.

Ms Simpson said while in Australia she plans to visit the arid outback her great-uncle worked and the shack where he spent the last years of his life.

Now that permission has been granted, she is determined

to get the remains home as quickly as possible.

She said: 'I hope to go out in March and have him home by April.'

'I have no idea how I'm going to get the remaining £3,000 by then, but I have confidence. I've started a Facebook group, the John MacAskill Memorial Fund through which people can make donations and it already has 129 members.'

Ms Simpson added: 'I think the exhumation of someone who has been dead so long is a historic first for the Western Isles.'

The story is being filmed for BBC Alba.

BROADFORD and Strath Community Council (B&SCC) had to cancel its first meeting of the New Year last Monday night after severe frost burst water pipes in Broadford Village Hall. Heavy snow the same evening was also a factor in calling off the meeting. B&SCC chairman Tony Moore told *The Oban Times*. He said: 'We were heading for the hall and they had turned the heating on and put the water back on, but every joint in the place had popped. You could not walk round about the hall for ice, so we just cancelled for health and safety reasons.'

Mr Moore, from Elgol, said weather permitting the community council's next meeting would take place as scheduled on Monday February 1, most likely at the same venue.



Alina Simpson: bringing her great uncle back to Berneray



Oops with an 'o'

CONTRACTORS in a hurry to finish the new waste water plant in Islay have forgotten a few letters on signs.

Fencing was erected around the plant, which is in the final stages of completion, with signs warning the public to keep out.

The company left out the letters 'au' in unauthorised, replacing it with an 'o' instead.

Scottish Water Solutions awarded contractors GMJV the contract to build the new waste treatment plant in Bowmore after announcing it would be investing £4.5 million in the project in 2006.

Tiree basks in sunshine

THE SUN was shining on Tiree this week, making it the sunniest place in the UK.

The Met Office confirmed five and six hours of sunshine while the rest of the country had heavy skies and no sunshine. Police officer Davy Paterson who was covering duties on the island described the island as 'glorious'.

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Warning as water leaks put pressure on supplies

SCOTTISH Water is urging West Highland and the Western Isles Sheila Campbell-Lloyd

householders, landowners and those responsible for vacant buildings to look out for leaks as the coldest winter for decades maintains its grip.

The utility says burst pipes on customers' properties have contributed to a surge in demand for water in some areas, causing low pressure and interruptions.

Skye and Wester Ross have been worst affected.

Householders are encouraged to report any leaks and owners of vacant properties, such as holiday homes and community or church halls, are advised to turn the water off and drain their plumbing.

Scottish Water workers have waded through thigh-deep snow, thawed out pumping equipment in temperatures of -19°C, cleared access roads to treatment works serving remote houses and even used pickaxes to get a river flowing again.

Regional manager for

particularly the owners of holiday homes that are probably empty at this time of year.

'We know of several where the plumbing has burst, causing damage to the property and drawing huge amounts of water from the local supply.'

Farmers and crofters are also asked to ensure any trough taps are not left running.

This is a common practice during cold weather but could be putting a community's drinking water supply at risk of running out.

Up to date information about any water supply interruptions and advice on preventing burst pipes is available at www.scottishwater.co.uk.

Fort assault trial continued

THE TRIAL of a Fort William man accused of assaulting another man in the Lochaber town has been continued until January 21.

Donald Stoddart, aged 21, of Clunes Cottage, Cameron Road, allegedly assaulted the man at Station Brae, Fort William, on September 1 last year.

Weather forces meeting cancellation

BROADFORD and Strath Community Council (B&SCC) had to cancel its first meeting of the New Year last Monday night after severe frost burst water pipes in Broadford Village Hall. Heavy snow the same evening was also a factor in calling off the meeting. B&SCC chairman Tony Moore told *The Oban Times*.

Mr Moore, from Elgol, said weather permitting the community council's next meeting would take place as scheduled on Monday February 1, most likely at the same venue.

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

(SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the Area Planning and Building Standards Manager at this office 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	Alternative locations where application may be inspected and time period for comments
09/00452/FULLO	Ben Nevis Inn Achintee Fort William	Erection of 2 holiday chalets	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00460/FULLO	Site East and South East of Tourist Information Centre Mallaig	Construction of marina	Mallaig Service Point (14 days)
09/00466/MSCLO	Housing Site to South of Sheraton Retail Shops Lochside Fort William	Erection of 2 houses	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00467/PILO	Land East Of St Pauls Wades Road Kinlochleven	Erection of 2 houses	Kinlochleven Post Office (14 days)
09/00469/FULLO	Land To South West of Henderson Row Plantation Fort William	Creation of allotments & woodland garden. Erection of 17 sheds, 1 polytunnel, 1 container, 1 compost toilet, 1 water tank, compost bins	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00470/FULLO	48 Camonach Crescent Fort William	Formation of disabled access ramp	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00477/FULLO	Moorings Hotel Banavie Fort William	Extension to hotel (cafe, terrace, public toilets and 4 bedrooms)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00480/FULLO	9 St Johns Road Lochside Fort William	Installation of satellite dish	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00483/PILO	Sites West and North West of 1 Tor An Eas Glenfinnan	Erection of 3 houses	Glenfinnan Post Office (14 days)
09/00484/PILO	Harlosh Morar Mallaig	Alterations & extension to house	Mallaig Service Point (14 days)
09/00488/FULLO	Mandalay Spean Bridge	Alterations & extension to house	Spean Bridge Post Office (14 days)
09/00489/FULLO	Unit 1 40A Ben Nevis Drive Ben Nevis Industrial Estate Fort William	Alteration to workshop	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

Area Planning and Building Standards Manager, Ross, Skye & Lochaber:
Dafydd Jones, Highland Council, Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William, PH33 6XY
Tel: (01397) 707015 Fax: (01397) 707022 e-mail: planning.lochaber@highland.gov.uk



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PLANNING

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Take notice that the applications in the following schedule may be inspected during normal office hours at 67/69 Chalmers Street Ardriishagh PA30 8DX and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Anyone wishing to make representations should do so in writing to the undersigned within 21 days of the appearance of this notice, whichever is applicable as indicated below. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE – DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION PLANS

● Ref No: 09/0132/PP
Applicant: Douglas Angus
Proposal: Erection of 90 centimetre high boundary fence
Site Address: 19 - 20 Shore Street, Portnahaven, Isle of Islay, Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Portnahaven

● Ref No: 09/0175/LB
Applicant: Dunlosit Estate
Proposal: Conversion of agricultural barn to a training centre and hostel (Class 7).
Site Address: Knocklearch Farm, Glen Road South Of Ballygrant From Ballygrant Bridge To Storaig Access Track, Ballygrant, Isle of Islay, Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Ballygrant

