

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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A-Z OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

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New Year New YOU



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Uncertainty over Peacocks' jobs

THERE was uncertainty over the future of 13 Oban retail jobs on Tuesday, after clothing giant Peacocks announced it was considering going into administration.

The multi-national company, which also runs stores in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, is in talks to renegotiate its £240million debt on Tuesday.

Staff at all branches were notified of the possibility of administration in a brief email on Monday evening.

While the company recorded operating profits of £27million in April 2010, bank loans and overdraft payments resulted in a pre-tax loss of £56million.

Oban's £1.8m CHORD project plan needs council approval

PLANS to spend more than £1.8million of CHORD project funding on easing traffic flow in Oban will go to the council for approval next month.

The proposal has been approved by the CHORD project board and programme board, but will require final approval from the council's executive committee on February 2.

The work will see a re-configuration of the bay, including pontoons at the North Pier which would provide facility for cruise ship tenders.

Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute appointed

FOUNDER and managing director of Inverawe Smokehouses, Robert Campbell-Preston is carrying on a family tradition after being appointed Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute.

As well as running a successful Argyll business, Mr Campbell-Preston has devoted much time to charitable work.

He follows in the footsteps of his uncle, the late Lt Colonel Robert Campbell-Preston OBE, who was for many years Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute.

Storms rip sand off Ganavan



Ganavan beach's famous sands have disappeared due to storm damage throughout December and January. 15_103beach2

ONE of Oban's most famous iconic assets may have to change its name after Ganavan's golden sands were simply washed away.

Tidal erosion

Recent storms and high tides combined to literally suck the sand off the beach, exposing stones and foundations of the beach's long since demolished huts.

Ganavan resident, Richard Bingham, who fell in love with the scenic setting not long after moving to Oban some 37 years ago, says it's the worst he has

ever seen the popular family spot, which attracts hundreds of visitors a day during the busy summer months.

While it is not unusual for the weather to cause levels of sand on the beach to fluctuate, it is thought to have been many decades since Ganavan has been so acutely affected.

Argyll and Bute Council are now considering what to do to restore the beauty spot to its former splendour, but admit it could take years for the beach to recharge naturally through tidal action.

Mr Bingham has been shocked by the beach's rapid facelift. He said: 'The beach has been absolutely destroyed. I've been here since 1975 and I've never seen anything like it.'

'It would take an enormous amount of sand to fix it.' The council's tourism spokesperson, Oban councillor Neil Mackay, has been similarly shocked by the beach's striking new look, but admits the council's already limited coffers may not stretch to artificially recharging Ganavan Sands. He said: 'I've certainly never

seen it as bad as that before. 'It has to be acknowledged that Ganavan's beach is one of the best assets we have. Like most people from the area, my parents took me there as a child and I in turn took my children to the beach. I certainly hope that is a tradition that continues.'

'We have to look at every option we have to rectify it. The decision is whether we take action or wait for nature to take its course.'

'We will do what we can with what resources are available to us.'

Traveller's luggage falls out of new bus boot

A PASSENGER aboard the Oban to Clydebank bus was left bamboozled on Monday after her luggage fell out the back of the bus minutes after departure.

However, she was oblivious until the bus reached Clydebank two hours later – even though the driver was aware of the problem 12 minutes into the journey.

The bag slid out the brand new

vehicle as it climbed out of Oban and was witnessed by a passer-by who took it to the local bus station. West Coast Motors' staff transported the bag to Clydebank by van and apologised for the error.

Company managing director, Colin Craig, said the luggage area is at the rear of the bus and therefore cannot be seen by the

driver from his cabin.

A remote closure mechanism failed, as did a fail-safe which prevents the bus moving until all doors are closed. He said: 'We would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused by this incident but I would hope that our swift response in solving a problem caused by teething problems with a brand new

coach has kept any inconvenience to the person affected to an absolute minimum.'

Meanwhile, traffic on the A85 at Connel had to be diverted on Friday evening after one of the company's buses suffered a gearbox failure. Oil had leaked onto the road resulting in a diversion being put in place to accommodate rush-hour traffic.

Lorne Highland Games organisers aim for new evening tourist attraction at Mossfield Stadium to complement traditional Argyllshire Gathering

ORGANISERS behind a proposed new Highland games for Oban this summer have called on help to get the project swinging into action.

But they insist the evening Lorne Highland Games, which

will be held at Mossfield on July 18, will complement the Argyllshire Gathering, not detract from it.

Duncan MacIntyre, who has been involved in Highland games' as an athlete and judge

for more than 30 years, was approached by Adam Crawford, Hon. Life Vice-President of the Scottish Highland Games Association (SHGA), to start new games in the town.

'The Argyllshire Gathering

is a great event but it is on midweek during the day, when a lot of locals are working.'

'By having the Lorne Highland Games during the evening more locals will be able to come.'

The timing of the Lorne event is also designed to catch the travelling heavy and light-field athletes, who will have competed at Inveraray the previous day and will be on their way to Tobermory for Thursday.

It is envisaged the new games would also feature piping, a hill race and Highland dancing.

Duncan added: 'Some Highland games are folding and the SHGA is desperate to keep them going but they are also

keen to find places where new games could take place.'

A meeting to help take forward the new event will be held in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls next Tuesday, January 24, at 7.30pm.

Roughcast row set to rumble on

Soroba residents hit with crumbling buildings' bill

HOMEOWNERS in Soroba could be forced to pay up to £18,800 each to repair crumbling roughcasting, despite some saying the costs are 'unaffordable.'