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED LEGISLATION PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Take notice that the applications in the following schedule may be inspected during normal office hours at the location given below and Planning Services, Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AR and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Anyone wishing to make representations should do so in writing to the undersigned within 21 days of the appearance of this notice. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PLANS

● Ref No: 09/01815/LB
Applicant: Mr And Mrs Fraser
Proposal: Enclose existing glazed canopy
Site Address: Luachrach Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4QB
Location of Plans: Oban Area Office

● Ref No: 09/01767/LB
Applicant: Vestry Of Portnacross
Proposal: Renewal of roof covering and rainwater goods.
Site Address: Portnacross Church, Portnacross, Argyll And Bute, PA38 4BL
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Ledaig

● Ref No: 10/00039/PP
Applicant: Mr A Tomkinson
Proposal: Alteration and extension to existing dwellinghouse
Site Address: 1 Argyll Terrace, Tobermory, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA75 6PB
Location of Plans: Tobermory Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at: 67/69 Chalmers Street Ardriishagh PA30 8DX and the location details below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning Services: 67/69 Chalmers Street Ardriishagh PA30 8DX by the 04/02/2010

● Ref No: 09/01322/PP
Applicant: Ms N MacLean
Proposal: Erection of 1 and a half storey dwellinghouse and demolition of existing derelict building
Site Address: Iorran Darroch, Grumart, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay

● Ref No: 09/01698/PP
Applicant: Mr And Mrs MacLugash
Proposal: Erection of dwelling house
Site Address: Lyubas Moor Croft, Bridgend, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA44 7PL
Location of Plans: Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay

● Ref No: 09/01805/PP
Applicant: MacCalman Homes Ltd
Proposal: Variation to planning permission reference 07/01800/DET incorporating alterations to house design and drainage treatment.
Site Address: Land East Of Dha Ular, Bowmore, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at: Lorn House, Oban 8DX and the location details below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications.

Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning Services: Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AR by the 04/02/2010

● Ref No: 09/01352/PP
Applicant: Mr S MacDougall
Proposal: Change of use from shop (class 1) to form flatted residence.
Site Address: 14 Jane Road, Dunbeg, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA37 1QE
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Dunbeg

● Ref No: 09/01567/PP
Applicant: Strathclyde Fire Board Per Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
Proposal: Erection of Fire Training Unit
Site Address: Fire Station, Sorbo Road, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4SH
Location of Plans: Oban Area Office

● Ref No: 09/01575/PP
Applicant: Mr And Mrs Davies
Proposal: Erection of front and rear extension and installation of roof lights
Site Address: Tigh-Na-Sith, Connell, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA37 1PJ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Connell

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

COMMUNITY COUNCILS NOTICE OF BY-ELECTIONS

ELECTIONS OF COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS
BY-ELECTION DAY - 4 MARCH 2010

1. By-Elections are to be held for the return of Community Councillors to fill vacancies on the undenoted Community Councils within the Oban, Lorn & the Isles area of Argyll and Bute.

Mull AA42, AA43, AA44, AA45, AA46, AA47, AA48, AA49, AA50

Iona AA51

Cola AA52

Tiree AA53

Oban AA36, AA37, AA38, AA39, AA40

Glenorchy Et Innisfail AA55, AA56, AA57, AA61

Taynuilt AA58

Ardchilet Et Kilcrenan AA59, AA60

Luing AA62

Kilmorar Et Kilmelford AA63, AA68

Seil Et Easdale AA65

Kilmore AA66

Dunbeg AA67

Lismore AA69

Connel AA71

Ardrach Et AA72, AA73, AA74

2. Nomination papers must be lodged with the Deputy Returning Officer, Kenneth Macdonald, Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AR, on any day except a Saturday or Sunday after the date of this notice, but not later than 4.00pm on Thursday 28 January 2010 and withdrawals of persons nominated must be intimated at the same address not later than 4.00pm on Thursday 28 January 2010.

Forms of nomination and withdrawal may be obtained from the Deputy Returning Officer at the addresses below.

Lorn House The Business Centre Breadalbane Street

Albany Street Crossapol Tobermory

Oban Isle Of Tiree Isle Of Mull

PA34 4AR PA77 6UP PA75 6PX

Nigel Stewart, Returning Officer, Kilmory, Lochgilphead PA31 8RT January 2010

Argyll
Bute
COUNCIL

West coast fears plethora of potholes

ROADS experts are predicting there will be

a huge increase in the number of pot holes on west coast roads – and Argyll and Bute Council is bracing itself for a huge bill.

'Final nail'

Isle of Mull councillor Mary-Jean Devon, Tobermory, said: 'I shudder to think what our road conditions will be when the thaw happens. These Arctic conditions may be the final nail in the coffin for many roads on Mull and beyond.'

If the experts predictions are correct we will be looking at weight restrictions on our roads. Farmers and small businesses will be adversely effected by this. I wouldn't be surprised if we were

looking at restrictions on other roads throughout Argyll and Bute. This is a very serious issue.'

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'We will certainly face increased problems with potholes as a result of the severe weather over the last few weeks.

'This will obviously have significant cost implications. We will have to reallocate our existing budget in order to deal with the roads priorities once the weather conditions improve.'

A spokesman for trunk roads authority Scotland Transerv said: 'In relation to anticipating future problems with the break up of the road surface of trunk roads following prolonged severe weather, such

occurrences are not unexpected.'

'However, to minimise the impact we have processes in place in which trained route inspectors inspect the roads within a strictly regulated time frame, and we are required by our contract to repair serious damage to the carriageway surface within a defined period. We are independently audited on this element of our work, as we are on all aspects of our performance.'

A spokeswoman for the Scottish Government said: 'We are unable to estimate the extent of the damage to roads until the thaw is over. We will then consult with our partners, such as Transerv, to complete necessary work.'

Freeze is not over yet

FORECASTERS predict that the severe weather is to ease slightly in the coming days with temperatures hovering around freezing.

All main roads in Argyll and Bute are now open but Argyll and Bute Council has pledged to continue gritting roads on a priority basis.

Main routes will be treated first before minor routes and pavements will be gritted where resources permit.

A council spokesperson said: 'In Argyll and Bute we currently have some 2,200 tonnes of salt in stock.'

Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) has been assisting the council in gritting pavements in the Oban, Lorn, Helensburgh, Lomond and Bute areas.

Transportation spokesman Councillor Duncan McIntyre urged the public to continue being cautious: 'The poor weather conditions are going to continue and I would ask that all drivers and pedestrians take care at this time.'