The warning from Alistair McGregor, the chief executive of Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) which owns the majority of homes in the scheme's tenement blocks, comes as talks with private tenants to find an agreement to do the essential work continue to falter.

While reluctant to do so, he says ACHA could apply for statutory notices from the local authority to ensure the work goes ahead.

The other option is to do nothing, but that would not only allow cold and damp to seep into more homes, but it would cause the buildings' condition to deteriorate further.

He further warned private tenants that, if ACHA are forced to renegotiate tenders for the work, agreed last year, the cost per property could rise well above the current proposal.

Meanwhile, work to repair the roughcasting on two of the housing scheme's tenements, at 19 Shuna Terrace and 9 Colonsay Terrace, which ACHA owns completely, will start in the coming weeks.

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by Steven Flanagan
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Alistair McGregor, the chief executive of ACHA says residents and ACHA face a tough choice

Mr McGregor said both residents and ACHA face a tough choice – either get the work done, or see Soroba rot.

He said: 'If owners do not sign up in the near future for works that are required then the association may have to re-tender and that price will be dictated by market forces at the time.'

'If agreement cannot be reached with owners then there is an option to do nothing and allow substantial parts of the Soroba estate to continue to

decline in terms of common repairs and thermal efficiency.'

'The association could also approach the local authority to consider the serving of statutory notices to allow the works to be carried out.'

He hopes though that, once completed, the work at 19 Shuna Terrace and 9 Colonsay Terrace will show the benefits of signing up to the scheme.

ACHA has set aside £1.1million to redo roughcasting on ten tenement blocks in the scheme. Of those 88 households, 21 are privately owned and 67 ACHA properties. Each private tenant would be asked to pay somewhere between £18,200 - £18,800.

The size of that bill prompted anger and disbelief from homeowners, who said the bill was 'unaffordable.'

One of those was Shuna Terrace resident, Helen Reid, whose share of the work would cost £16,620.

At 63, she wouldn't be able to get a loan to finance the work and while grants were available she would have to pay £5,000 up front – with no guarantee her application would be successful.

She said: 'There's not many – if any – individual owners who can afford this, especially now.'



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Eviction from Islay surgery after lease dispute

REPORT
by Euan Paterson
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

ISLANDERS on Islay are being asked to make their voices heard after the Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) moved primary care services in Bowmore over a lease dispute.

The CHP was issued with an eviction notice by retired GPs David and Susan Latta, who own the current surgery building, after both parties failed to agree terms of a new lease.

Emergency meeting
Last Wednesday, the CHP called an emergency meeting with Islay Community Council to announce plans to move primary care services into the island's hospital.

And although the community expressed its dissatisfaction with the lack of an agreed lease – 18 months after the Lattas retired – and the short notice given for last week's

meeting, it will wait to gather community feedback before taking a stance on the hospital move, which will take place from February 1.

Vacate the building
NHS Highland said the hospital would have no detrimental effect on primary care services in Bowmore, although islanders have expressed concern at the lack of space available within the hospital and at its car park.

Derek Leslie, General Manager of the CHP, said: 'I remain disappointed that the CHP was unable to agree a lease to remain at the current Bowmore Practice location and that we were informed we had to vacate the building by the end of January this year.'

However, we must comply with national property and statutory guidance and achieve value for the public pound and it was felt that this was not possible at this location.

'After meeting with local staff it was agreed that the expedient answer was for the CHP to make alternative arrangements to ensure we continue to provide a wide range of Primary Care Services for the local community. Accordingly services will be provided utilising accommodation at the Hospital from 1 February.'

'I readily acknowledge that this leaves us with a number of challenges but I am confident that the CHP will overcome these challenges.'

He added that the usual primary care services will be carried out at the hospital until at least the end of June. In the meantime the CHP will try to develop a permanent and sustainable solution.

Islay Community Council has written to Nicola Sturgeon to express its disappointment at the handling of the situation by NHS Highland and also had a meeting with Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell by videolink. A special meeting of the community council will be held today (Thursday) before it meets with NHS Highland next Tuesday to express its views.

Chairman Glen Roberts said: 'When the hospital move was explained to us, we were not happy. 'This issue has been going on for 18 months and within one day a decision like this is made.'

Drs Latta were unavailable for comment.

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Crofter with a vision

New commissioner from Skye believes that crofting can once again become the mainstay of vibrant, resilient and sustainable communities

LAST week we reported how crofter Susan Walker from Sleat, Isle of Skye, had been appointed by the Scottish Government to serve as one of its three commissioners on the new nine-member Crofting Commission board. Here, Susan tells *Oban Times* readers what the changes will mean for the industry – and what her hopes are for the future.



Leurbost, south of Stornoway, will be among the crofting townships coming under the control of the new Crofting Commission.



Susan Walker has a vision of a sustainable future for crofting in the 21st century.

'2012 WILL be an exciting year for crofting and for rural communities in the Highlands and Islands with the establishment of the Crofting Commission.

'With two thirds of the new Commission being chosen by ballot for the first time, crofters will have a role in ensuring that crofting is more efficiently regulated.

'Over recent years, many have felt that crofting has been in crisis, with opinions swinging between those who sought to encourage open speculation on croft land, and those who saw that crofting was still vital, agriculturally, socially and culturally.

'With the passing of the Crofting Reform Act in 2010, it became clear that the Scottish Parliament supported the concept that crofting was too important to allow to founder.

'The Scottish Government has also shown that it subscribes to the idea that the system of crofting, set up more than 125 years ago, far from being outdated and only of historical interest, has a crucial role to play in strengthening and sustaining peripheral communities in a modern Scotland.

'When, in 2007, Professor Mark Shucksmith conducted the largest consultation of

the Commissioners would be elected, and gave it a new name – The Crofting Commission - it also strengthened the regulatory powers of the Commission, for example to restrict speculation, ensure that crofters, both tenants and owner occupiers, occupy their crofts and that crofts are 'put to purposeful use'.

'It is a great honour to have been named as one of the three Government appointed Crofting commissioners, and I bring with me a vision for what crofting can achieve for individuals, for families, and for communities.

'However, my vision is nothing new. When crofting was legally set up with the passing of the Crofters Holdings Act in 1886, the aim was to give security to individuals and communities and to allow them to use their croft as a resource for food, income, a home and a base for micro industry or employment.

'What the 1886 Act envisaged is just as relevant in 2012 and, I believe, will become increasingly

relevant with rising food and fuel prices and shortages and with increasing global warming.

'In 1886, people lived 'sustainably' because they had to – because they had very little money and had to produce as much as possible by their own hands.

'Today the imperative to live sustainably might have different causes, but is just as pressing. Crofting, which gives every crofter family a piece of land for a home and perhaps a business, and the potential to produce food, fuel and renewable power, will make crofting communities much more resilient than most in face of the increasing challenges of the modern world.

'At the same time, the clever combination of individual and communal management of land that crofting offers, helps to strengthen community relationships at a time when modern lifestyles tend to encourage more isolated and individualistic behaviour.

'With the rising value of land and of housing in recent years, there has been a big temptation for crofters to see crofts as a convenient source for raising quick capital, rather than as a means to sustain them.

'However, many crofters have resisted this temptation and recognise that any benefit from the sale of croft land for development or housing is a short term one, which only one or two generations will be able to profit from. If we can begin to de-couple croft land from development land valuations, we might once again see young people able to acquire crofts, the depopulation of many rural areas being reversed and more crofting and entrepreneurial activity taking place.

'One of the most important jobs of the new Commission, in my opinion, will be to remind everyone of the original intention of crofting but also, through its actions, to create a vision for what crofting can be in the future.

'Crofting once sustained whole communities in very marginal and fragile areas. If we can ensure that the new Crofting Commission is serious about effective regulation, as required by the new legislation, crofting can once again become the mainstay of vibrant, resilient and sustainable communities throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland into the future. It is an exciting vision and one which I hope crofters can help to ensure becomes a reality by voting in six new Crofting Commissioners who share that vision.'

What are your views on crofting's prospects in the years ahead? You can contact The Oban Times at fort@obantimes.co.uk or write to The Oban Times, Mamore House, Fort William, PH33 6BA.



Beachd Ailein
 Ailean Caimbeul

BHEIL sibhse, mar mise, toilichte gum bheil an deasbad mhòr phoilitigeach mu neo-eisimeileachd na h-Alba air tighinn a-mach dhan fhollais mu dheireadh thall? Chan eil e gu diofar dè a' bheachd a th'air duine againn a thaobh co-dhùibh a bu chòir sgaradh a bhith ann gus nach bi, 's theàrr argamaid fhosgaile seach am falach-fead a bh'againn bho na partaidhean mòra uile gu ruige seo.

Bha e riaghailt fìor nuair a bha faireachadh ann gun robh nàmhaid shònraichte a' bagairt dùthaich gun nochdadh companais gu math annasach agus chan eil ceist referendum neo-eisimeileachd na h-Alba eadar-dhealaichte. Bha e doirbh gu leòr gabhail ris a' chàirdeas a rinn na Lib Deamaich leis na Tòraidhean gun Riaghaltas co-bhanntachd a stèidheachadh, ach 's e dealbh gu tur do-chreidsinneach a th'ann a bhith faicinn Mìliband agus an Camshronach cho mòr air an aon ràmh. Chan eil an t-suirghe ach aig a' chiald dealradh agus chan eil fiù 's cinnt gun tig cùisean gu ìre gaol sam bith, ach nach sònraichte an dearbhadh e air an sgàig a tha na prìomh phartaidhean poilitigeach a rèir coltais a' gabhail a' thaobh suidheachadh riaghaild Alba. Fad bhliadhnaichean, cha robh dùn sam bith aca a' thaobh ceist 'saorsa' na h-Alba, cha robh ann ach faoinneas buidheann beag de nàiseantaich. Agus fìu 's fhathast, tha buill as na partaidhean mòra sin den bheachd nach eil an seòch ceist bheag-seagh air nach eil adhbhar cus dragh a' ghabhail.

'S e an tàmait mun t-seòrsa bheachdan sin gum bheil a' chion dùn a thathas a' nochdadh a' cur an tuilleadh suidse agus taic ri sgaradh eadar Alba is Sasainn gun chothrom cho-leud ceart sam bith. 'S e ceist chudromach dha-rìribh a tha seo dha muinntir Alba agus tha mi 'n dòchas gun toir luchd-poilitigs uile ùine agus inbhe dhan chuspair agus am bi làn-fhiosrachadh aig a' mhòr-shluagh nuair a thig iad gu referendum. Foadaidh sinn a bhith cinnteach gun cluinnear mòran amaidis bho gach taobh den argamaid agus cuiridh mi geall nach bi an meadhan air deireadh le sgeulachdan mu chrioch eadar dà dhùthaich agus teaghlachan air an sgaradh. Saoidh mise gum bheil deastanas air luchd-poilitigs an deasbad a' thaobh sgaradh a' dèanamh air Breatann a thoirt air adhart gu dùrachdach agus gun fhaoinneas ag an làn-amas air còmhradh cruaidh ach modhail. 'S e mo bheachd fhìn gum bheil, agus gum bi, feum aig an dà dhùthaich air taic a chèile co-dhùibh bho sin bho shuidheachadh neo-eisimeileachd neo bho leasachadh air suidheachadh fèin-riaghaild.