The Scottish Government TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION AB4 NORTH OF STRATHYRE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION BY THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS UNDER SECTIONS 20A AND 55A OF THE ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS hereby give notice that they have determined that their proposed replacement of an existing piped culvert 1 kilometre or thereby north of the village of Strathyre between Callander and Lochearnhead is:

(a) not a project which falls within Annex I of Council Directive No. 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended by Council Directive No. 97/11/EC and Council Directive No. 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and Council;

(b) is a relevant project within the meaning of Sections 20A(9) and 55A(7) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, and falls within Annex II of the said Directive but that having regard to the selection criteria contained in Annex III of the Directive it should not be made subject to an environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Directive, and accordingly the project does not require the publication of an Environmental Statement.

D M C MACNEILL

A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers

Transport Scotland

Trunk Roads Network Management

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

6th January 2010

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

Scottish Natural Heritage is the leading public body responsible for advising Ministers on matters relating to the natural heritage. The natural environment is a key asset that underpins Scotland's wealth, health and quality of life. Our job is to conserve this resource, to promote its sustainable management and to encourage people to access and enjoy it responsibly.



Administrative Support Officer - 37 Hours

Starting salary: £14,548
Isle of Rum (Six months, Fixed Term Contract)
(Ref: 064-105)

We are looking for an Administrative Support Officer to spend 6 months on the Isle of Rum, one of our most important National Nature Reserves. Supporting our busy Reserve Team, your experience of office working and excellent customer care & communication skills will provide a strong foundation for this role. You will need 4 Standard Grades (or equivalent) and good IT skills. Duties will include office reception and enquiries, financial management, record keeping and a major upgrade to the reserve and Castle filing and archiving systems.

We're as supportive, committed and proud of our people as we are of the natural world around us. Find out more, and apply, online. Alternatively, call 01463 725182.

Closing date: Friday 29 January 2010.



get closer

snhjobs.co.uk

Post 1 Service Manager

27 hours per week

Salary scale £23,080 - £25,550 p.a. (pro rata)

Crossroads provides Short Term Home based Respite, to Carers in Mid Argyll, Kintyre, Islay and Jura.

We are currently seeking an enthusiastic and highly motivated person to manage the Service. Responsibilities will include managing a team of staff, care management and overseeing administrative and financial systems.

Applicants should have a qualification in Health or Social Care, or hold the appropriate qualifications to register with SSSC, or be willing to undertake the training to do so.

Post 2

Administrative Assistant

16 hours per week £15,035 - £15,773 p.a. (pro rata)

The post will provide administrative support to the Service Manager. You should have good working knowledge of Microsoft Applications and have office experience. Both Posts are based in Lochgilphead.

For further information and Application Pack contact:

Helen Kessell Coordinator, Crossroads Dalriada & The Isles, Aros, Lochgilphead PA31 8LE Tel: 01546 603082 crossroads.maki@btconnect.com

Closing Date for returned applications is 3rd February 2010



DALRIADA & THE ISLES

SC032275



LBO Manager – Fort William Area

(Starting salary £15,975.00 - 37.5 hours per week)

Deputy Managers – Fort William Area

(Starting salary £14,525.00 - 37.5 hours per week)

Customer Service Assistants – Fort William Area

(Starting at £6.10 per hour - various hours available)

We currently have a vacancy in the Fort William area for a full time LBO Manager. Previous betting industry experience would be desirable however full training will be given. Customer Service experience would be advantageous.

We are also looking for Deputy Managers in the Fort William area. Previous industry or supervisory experience is advantageous but not essential, as full training will be given.

In Customer Service Assistants we are looking for good team players to deliver excellent customer service to a wide range of customers. You'll take bets, pay on wins and work as part of a team in a modern environment that's fast-paced and fun. Our training and development programs will allow you to develop your talents.

We are a fast-paced, 7-day a week business and our busiest times are very much dictated by the sporting calendar. Bearing this in mind you must be flexible and adaptable.

You will be aged 18 or over, and able to work evening and weekends.

For further information or to apply please call 0800 88 22 77 or telephone Tracey Campbell on 07841784410.

PART TIME CARER REQUIRED

Care worker required to work with elderly lady, previous experience preferred.

Applicant must be caring, active and understanding.

Hours are 7 per week but these will increase over time.

Please phone 01631 566453 for details.



MASTER

We have a permanent full time vacancy based in Cowal for a suitably qualified and experienced Master or Boatmaster to serve on board our fleet of Class V passenger / vehicle ferries operating on the Firth of Clyde between Dunoon and Gourock.

Candidates qualified to at least STCW CoC II/3 Master <500GT or UK MCA Grade 1 BML / equivalent new BML will be considered.

Previous experience of passenger vessel operations, coupled with proven shiphandling skills would be advantageous. A sound appreciation of safe maritime working practices is required.

Please apply in writing enclosing your c.v. to Captain Eric Brown, Operations Manager, Western Ferries (Clyde) Limited, Hunter's Quay, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8HJ.

Supervisors
(Harvesting)
Oban &
Inverness



Ref: 2009-75-HS-12 Oban

Ref: 2009-75-HIS-12 Inverness

UPM Tilhill is the UK's leading forestry, timber harvesting and landscaping company, with an annual turnover in excess of £100 million.

We have opportunities for two Supervisors to join the UK's leading harvesting team. One post will be located at our Oban office, working in mid Argyll and Kintyre and the other from our Inverness office, working in North and North West Scotland.

These roles cover all aspects of harvesting operations. You will run operational activities and provide supervisory and technical input as required to plan, organise and implement operations.

Applicants should hold a recognised qualification in forestry, arboriculture, environment, land use or other relevant discipline. Relevant practical experience is equally valued. We seek applications from team players with the enthusiasm, drive and ability to apply high professional and technical standards in a thriving commercially driven business.

In return, we offer an attractive salary and benefits package together with personal and career development opportunities.

Closing date: 18th February 2010

To apply please visit www.upm-tilhill.com For any other information, call 01786 435000.

UPM Tilhill

UPM Tilhill is an Equal Opportunities Employer

CORACHIE CLEMATIS (Campbeltown) Ltd

Glebe Street, CAMPBELTOWN, Argyll, PA28 6JJ

E-mail: info@mcfadyenscontractors.co.uk

As a result of increased workload we have the following vacancies:-

180°/360° Excavator Operators.

Clean full driving license and current CPCs certification essential.

Please apply in writing to the address above, stating details of relevant experience.



A'Cruthachadh Olidhig na Gaidhealtachd nan Eilean Creating the University of the Highlands and Islands

As a partner in the UHI Millennium Institute, Argyll College provides access to a range of educational opportunities.

We are now recruiting for the following part-time post at the Campbeltown Hazelburn Campus:

BEAUTY TUTOR

Applicants should be qualified to SVQ3/HNC level in Beauty and have relevant commercial experience. The hours are 6 teaching hours per week with the option of some additional weekly hours supervising students in our commercial salon. The supervision starts when students are sufficiently competent to work with paying customers.

Applications are now invited for the following part-time teaching post, based at the Oban Learning Centre

SKILLS FOR WORK TUTOR (Uniformed and Emergency Services)

The post is for 2 hours per week on Thursday afternoons, teaching school pupils aged 13-15 years. Applicants must have previous experience working in a uniformed or emergency service, and will have the opportunity to complete a teacher training course.

Payment for teaching hours is at our standard FE teaching rate of £21.87 plus a payment in lieu of annual leave of £2.85, giving a total hourly rate of £24.72.

Supervision in the commercial salon is paid at £15.91 per hour, which includes a payment in lieu of annual leave of £1.84 per hour.

For both posts, please send a CV (maximum 2 pages) and a one page covering letter by 22nd January 2010 to:

Lorna McDonald, Dunstaffnage Learning Centre, Oban, Argyll PA37 1PZ or email to lorna.mcdonald@argyllcollege.ac.uk or fax to 01631 559519

Interviews will be held in Campbeltown on 29th January 2010 for the Beauty Tutor post.



J.M. BRECKENRIDGE DRIVER/STOREPERSON REQUIRED

Oban and Fort William Depots

Permanent full time positions

Ful clean driving licence required

Good rates of pay

Apply to Mr C McDonald on 01631 563 711
Oban Depot position and

Mr D MacDonald on 01397 772 143
Fort William Depot position

Oban War & Peace Museum

is seeking a

Governance & Administration Manager

10 hours per week at £10 p.h. - 11 months per year

Reporting to the Chairman of Trustees the post holder will undertake the tasks necessary to meet the governance requirements of a charitable organisation and ensure that the administrative and financial business of the museum is carried out in an efficient manner. Applicants must be able to work on their own, be competent with Word and Excel and display an understanding of working within a voluntary organisation.

For further information please email obanwarandpeace@aol.com or Tel: 01631 570007.

Support Scientist (CCAP)

Part time, Fixed Term Appointment

- 3 years

Support Scientist Grade B/C

£15,453 - £18,641 per annum pro rata

CCAP (Culture Collection of Algal and Protozoa) requires a versatile Support

Scientist to be responsible for maintenance of part of the Collection, assisting with media production, glassware washing and other technical support as necessary.

The postholder, with other members of the team, will also be expected to provide support to CCAP service activities to the user community; underpin research activities and assist with the development and exploitation of the CCAP. Ideally, candidates should have some experience of microbial work (however, full training can be provided); they must have excellent communication and team working skills, with good organisational abilities.

General enquiries for above CCAP post should be directed to ccap@sams.ac.uk

Further information, including application form, is available online at www.sams.ac.uk. Alternatively, please write to: Human Resources, Support Scientist (CCAP), Job Ref D06.09/JD, The Scottish Association for Marine Science, Scottish Marine Institute, Oban, Argyll PA37 1QA or e-mail recruitment@sams.ac.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications is

Friday 29th January 2010

SAMS is a registered Scottish charity (SC 009206), has an equal opportunities policy and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.



Have your say on the forum at WWW.OBANTIMES.CO.UK



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AUDIO EQUIPMENT

DEWALT RADIO brand new boxed dewalt DC010 radio, cost £84 in Screwfix, £45 Telephone 01631 567043.

BABY EQUIPMENT

BABY BATH SUPPORT Mothercare ergonomically baby bath support, holds baby securely without slipping, as baby grows from birth to approx 6 months, £5 Telephone 01631 720369.

COSATTO HIGHCHAIR good condition, folds flat for storage, would suit boy or girl, £20 Telephone 01631 710787.

MACLAREN XT STROLLER MacLaren techno xt stroller, complete with footmuff and raincover, suitable from birth, vgc, £49.99 Telephone 01546 606650.

MOSES BASKET Mamas and Papas Moses basket with wooden stand, cream in colour, £15 Telephone 01631 567043.

PLASTIC BABY BATH, £5 Telephone 01631 567043.

BUILDING / DIY

AXMINSTER SAW STAND virtually brand new Axminster Mitre Saw Stand for sale, buyer MUST be able to collect from Ballachulish, £20 Telephone 01855 811524.

CAR ACCESSORIES

CLIO TOWBAR kit for Renault Clio 06+, new and boxed complete with all fittings and electrics, £48 Telephone 01586 552496.

CLOTHES, SHOES AND ACCESSORIES

BOYS CLOTHES worn once 6-12 months, New Look, Next etc, also boys coat, new, from smoke and pet free home, £18 the lot, Telephone 07833 155212.

DRESS SHIRT white, 17" neck, normal fit, lined collar and double cuffs, boxed, unworn, £22 Telephone 01631 720233.

NEW NURSING SHOES 2 pairs leather shoes, plain laceups, 1 pr navy and 1 pr white, 5 E, boxed and new, neat fit, washable at 40 degrees, £10 Telephone 01631 720369.

DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

FRIDGE Larder(Frigidaire), 21cm wide 56cm high, good working order, buyer to collect, reason for sale larger style purchased, £20 Telephone 01631 566549.

DOMESTIC PETS

KUNE KUNE PIGLETS for sale, girls and castrated boys, excellent pets, must be seen Telephone 01880 740636.

PARSON RUSSELL TERRIER PUPS 1 bitch, 1 dog, born Oct, 09, inoccuated and vet checked Telephone 01855 811160.

FIREARMS

RIFLE SCOPE I.O.R. 6x42 rifle scope, very robust stalking scope, brand new in box with warranty, top quality German Schott glassworks optics, £460 new, sell for £325 onto, Telephone 07733 131761.

FURNITURE

BED child's pine bed, 55"x27", £15 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

BED SETTEE green velour three seat bed settee, great order, £19 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

CABIN BED with six drawers, suit a teenager or a granny!, £15 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

DESK modern kneehole desk, approx 4'x2', £9 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

DISPLAY CABINET bow-front walnut display cabinet, £45 Telephone 01631 300568.

DISPLAY UNIT 3ft wide mahogany shelf display unit with cupboard below, £9 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

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THE OBAN TIMES

& West Highland Times

THE REGIONAL
NEWSPAPER FOR THE
WEST HIGHLANDS,
ISLANDS AND
ARGYLL



The Oban Times is the best-selling weekly newspaper in the Highlands and is distributed via 1742 newsagents every week.

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BIRTHS

ROBINSON - Tim and Ruth (MacKenzie) are thrilled to announce the safe arrival of Megan Eilidh, on January 5, 2010 at Stirling Royal Infirmary. A wee sister for Molly.