MOST people will welcome the fact that the Scottish Referendum debate is in the open at last and that the big national parties will engage in proper debate rather than occasional sniping from the sidelines.

This is an extraordinarily important debate for Scotland and I hope that politicians of all parties will give the matter the time and gravitas to properly inform those who should vote in a referendum. Let's also try to debate vigorously, but courteously. **Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)**
 ailean@obantimes.co.uk.

HIAL announce satellite navigation system to aid airports

PIONEERING technology which guides aircraft through poor visibility when landing could be fitted at airports on the Isle of Barra, at Benbecula in the Uists and Campbeltown in Kintyre.

Highlands and Islands Airports (HIAL) hopes to install the EGNOS satellite navigation system at the airports this year.

The system works with GPS-style equipment on the planes to accurately measure the plane's location in relation to the landing strip.

Loganair, which run flights to the airports, say its smaller aircraft have the equipment needed to work with the new technology, making a trial run viable.

If successful, the equipment could be rolled out across all HIAL's sites.

Passenger numbers up
 Meanwhile, HIAL has announced that passenger numbers have increased by a quarter during December 2011, compared to the same month the previous year.

The 24.7 per cent increase represents 17,971 extra passengers, resulting in a year to date increase of 9.6 per cent.

Commenting on passenger results for December 2011, Inglis Lyon, managing director for Furnace Amenity Association for improvements to the village hall, including double-glazed windows.

Conductor
 All Saints Church in Inveraray has been granted £3,584 towards the cost of repairing its lightning conductor on the bell tower and Inveraray Golf Club will be given £3,300 to upgrade the tees, greens and fairways.

Councils continue to judge building standards

HIGHLAND Council has expressed relief after the Scottish Government announced that local authority staff would continue to sign off new homes and buildings.

A public consultation had looked at introducing the private sector on a limited basis to verify building standards, but most respondents were opposed.

Councillor Ian Ross said of the council's building standards department: 'Over the last three years there has been a consistent improvement in the service we provide so I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff for all their hard work.'

Habitual criminal jailed again

A CAREER criminal who stole a £70 camera from an Oban supermarket has been sent to jail for four months.

Stuart Wilson, 37, whose address was given as Room 8, Shore Street Project, Shore Street, admitted stealing the camera on Saturday January 7 when he appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

The court heard he had 'pages and pages' of previous convictions, dating back to 1992.

Kennedy MP joins call for fairer delivery charges

ROSS, Skye and Lochaber MP Charles Kennedy has added his name to a motion in the UK parliament calling for an end to unfair delivery practices for people in rural areas.

The motion welcomes Citizens Advice Scotland's recent report and campaign on the issue, which have revealed many online retailers do not comply with the law on distance selling as they fail to state delivery costs up front.

Mr Kennedy said: 'Recently, I ordered something from BT which offered free delivery to everywhere in the UK – except the Highlands. Some people in the West Highlands are often told that they can't receive items as they aren't on the UK mainland – even when they are. 'We need companies to take responsibility for charges. Falsely advertising free delivery has to stop, and retailers should investigate ways to keep charges down, such as delivering by Royal Mail in areas where couriers charge excessive fees.'

Highland calls for low rent increase

HIGHLAND Council is recommending a council house rent increase below the rate of inflation for a second year.

Skipper's shock as his £49,000 vessel is destroyed during storm

Well-known fishing boat wrecked on Isle of Mull in 'worst weather experienced in 36 years at sea'

A FISHING boat operator believes the recent storms are the worst he's seen in his lifetime after pounding waves and jagged rocks ripped apart his prized vessel.

Ronnie Campbell has worked at sea for the past 36 years, for the last 11 of those offering fishing trips and private charters aboard his 35ft Offshore 105, the *Laura Dawn*, named after his eldest daughter.

However, the boat ended up being a double victim of the elements despite Ronnie taking every precaution to protect the vessel, to which he'd only just added a new deck last February.

Knowing storms were likely on December 8, Ronnie was going to move his vessel from its anchorage on the south coast of Ulva, Mull to a more sheltered spot at Ulva Ferry.

But when he arrived at the *Laura Dawn* on the seventh, he found she had broken free from the anchor and had been grounded on treacherous rocks on Mull.

The damage at that stage was enough to write off the *Laura Dawn*, while the dangerous rocks made recovery too hazardous.

Mr Campbell promptly informed his insurer and returned to the safety of Little Colonsay.

It was only after the hurricane strength winds subsided the following day he was able to return to see if the boat had been moved by the wind. But he was shocked



Above : Now you see it! - the *Laura Dawn* is driven ashore. Below: Now you don't! The scale of damage - the *Laura Dawn* has all but disappeared, with debris scattered over a wide area after December 8's severe storms took owner Ronnie Campbell by surprise.



Ghostly hound lies behind new Arisaig Games prize

ARISAIG Games and Boisdale, the London restaurant chain run by Randal MacDonald the Younger of Clanranald, have announced the 2012 Boisdale Prize for young artists.

The theme of this year's competition is 'A' Chù Ghlais Meobail (The Grey Dog of Meoble) a ghostly hound said to appear before the death of a member of particular families with ties to Arisaig and Morar.

Local people claim the mystical Scottish deerhound appears as people belonging to some MacDougall, MacDonald and Gillies families pass away.

Eight groups share in £28,500 boost from windfarm community fund

EIGHT Argyll groups have benefited to the tune of £28,500 from this year's RWE npower renewables An Suidhe Windfarm Community Fund.

The fund exists to support charitable organisations within the catchment areas of Glenorchy and Innishail (Eredine only), Inveraray, Furnace and Dalavich.

Dalavich Improvement Group was granted a total of £6,681 to help with a number of health and safety projects in the village.

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Strike threat still hangs over Argyll and Bute landfill sites

STRIKE action at Shanks' landfill sites across Argyll and Bute over pay and conditions was averted at the last minute on Friday.

Staff at the waste disposal company had voted through the GMB and Unite unions to take industrial action in a row over a significant cut to sick pay entitlement and a one per cent pay increase offer, spread over three years.

Shanks operate in five of the county's

burghs, with transfer stations and civic amenity sites at Oban, Campbeltown and Rothesay. Landfill sites are coupled with civic amenity sites at Dunoon and Lochgilphead.

Workers had intended to close the gates on Monday morning between 8am and 10am, but Shanks' decision to return to the negotiating table meant the action was cancelled.

The company has been warned

though that the 30 workers affected will hold the two-hour strike on February 6 if a satisfactory agreement cannot be found.

Further disagreement would result in a two-day strike.

Tom Connarty, whose Unite union represents 11 of the employees, said: 'Until now, staff at Argyll and Bute's landfill sites have been entitled to six months' full sick pay and six months

half. Shanks have offered 18 weeks on a sliding scale. The offer of a one per cent pay increase over three years is derisory anyway, but across the central belt the increase has been between two to 2.75 per cent. If we can't come to an agreement by February 6, we will strike from 8am to 10am and there will be a ban on overtime. This is always the last resort.'

Alex McLucky of GMB said: 'The

company has agreed to have a further round of negotiations and we're quite happy with that. We've given them four weeks to come to a satisfactory conclusion. If there's still no satisfactory conclusion, we'll look at taking action again.'

One of Shanks' Oban employees said: 'We do a difficult job and for not much money. The industry we work in, there are odours and gasses. It's not

always pleasant, but we don't get the pay that reflects the job we do. This has been very stressful for everyone and morale is low. It really has got to the stage where it is difficult to concentrate on work.'

A spokesperson for Shanks said: 'We continue to meet with union representatives through ACAS. While discussions are ongoing it would be inappropriate for us to comment.'

Injury halts Ballet West performance

BALLET West has been forced to cancel this weekend's performances of *Swan Lake* at Oban's Corran Halls after principal male lead Jonathan Barton injured himself in training.

Jonathan has been preparing for the role of Prince Siegfried since September, but his injury comes just days before the company's production of Tchaikovsky's spectacular ballet was due to open.

The Oban performances have been re-scheduled and reduced to a single date on February 16 and the company is now looking for a new lead to dance as Prince Siegfried before their next show, at Stirling on February 4, which is now the first date in a month-long tour.

The company hasn't ruled out hiring a new couple to play both principal roles. While Sara Maria-Smith is filling the lead female role of Princess Odette, she has only prepared with Jonathan. It is hoped Jonathan will recover in time to take up the rest of the tour.

Tickets for this weekend's performances will be refunded, with an option for the February 16 show at the Corran Halls.

For more information, contact Ballet West.

Senior councillors are subjects of complaint

MSP highlights actions of Argyll and Bute members

THE CONDUCT of three of Argyll and Bute's most senior politicians is to be investigated after a complaint from a local MSP.

The Scottish Government's education secretary, Michael Russell, has lodged a complaint with the Commission for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland alleging that the council's deputy leader, Ellen Morton, and senior councillors Duncan MacIntyre and Robin Currie, misrepresented him.

The complaint revolves around a motion lodged on November 24 last year by Ilay councillor Robin Currie and seconded by Duncan MacIntyre.

The motion alleged Mr Russell had, at a meeting on May 23 last year, promised on behalf of the Scottish Government to help with future funding of the Jura passenger ferry if the council funded it in 2011 - something that is not in Mr Russell's remit.

However, the councillors involved say they are 'surprised' that the complaint was lodged, denying any wrong-doing in the process.

Mr Russell said: 'I've made it clear from the beginning that this accusation was serious and, as it was untrue, I have sought an apology which has not been forthcoming.'

'Accordingly, I have made a complaint under the Commissioner's Code of Conduct. It must be allowed to take its time to consider the matter.'

Mrs Morton said: 'It is very disappointing that he's found it fit to lodge a complaint then go public about it without having the decency to tell me it was being lodged.'

'I did receive an email from him asking for an apology. I didn't make one because I haven't done anything wrong.'

'I didn't move or second the motion. I voted for it, but so did others so I can't understand why there's a complaint about me.'

'I can understand him complaining about the mover and seconder.'

Mr MacIntyre said: 'I'm certainly surprised and disappointed. I don't see the problem; the Ferries Review has assured the future of the Jura Ferry for the next couple of years anyway.'

'While I didn't hear his comments first hand, Ellen Morton is pretty accurate in these sorts of things.'

'He's not the minister for transport, but he was fully supportive of taking this forward.'

Mr Currie was contacted for comment but was unavailable at the time of going to press.