ENGAGEMENTS

BRYSON - PATERSON - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Katy, only daughter of Jim and Moira to Steven, youngest son of Ewan and Tricia.

EVERALL - McGLYNN - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement on Christmas Day of Stephanie, daughter of Jean Burns, Ardriashig and Frank Everall, Manchester to Ryan, son of Fraser and Cathie McGlynn, Lochgilphead.

DEATHS

BOYD - Suddenly but peacefully at The Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on Wednesday, January 6, 2010, in her 83rd year, Nessie, The Lynn of Lorne Nursing Home, Benderloch, formerly of 7 Torosay Court, Oban, beloved wife of the late Charlie, much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Loved and cherished always.

GILLIES - (née Fraser). Peacefully at Moss Park Nursing Home, Caol, Fort William on January 10, 2010, Johan Fraser, formerly of Broadford, Skye, widow of the late Finlay Gillies, mother of Ishobel, Hamish and Doreen and the late Annie and Danny, much loved mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great-grandmother and auntie to all the family. Funeral Service will take place at Duncansburgh Parish Church, Fort William on Friday, January 15, 2010 at 10.30am Interment will take place at Strath Cemetery, Broadford at 2pm. A life well lived.

KIRKPATRICK - Ada (née Campbell), sadly passed away on January 5, 2010, aged 82 years, beloved wife of the late George, 1 Lorn Avenue, Dunollie, Oban, mother of Alex, Irene and George, mother-in-law to Joanne and much loved grandmother to Lorne and Sharyn and sister to Mairi. Sorrey missed.

LYONS - Mary Jane Doyle (née Oliver). Peacefully at St Raphael's Care Home, Edinburgh, on December 31, 2009, aged 94, beloved wife of the late William (Tom), much loved mother of James, Martin (Kevin) and the late Keith and a loving grandmother and great-grandmother.

MACDONALD - Donald Angus MacDonald, Aultfern, Mallaig, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 8, 2010. Dearly loved father and grandfather who will be sadly missed. Requiem Mass in St Patrick's Church, Mallaig, on Friday, January 15, at 1pm. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please. Donations for MacKintosh Centre would be gratefully received at Church. Our thanks to all who cared for Angus during his recent illness.

MACTAGGART - Margaret Campbell, (née MacLachlan). Peacefully at Garthnavel General Hospital on Thursday, January 7, 2010, Margaret, beloved wife of the late Angus MacTaggart, formerly of Bridgend, Islay and latterly of Milngavie, a dearly

beloved sister, aunt and great-aunt. Funeral service at Kilmeny Church, Islay on Thursday, January 14, at 11.30am.

PEEL - Theo Peel (son of Willie Peel of Bonawe) passed away peacefully on Monday, January 4, 2010 at his home just a week after his 80th birthday. We thank God for his life and love for his family. If you wish, please make contact with Pam Peel at 5 St Lawrence Close, Knowle, Solihull B93 0EU.

YULE - Suddenly at home, on January 9, 2010, William (Bill), of Haddington, beloved husband of the late Betty, much loved dad of Iain, Amy, Janette, Erica, Andrew and Shona, father-in-law to Allan, George, Fiona and Margaret, adored grandpa to Rachel, Ashley, Ruth, Stuart, Kimberly, Harry, Jack, Emily, Killian and Callum. Service to be held at Mortonhall Crematorium Main Chapel, Edinburgh, on Tuesday January 19 at 12noon, to which all are invited. Family flowers only please, but a retiring collection will be taken for Chest, Heart and Stroke Association (Scotland). Dark colours need not be worn.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FAIRLIE - Duncan, David, Michelle and Nyree would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kind expressions of sympathy extended to them through cards, letters and telephone calls after their recent sad loss. We would like to thank the staff at Cowal Ward, Doctors Thompson and Brown at Argyll and Bute Hospital for their excellent care and support. Grateful thanks to her home carers for their loving and dedicated care over the last few years also Steve Hunter for his excellent guidance and support. Special thanks to the Rev A Dunlop for his comforting services and to Roddy MacDonald for the caring and professional way he carried out his duties. Finally, thanks to all who paid their last respects at Kilmichael Church and Carsaig Cemetery and Tayvallich Inn for the catering. Retiring collection for Cowal Ward raised £135.

KENNEDY - The family of the late Chrissie Kennedy wish to thank all friends and relatives for all cards, visits and telephone calls following Chrissie's death. Sincere thanks to the Rev A Burnside for her comforting service, thanks to Mrs Helen MacIntyre and Douglas MacIntyre for their funeral arrangements and finally thanks to all who came to pay their respects at the church and graveside.

MACGILLIVRAY - Fortified by the Rites of the Holy Church. The family of the late Dolina MacGillivray wish to thank most sincerely the doctors, medical staff, relations, friends and neighbours for all mass cards, expressions of sympathy, visits, flowers and accommodation received following their sad bereavement. To Msng McElroy, St Andrews and Father Gus Hurley, St Augustines, Glasgow. To Father Roddy MacAulay for Requiem Mass at St Peters, Daliburgh, South Uist and comfort at graveside, Hallan. To Dolly's remaining brother and sister Mr Archie Walker and Mrs Chrissie O'Henley and families. Also the Beaton family in the Uists for their love, faith, strength and support. The Co-op and Donald and Neil MacIntyre for caring and efficient funeral arrangements, to Sandy, St Peters Parish Hall committee, the kind ladies and gentlemen for catering and to all who attended and assisted at Hallan. Holy Mass has been offered for the intentions of all. Donations will be made to the three aforementioned parishes and various charities. May she rest in peace.

McCORMICK - Isobel, Kenny and family sincerely thank all family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues for the numerous messages of sympathy, telephone calls, cards and flowers received on the passing of dad/grampa (Dan). Thanks again to everyone who attended the service in Lochgilphead.

SUTHERLAND - Yvonne, Helen, Joan and family of the late David Sutherland wish to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours, for cards and telephone calls during their sad loss. Sincere thanks to the Rev J Carmichael for his most comforting service, Mr Andrew Anderson and Son Funeral Directors for their caring and professional funeral arrangements. Loch Leven Hotel for catering, special thanks to Alastair McDonald and Jimmy, Mrs Carmichael, Betty, Annie and Cathy for kind

hospitality at Ardour Church and their home baking, and to all who came to pay their respects in church and graveside, thanks for donations received to Ardour Church and Killin Nursing Association, total of £300 received.

IN MEMORIAM

BELL - In loving memory of our dear friend, Rachael Bell who died January 19, 2009.

In our home she is remembered, Sweet memories cling to her name. Those who loved her in life sincerely, Still love her in death just the same.

- Dougie, Janet and family, Cherished memories of Rachael, who died January 19, 2009. Beautiful memories, Just as you were, you will always be, Someone special in my memory.

- Barbara.

BLACK - In loving memory of Alice, our dear mum, and much loved nanna, who died January 9, 2008.

Always in our thoughts and words.

- Alison, Ian and family.

BLUE - Eternal memories of the late Brian Thomas Blue, June 14, 1980 - January 19, 2009.

You are always in our thoughts

- Forever in our hearts Words cannot express the sorrow that we feel.

All our love.

- Mum and Dad.

BLUE - In life we loved you dearly

In death we love you still In our hearts you hold a place

No-one could ever fill Our family chain is broken And nothing seems the same

But as God calls us one by one

The chain will link again.

Missed every day, loved eternally.

- From Denise and your loving son Owen.

BLUE - In loving memory of our dear brother and brother-in-law, Brian Thomas Blue.

We hope your crossing over was filled with love and light

We will always remember the warmth of your smile and your generous nature

We hope that wherever you may be you are surrounded by love

We will never forget you Brian, your memory we will keep alive.

All our love

- Your big brother Mark and Louise.

Rest in peace now Uncle Brian

You live on within our hearts

And as you watch over us we will never truly part.

Though time passes we shall smile to the sky for Uncle Brian is there With the angels he flies.

Love and cuddles.

- From Lucy and Connor

BLUE - Treasured memories of my lovely grandson, Brian who died January 19, 2009.

Though his smile has gone forever

And his hand we cannot touch

Still we have so many memories

Of the one we loved so much

His memory is our keepsake

With which we shall never part

God has him in his keeping

We have him in our hearts.

- Nana xx.

BLUE - In loving memory of our loving nephew Brian, who died January 19, 2009. Always in our thoughts.

- Aunt Lilian and Uncle Donnie.

BLUE - Brian.

No one knew that morning what sorrow that day would bring

When a heart of gold stopped beating

And they couldn't do a thing

We never got to say goodbye

Perhaps it's just as well

For how could we have said goodbye

To someone we loved so well.

- Mum, Dad and Carmen.

MACIVER - In memory of Duncan, a much loved brother and brother-in-law who died January 12, 2007. Remembered with love.

- Chrissie and Rob, Colin and Jocelyn.

MACIVER - Remembered with love Duncan, devoted husband, father, father-in-law and grampa, passed away on January 12, 2007. We miss you.

- Bunty, Kevin, Lindsey, Bev, James and Duncan.

MACMILLAN - In fond and loving memory of our dear son, Mark, who died January 14, 1991 aged 15 years.

The hardest thing in life to bear

Is to want your child and he's not there

With tears in our eyes we whisper low

We love you Mark and miss you so.

- Love you always Dad and Mum, Ballachulish.

And days turn into years

They hold a million memories Of one we loved so dear. Lorne and Kathie and Alisdair and Christine Love makes memory eternal.

- Kirsteen and Harry.

CLARK - In loving memory of my dear husband, Angus Ross Clark, died January 19, 2009. Time passes Memories stay Loved and remembered every day.

- Peggy.

CLARK - In loving memory of our beloved Dad and a much adored Grampa, Angus Ross Clark who died on January 19, 2009.

The love and laughter you gave each one of us built memories that will remain with us forever. You live on with us Dad in our hearts. Rest in Peace our sleeping warrior.

We love you always

- Morag (Smoch), Mike, Nicky and Paula, Dugie, Kaye and Dara, Donald, Lorraine, Gavin xxxxxxxx.

Remembering also our beloved Grampa, Donald Brown who died January 19, 1973.

CRAWFORD - In memory of Jessie, died January 20, 1995, dear wife, mother and gran. Sadly missed.

- Eddie and family.

CRUICKSHANK - In loving memory of Jimmy, a much loved husband, father and grandfather who left us so suddenly on January 15, 1999.

Always in our thoughts. - Joan and family, Islay, Drymen and Newton Mearns.

SIMPSON - In loving memory of Archie, died January 13, 1999. Always in my heart.

- By the Real Johnny Cash. Ronnie.

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'Aray manager's fond memories

Davie's entertaining team was always up for the cups

IN STEPPING down as manager of Inveraray Shinty Club at the end of last season, Davie MacPherson ended a reign of 15 years at the helm, which many agree has been the most successful in the club's history.

Often sacrificing league form for cup glory, Davie's Inveraray played a high tempo and attractive form of shinty, which relied on the energy and skill of a group of players Davie knows well.

Having coached with the club for a total of 26 years, he has taken a group of players from Inveraray and the surrounding district, including his son, David, from youth level through to reserve and senior success. This culminated in a Camanachd Cup win in 2004, Davie's finest achievement as a manager.

Scottish Cup

Having never won the Scottish Cup as a player – he played in the 1983 final for Strachur against Kyles,



Davie MacPherson

losing to a goal in the dying minutes of the match – the victory over Fort William in 2004 fulfilled a life-long ambition.

'I don't think I can top winning the Camanachd Cup as a feeling,' said Davie.

But Inveraray's reputation as a cup team is better illustrated in their recent

dominance of the Glasgow Celtic Society Cup.

Since 1999 the 'Aray boys have won the trophy eight times, including victory in 2009. They have only failed to win the competition twice in that 10-year spell, in 2000 and 2005.

And in a prosperous 2001 season, which saw their return to the premier league, they filled their trophy cabinet with the Celtic, Macaulay and Balliemore cups, as well as the National Division One title.

'The team always saw the league games as something you did every Saturday but they would really get up for the cup games,' explained Davie. 'That's what happens when you get a taste for cup wins.'

'The other reason we did well in the cups was that we had a small pool and over the course of a league season that affects your chances.'

Davie says he will continue to support the club on the committee and



Inveraray Shinty Club won the Glasgow Celtic Society Cup for the eighth time in 10 years last season.

Picture - John MacTavish

is keen to get back to grass roots shinty, encouraging Lochfyneside youngsters to pick up a caman.

Tradition

Indeed, tradition dictates that Davie remains involved with the club, with which his family has so many ties.

Davie made his debut for the senior team as a 15 year old and continued to play until the club folded in 1979, opting to play for

Strachur until his home club reformed three years later.

His brother, Ernie, is a former captain and club chairman and most recently helped Davie with coaching duties. Their father, Donald, managed the club for a number of years.

His cousin, George MacPherson, also has strong links with the club and his sons Gary and Graham, are stalwarts for the first team.

Davie admitted there was 'too much to do' at committee level for him to those players have achieved a lot; they put a lot into the success of the team and were always willing to learn.

'I tried to teach them to not just be physical, but play the game in a different style.'

'Now I want to get more young kids playing shinty, because this is my sport.'