Connell cover girl Tracy is a shadow of her former self

A MOTHER of one from Connell has gone from a size 26 five months ago to a trim, size 12 cover girl.

Tracy Davies' tremendous slimming efforts transformed her look completely and saw her named Scottish Slimmers Slimmer of the Year in October.

The 37-year-old financial controller was then whisked into a photo studio to complete her transformation from frumpy mum of one into a stunning cover-girl for Scottish Slimmers Boost magazine.

She said: 'I used to hide from the cameras so now I can't believe I'm a cover girl.'

She is joined in the magazine, by another local slimmer, 51-year-old Caroline Nicolson from Kinlochleven, who also features in the January edition of the publication.

The medical receptionist lost over seven stone, dropping five dress sizes in the process.

The pair achieved their results by following the group's Positive Eating Plan.

Self motivation

While the plan encourages plenty of self motivation, Tracy had a special reason of her own to shed more than six stone of excess baggage.

She said: 'I'd lost my dad when he was only 44 and I was only



Tracy Davies prior to joining Scottish Slimmers and shedding more than six stones.

too aware I was fast approaching the age he had been when he had his first heart attack. I knew being so overweight



And Tracy now, as she appears on the front cover of Scottish Slimmers Boost magazine.

dramatically increased my risk of serious health problems, especially heart disease. However, despite my constant health fears, the final straw was when my husband and I booked a family holiday to Egypt.

Overweight

'The thought of being so overweight in such a hot country took the shine off my excitement about our holiday - and that's when I finally decided to sort myself out and join Scottish Slimmers.'

'I feel very comfortable at this weight - and absolutely love looking like this.'

'My husband loves my new look, too. In fact, he now calls me his sexy wife!'

Scottish Slimmers' marketing director Alexandra Howie said: 'Tracy and Caroline are amazing ambassadors for us and we think they look sensational!'

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Smart phone helps rescue team find walkers

OBAN Mountain Rescue Team found two hill walkers lost in the Glen Orchy area thanks to the assistance of smart phone app technology.

The team was called out on Saturday night when the

walkers became lost on the Ben Achallader - Ben a Creachain ridge. After the rescue team had set out, one of the walkers downloaded a smart phone app which allowed him to find their latitude and longitude co-

ordinates via his phone Global Positioning System (GPS). These were sent by phone to rescue leader Ian Campbell's wife, who passed them to Oban Police who, in turn relayed them to Ian. He converted the

details to ordnance survey grid references before radioing his team, allowing the 'lost' walkers to be pinpointed at the top of Ben a Creachain. They were found at midnight and walked off the hill by 2am.

Tourism group take positive Oban and Lorn message to Scotland's Central Belt

AN OBAN-based tourism group is hoping there will be an influx of visitors from Glasgow this summer after a high-profile showcase of the area's assets.

Oban and Lorn Tourism Association's (OLTA) weekend-long high profile interactive display and information stand at Glasgow's Silverburn shopping centre enjoyed a potential audience of around 100,000 people.

Representatives of those businesses and organisations who took part were inundated with enquiries throughout and it is hoped

the event will prove more than worthwhile when this year's tourist season gets into full swing.

Chairperson of the OLTA Linda Battison was delighted with the response.

She said: 'It is the first time we've ever done this. It was very interesting to get feedback from Glaswegians and exciting to raise Oban's profile down there.'

'The kids that came to our stands were very interested in displays such as our kayaks and the star fish in our touching pool.'

'It was very interactive and that worked well. Dunollie came along and the Broach of Lorn was on display and was also very popular.'

'Silverburn is a shopping mall where more than 40-50,000 people per day visit, so it was very busy. We think it was worthwhile.'

While a success, it did highlight one of the biggest problems Oban and Lorn faces when trying to attract people from the central belt.

'We had one guy who was certain Oban was north of Inverness. He refused to believe me and I ended up having to load Google Maps to

show him. What we found is that a lot of Glaswegians haven't been to Oban since they were children, but there was lots of interest in coming back. And of those folk who thought they knew Oban, some weren't sure where we are and didn't know what the town has to offer.'

'We did get the opportunity to put that right though, so that was worthwhile.'

It is hoped that the promotional exhibition can be held again in future, though its success or otherwise will be monitored this summer.

LORN LINES

OBAN Speakers Club got the New Year off to an excellent start last week when members heard three interesting speeches from Iain Fullarton, Malcolm Black and Archie Mephaill.

Iain talked on 'Golf - a good walk spoiled'. Malcolm, making his first speech to the club, chose his recollections of 'Wartime in Tobermory' and Archie entertained with his talk on 'Geronimo'.

The speakers and their critics, Roy Wood, Donnie Graham and Jim Fraser, were introduced by Bill Leech. Frank Walton was responsible for the topics session and gave an interesting variety of subjects to Eamonn Arthur, Ian Crawford, Guido Faccenda, Bill Leech, Jim Fraser and Martin Wilson. Timekeeper for the evening was Alec Clark and a fair and comprehensive general evaluation was given by Tom Clegg. The next meeting will be held in Soroba House Hotel on Thursday January 26 at 8pm.

A PHOTOGRAPHER turned children's book illustrator has used the landscapes of Argyll in publishing her latest work.

Lorna Freytag, who is married to Oban man Daniel, has worked in Dubai, New York, London and Australia but says Argyll's landscapes are the best in the world.

The 34-year-old came up with the concept for 'Wild Child' over a number of years and publishers Walker Books jumped at the idea.

Lorna, who lives in Glasgow, explained: 'The story is about a little girl who lives on her own in the wild because she doesn't want to be found by the grown-ups and be made to go to school.'