Lochaber District Council officials, left, and councillors after their challenge match in the early 1970s. Back row left to right, John Hearmon, Bill Clark, Peter Watson, Kenny Gillespie, John Steele, Eric Wallace, Drew MacFarlane-Slack, Euan Harper, Drew Purdon. Front row, left to right, Keith Falconer, Robert McCover, Neil Clark and Eddie Hunter.

Flashback to council grudge match

RUMOURS that certain Lochaber councillors were not always as generously proportioned appear to be confirmed in this photograph of a challenge match between Lochaber District Council staff and councillors in the early 1970s.

Football

Current Highland Council members Bill Clark, back row second left, and Eddie Hunter, front right, were both in their twenties – and a shade slimmer – when snapped here before the

game at Claggan Park. Councillor Clark, who was then on the council staff, was unable to confirm the score to *The Oban Times*, but assures us his officials team gave the elected members 'a footballing lesson'.

'Eric Wallace [fourth from right, back row] was a really good player, but we never gave him a kick of the ball,' said Councillor Clark. 'It was the only chance we got to kick them without any reprimand!'

footballing lesson'.

'Eric Wallace [fourth from right, back row] was a really good player, but we never gave him a kick of the ball,' said Councillor Clark. 'It was the only chance we got to kick them without any reprimand!'

Alleycats lead the way

Ten-pin bowling

AFTER week 11 there is no change at the top of the scratch division of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league at the Nevis Centre as the top two teams both won 5-0.

Alleycats stay top after beating the British Legion whilst second-placed Council Workers beat the bottom placed team Fairway Fillies. Tradewinds move into third following their 5-0 win over Phoenix.

In the handicap division it is very tight at the top with only two weeks to go and only one point covers the top five teams.

Previous leaders Golf Club dropped to second spot after not showing up and forfeited the points.

Alleycats move to the top on the same points but with a higher total pinfall after beating the British Legion 5-0.

Morrison's, Ardtroe Marine Lab and Council Workers fill the next three places.

The best individual score this week came from Bowllax's Shug McMurry with 162 scratch, 235 handicap.



Primary teams aim for Fort William

Primary school shinty teams competing in the Oban Area Indoor League played in the penultimate round of games in the refurbished Atlantis Leisure main hall on Sunday. The final round will also be held there on February 7, when the winners of two of the three leagues will go on to a national indoor final in Fort William. The teams competing are Rockfield, Park, St Columba's, Lochnall, Taynuilt and Salen. Pictured are players from Park (white and black) and Rockfield in action. 07_103indoor01

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

WIN £850

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
N Noddings, Ardbeg Road, Rothesay and I Campbell, Pulpit Hill, Oban

All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

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. Prizes will be shared between those submitting correct entries.

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.

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 reach "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12 noon Tuesday.

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

Competition Rules

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

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the 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 The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

I enclose £1 (note) for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules.

How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____

Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

Race moved to avoid freezing conditions

Athletics

TEMPERATURES down to minus 20°C and the risk of water ice were enough to change the traditional Lochaber Athletic Club sledge down Glen Nevis riverbank to a loop in lower Glen Nevis.

A total of 38 runners lined up at Claggan Park with Manny Gorman and Alec Johnstone setting a fast and furious pace over the frozen terrain.

First

Manny (34.31) held off Alec (34.36) for first place with Oliver Blomfield taking third in 35.49.

Geoff Simpson was next in 36.04 and also first 50+ male veteran, with first lady being Amanda Blackhall (39.29), followed by Nix Forster in 42.39.

First male veteran 60+ was Ernie Orr in 43.58, while Nancy Kennedy clinched first female veteran 50+ with a very strong run of 44.56.

As the winter league draws on the individual races within each race become more competitive as the crucial points earned all count towards places in the overall results.

Next race is Leananachan on Sunday, January 24.

High hopes for Fort's Claggan comeback



John Corbett checks out Claggan Park, which was still covered with soft snow on Tuesday morning.

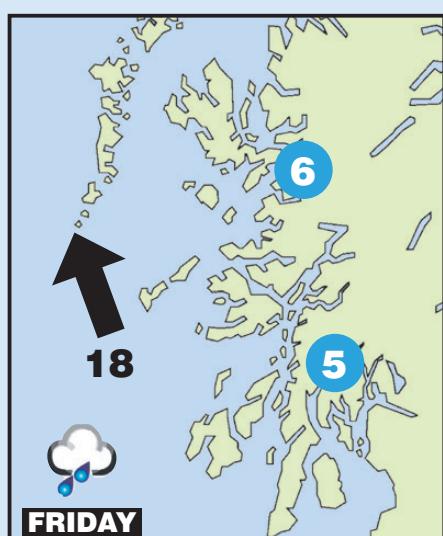
Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, January 14, 2010 are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 05.07	3.7	11.37
Fri 05.45	3.9	12.14
Sat 06.23	1.1	06.21
Sun 06.58	1.1	06.55
Mon 01.31	1.1	07.28
Tues 02.01	1.2	07.59
Wed 02.27	1.3	08.28
Thur 05.07	1.4	17.27
Fri 05.45	1.3	18.00
Sat 06.23	1.3	12.49
Sun 06.58	1.3	18.33
Mon 01.31	1.3	13.54
Tues 02.01	1.4	14.25
Wed 02.27	1.5	20.29
Thur 05.07	23.48	1.2
Fri 05.45	3.7	**.**
Sat 06.23	18.33	3.8
Sun 06.58	19.05	3.8
Mon 01.31	19.35	3.8
Tues 02.01	20.02	3.7
Wed 02.27	20.29	3.6

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)
 Ardrishaig -5.35 Lochboisdale +0.30
 Campbeltown -5.30 Mallaig +0.25
 Crinan -0.47 Portree +0.55
 Islay Port Ellen 2.00 Tobermory +0.16
 Dover +5.30

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the weather

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Thursday
 Light snow showers for part of the day with winds a light east/south-easterly. Temperatures 0°C to 1°C

Friday

Should provide a break in the recent cold, dry spell with heavy rain expected. Winds moderate south/south easterly. Temperatures around 5°C.

Weekend Outlook

More heavy rain forecast. Winds moderate to strong south/south-easterly. Temperatures around 5°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
 Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate
 Oban to Coll/Tiree - As above
 Kennacraig to Islay - As above

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HOPES are high that Claggan Park will see its first football in six weeks following the prolonged deep freeze.

Club officials have been monitoring the pitch throughout the week and another inspection today (Thursday) will be a crucial pointer as to whether Saturday's match against Rothes can go ahead.

The Fort William players have been effectively kicking

Football

their heels since December 5, when they beat league newcomers Strathspey Thistle 2-1 to move up the table and Calum Maclean's men will be keen to keep that success going against bottom club Rothes.