'All the picture backgrounds are taken from around Argyll and the west coast because they give the best indication of the wilderness.'

'Children's books are a new thing for me but something I always wanted to do. When I was up visiting family in Argyll I would take a lot of photos and that helped me come up with the concept of 'Wild Child'.

'So when Walker Books approached me to do a traditional children's book, I told them about this concept and they went with it.'

The book, out now, is written by acclaimed children's author Jean Willis and features landscapes of Oban, Kerrera, Kilmelford, Tralee and many others.



Book illustrator Lorna Freytag.

OBAN Photographic Club's first speaker of the New Year was David McLellan of Carluke Camera Club with his subject of 'West Highland Highway'.

David, who retired from his insurance business through serious illness, fought back to full recovery and now uses his love of the Scottish mountains to fund raise for charity.

How about climbing 30 Munros in 16 days! His photos and narrative of the mountains was truly inspirational to everyone.

The next meeting of the club is on January 23 when Stephen Lipton, who attended the club as a judge last year, will present 'My Photography'.

PARK Primary School's class of P4 is set for a trip to Ibrox to watch Rangers play Aberdeen, thanks to pupil Chloe Hamilton.

The seven-year-old Rangers season ticket holder was selected at random to invite her Oban classmates along to watch a game at the famous stadium for free, and the class is now gearing up for this weekend's clash.

Every pupil attending can take an adult

too and transport has been arranged by Chloe's mum Fiona Gibb.

On arrival, the group will be given Super 7s t-shirts, before being taken onto the pitch at half time in front of 50,000 fans. Their names will also appear in the match programme.

Fiona said: 'It's quite good. Chloe's uncle bought her a season ticket and I think what they do is pull names out of the hat and the winner gets to invite their classmates.'

Oban pier pub name change ends 'MacBrayne's' dispute

A DISPUTE over the name of Oban's newest bar has been resolved, with the former Waterfront Bar to be called 'Sloan's'.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) succeeded in forcing the consortium behind the Railway Pier pub to change its name from 'MacBrayne's' after highlighting a clause in the original 1963 lease of the building.

One of the local businessmen behind the venture, Calum MacLachlaine, said: 'I am disappointed that they chose to revert to a minor clause in a 1963 lease to enforce their wishes as their initial case is weak and would not stand up in a court of law. However, I am

pleased that they have offered extra ground on the seaward side of the waterfront to extend the restaurant.'

The new name was picked after a competition was held on the bar's Facebook page, he added.

A spokesperson for CMAL said: 'The owner has now agreed to remove the sign and CMAL is working with him to ensure minimal impact to his business.'

'We are in discussions with the owners at present regarding a small strip of land which we understand would be used to accommodate a fire escape stairway.'

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Admin: rhona.sharp@highland.gov.uk

The Scottish Salmon Company

The Scottish Salmon Company: Isle of Mull Community Information Events

The Scottish Salmon Company have proposed two new fish farming facilities, to be sited on the Isle of Mull. We will be holding an open community consultation and information session at the following venues and dates:

- **Bunessan Village Hall:** Tuesday 31st January from 4pm to 8pm
- **Tobermory Western Isles Hotel:** Wednesday 1st February from 10am to 2pm
- **Craignure MICT building (Alice Lambert Room):** Wednesday 1st February from 4pm to 8pm

Participants will have the opportunity to view details of the proposed plans. They will also have a chance to speak to staff from The Scottish Salmon Company, ask questions and offer feedback on the proposals.

The proposed plans include;

- A new salmon farming facility near Ardmeanach, Loch Scridain
- A new salmon farming facility near Gometra, Loch Tuath

The event is open to all. If you would like to register your interest, or simply find out more please don't hesitate to contact Mark Edmonds at mark.edmonds@scottishsalmon.com or by phone on 07810 834779.

ISLAY

IT WAS no surprise on the morning of January 4, wakening to the continuing roaring of stormy gales, that the electricity had gone off in the night. It had been an extremely noisy night, with severe gales, thunder and flashes of lightning. The Rayburn's timer switch had stopped at about 6am, and it was clear that work on the power lines was going to be delayed by continuing severe weather. So, on the Tuesday evening, the kettle was boiled and soup was heated over the fire for tea, and a sleeping bag and mat were brought into the warmest room to spend the night.

Next morning, Wednesday, still no electricity. The old phone which doesn't need an electric supply had been brought out and plugged in, and the SSE/Hydro Electric helpline gave a time later in the day for an update. Feeling chilly but positive, the best course of action seemed to go to where power was on. Neighbours said that Bowmore had power, so going there to use light/heat/internet connection seemed a useful way to spend the day. While in the village, the talk was all about the extensive and serious storm damage to properties around the island.

Shopping for easily heated food was also a reasonable precaution. That evening, neighbours with a generator invited me for an evening meal and to stay the night with them, which was sociable and fun, as well as kind and helpful.

On Thursday morning, the SSE helpline only advised a later update on reconnection of supply. Back to Bowmore, for more electricity-sharing. On reaching home in the afternoon, still no power. Later, both the SSE and the council phoned, checking whether my household was managing alright and offering hot meals in a hotel. Availing of the offer of hot meals would have meant either not lighting the fire or letting it go out and afterwards coming home to a very cold house, which didn't appeal. It felt better to stay put and keep warm.