Committee member John Corbett was up at the park again on Tuesday morning to check on the surface as

the slow thaw continued. He told *The Oban Times*: 'I would like to think we can get the game on. If the thaw continues I think there's a good chance. The boys only did a wee bit of training at the Nevis Centre last week, because they can do nothing outside.'

'We are really desperate to get a game, but all the other teams bar Fraserburgh are in the same boat.'



Slope success

Glencoe Mountain enjoyed its busiest two days of the season so far last weekend when over 1,000 skiers and visitors took to the slopes.

Manager Angela Dingwall said: 'Normally it's not until the middle of January that our season kicks off, so this is a bonus - it's really great.'

All-weather pitch given all clear

All-weather pitch

THE ALL-weather pitch in Oban should be playable by Saturday – after a short closure during the icy conditions.

Roddie McCuish, chairman of the Oban Community Pitch Association, said: 'The pitch is a 3rd generation All-weather pitch.'

'These pitches do freeze, and the current exceptional weather has caused it to be unavailable through ice and snow covering.'

'No pitch would be able to be open during such weather unless it has under-soil heating.'

'The pitch will be available for use again as soon as it has thawed.'

'It will be fully inspected prior to being opened again to pupils and the general public, but it is not anticipated that there will be any problems.'

Oban Pool League

Pool

ALL TEAM captains and the league committee are being asked to attend a special meeting on Sunday in the Lochavullin at 8pm.

	P	Pts
Lochavullin B	8	14
Lochneill Arms	9	14
Markie Dans A	8	12
Lancaster	9	12
Lochavullin A	9	10
Claredon A	9	10
Cellar	9	10
Kelvin Dale	9	8
Markie Dans B	9	8
Gluepot	9	4
Claredon B	9	2

Goon Squad edge Lochaber Leisure to stay top of league

Football

GOONSQUAD consolidated their position at the top of the Ali Young Winter League at the Nevis Centre – but only after a narrow 2-1 win over a plucky Lochaber Leisure outfit.

Achintore kept ahead of the chasing pack by beating Caol United comfortably to stay second, while Funky Five moved into third with

a 3-0 win against bottom team Real Rotten. Livercaol demolished HWE No Stars 9-1 and Alcan and Rangers fought out at 0-0 draw.

Fixtures for Jan 17: Achintore FC; Caol United v Real Rotten; Funky Five v Lochaber Leisure; Goon Squad v Livercaol; HWE No Stars v Sawmill; Rangers Supporters v Wanderers.

MOUNTAIN sports enthusiasts will be flocking to Lochaber next month for the annual Fort William Mountain Festival, which is now in its ninth year.

Organisers have promised a five-day feast of lectures, workshops and films for residents and visitors who want to learn about and celebrate mountain culture.

The festival comes after one of the best starts to the ski season for decades, with winter walking and climbing conditions more akin to the Alps than Scotland. This year's programme of new events and old favourites will take place throughout Fort William and Lochaber - the Outdoor Capital of the

mountain sports UK - from Thursday 11 to Monday 15 February and is dedicated to celebrating mountains and the culture that surrounds them.

The festival favourite 'Party at Nevis Range', the official opening ceilidh at the top of the Nevis Range mountain gondola, will launch the varied and entertaining programme that includes lectures and film screenings from cutting edge outdoor athletes and adventurers.

These include big-wall climber Andy Kirkpatrick, multi award winning filmmaker Paul Diffley and Jimmy Marshall, the architect of modern Scottish climbing. The festival will close with the now legendary film night - The Best of Banff Mountain Film Festival.

The winner of the 2010 Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture will be announced during the festival.

There will also be plenty of opportunity for both novices and experts to hone their skills through inspirational workshops in mountain skills, avalanche awareness, winter walking and winter climbing in the Outdoor Capital. Indoor climbing and ice climbing at Kinlochleven's Ice Factor Indoor Climbing Centre will also feature.



High-kicking kids earn their belts at karate grading

Lochgilphead Kyokushinkai Karate Club have held an end of year grading. Grading exams are taken every six months and the prize-giving was held on December 20. Special awards of club tracksuits were given to Niall Timmins and Scott Stephenson, both of Tarbert, who excelled at the tournaments during the year. Anyone interested in learning Karate in Oban or Lochgilphead can contact the club Instructor Sensei Iain Rodger on 07584 166542.

Saints' Scottish Cup tie frozen off

Football

THE Foster's Scottish Amateur Cup 5th round tie between Falkirk and Oban Saints, due to be played at Little Kerse, Grangemouth, last Saturday was called off due to a frozen pitch which was also covered in several inches of snow.

The match has been rearranged for this Saturday at the same venue, kick-off 2pm. The weather during the rest of the week will play a big part in deciding if this game goes ahead or not.

At the moment the pitch is frozen solid with a covering of snow, so even if the thaw does come, the pitch is likely to be waterlogged.

Training has been a problem for the Oban side during the big freeze as the 'all weather' 3g pitch at Oban High School is covered in snow and frozen solid so it has been put out of commission by the council as it is too dangerous to play on.

If the Scottish Cup tie against Falkirk is called off

allow their Regional Cup 3rd round tie with Barcalomond to take place on Saturday, kick-off is 1pm.

The Under 15s are scheduled to travel away to take on Blair Thistle in a Dumbarston Development League match.

Saints Under 13s will be hoping the pitch thaws out to

Dunbartonshire Development League - Under 13s

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oban Saints	9	9	0	0	65	5	27
Baljaffray	10	7	0	3	55	19	21
Clydebank Boys	9	7	0	2	48	24	21
Lenzie Colts	7	4	0	3	26	12	12
Helensburgh	8	4	0	4	25	45	12
Westerton United	8	1	0	7	16	19	3
Blair Thistle	8	1	0	7	16	29	3
EDFC Villa	7	0	0	7	9	59	0

Dunbartonshire Development League - Under 15s

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kilpatrick	8	8	0	0	44	8	24
Drumchapel Utd	10	7	1	2	49	14	22
Dumbarton Rock	7	5	1	1	29	5	21
Blair Thistle	9	5	0	4	29	16	15
Renton Youth	7	5	0	2	15	7	15
Oban Saints	7	4	2	1	25	15	14
Torrance Thistle	13	4	2	7	34	32	14
Helensburgh	8	1	1	6	20	29	4
Argyll Athletic	7	1	1	5	9	60	4
Milngavie	12	0	0	12	13	61	0

Tarbert raises the sails on Scottish Series

Sailing

OLYMPIC gold medalist Shirley Robertson has fired the starting gun on this year's Brewin Dolphin Scottish Series.

One of Scotland's premier yachting events, the series will hit Tarbert on May 28, following pre-regatta races from Bangor, Northern Ireland and Inverkip.