On the Friday morning, SSE was still advising later updates and phoned again to see how I was faring, as did the council. The day was spent knitting, reading when there was enough light, writing and a bit of general housekeeping. The cottage's water supply pumps into a storage tank in the loft, and even with carefully limited use, the water was now nearly used up. Bottled drinking water is always kept in case of need, and buckets of rainwater were carried in and boiled on the fire for washing-up. How different life in pre-electricity days would have been and how time-consuming it is to do even the basic household tasks without the power we've become used to.

On Saturday morning, January 7, SSE helpline still advised updates. But SSE workers arrive in vehicles and on foot, checking local lines and poles including equipment behind my cottage. The SSE guys said that that the transformer on a pole nearest the cottage had been struck by lightning, and a replacement would be fitted. Just as it was getting dark, a cavalcade of SSE vehicles, along with Iain MacPherson's digger, arrived behind my cottage and the workmen soon replaced the damaged transformer with the new one. And there was light! And even better, water was pumped in.

Later that evening, checking in on Twitter, I wrote that my cottage's electricity supply had finally been reconnected. Mike Russell MSP, a Twitter follower, replied: 'Last in Argyll, I think. Welcome back!'

AN OLD-fashioned ceilidh with traditional seasonal fare was held in celebration of the Old New Year, An t-Sean Nollaig, in Ballygrant Hall last Friday. Fear an tìghe was Andy McCowan of Ballygrant, formerly of Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir and currently a member of Còisir Ghàidhlig Ile. There was Gaelic song aplenty, with instrumental music, Highland dancing and ceilidh dancing. Performing artists were Alasdair Currie, Andy McCowan, Mairi McGillivray, Libby Morris and Ella's Highland dancers, with other local musicians.

The gathering enjoyed dancing to Niall Kirkpatrick on accordion and Davie Hastie on drums.

Kilmeny ceilidhs are for everyone; all ages are welcome and traditional singers or musicians of all ages who come along are welcome to take part. This time it was a special ceilidh, a thank you for all the local support in the Kilmeny Ceilidh Club's first year.

A NEW Islay rowing club is forming as an offshoot of the successful Lagavulin fundraisers activities.

Two traditional Irish yaws that Lagavulin fundraisers have built over the last few years have been handed over to the new club.

These boats are built to a traditional design, which has been used in the west coast of Scotland and Ireland for hundreds of years.

The boats have shown that they are very capable, as they were rowed all the way to Ireland during the summer as part of the Colmcille Challenge.

The new club aims to build on this success and several experienced members of the community are willing to pass on the history of these boats to anyone interested.

For information on joining, email islayrowingclub@hotmail.co.uk. Anyone wishing to do it the old fashioned way should speak to Bryony McFarlane or go along to the annual meeting on January 31 in the Columba Hall at 7pm. SC



Rachel Barrie.

THE COMPANY that runs Bowmore Distillery on Islay has created the new role of master blender to oversee operations.

Rachel Barrie's appointment by Morrison Bowmore Distillers (MBD) means she will oversee the production of Auchentoshan, Bowmore and Glen Garioch malt whiskies.

She will head up the company's Spirit Quality Control and laboratory functions and will join Morrison Bowmore's Operational Senior Executive Group, reporting directly to Andrew Rankin, MBD



The council's head of transport Sam MacNaughton, contracts manager Jonathan Wills of Will Bros, Hugh MacPherson and Michael Foxley examine the plans on site.

Work starts on vital Moidart road improvements

WORK got underway last week on a notorious section of sub-standard lifeline road in Moidart at Drynie Hill, between Acharacle and Glenugie.

For the duration of the contract, a temporary daily road closure will be in place between 10am and 12.25pm and 1.10pm to 3.30 pm, Monday through to Friday, to allow vital tree felling and blasting works to be safely carried out.

The temporary closure is now in place and will last until April 4. It is anticipated the work will be completed by June.

Motorists are asked to follow local diversions and the council apologises for any inconvenience.

Acharacle Community Council chairman Hugh Macpherson said: 'The road works are a wonderful New Year present for the community who have pressed for this

scheme for many years. The upgraded road will help improve access and open up the area for local business and tourists.'

Highland Council leader and local councillor Michael Foxley said: 'I am delighted that after many years of exploring opportunities for funding the works have now started.'

The project is being partially funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Operations Director and Chief Blender.

Commenting on the appointment Mr Rankin said: 'Rachel is one of the most experienced master blenders in our industry and I am extremely delighted that she will be joining our team here at MBD.'

'We have a very strong blending team within the company and this appointment will massively strengthen and reinforce our commitment to producing the ultimate in quality Single Malt Scotch Whiskies.'

Ms Barrie comes to Morrison Bowmore from The Glenmorangie Company.

BRUICHLADDICH Distillery has added a merchant banker and an astrophysicist to its commercial team to develop sales worldwide.

David Ferguson and Craig Johnstone have joined Bruichladdich's young team as business development managers.

Ferguson, aged 30, whose family are from Islay, is a chartered accountant by trade having returned to Scotland after seven years working with Deutsche Bank in London and New York.

Meanwhile, Johnstone, 26, from Macmerry in East Lothian, qualified as an astrophysicist before deciding that another celestial body, whisky, was more interesting than rocket science.

He started as a tour guide with Glenkinchie before being the Edrington Group's brand ambassador in western Canada and then in Edinburgh for the Scotch Malt Whisky Society.

Ferguson and Johnstone join an invigorated Bruichladdich commercial team under Douglas Taylor that enjoyed a record year in 2011 with sales growing by 20 per cent - helped

by the launch of the Botanist Gin and the Laddie 10.

A PLANNING application for the demolition of an existing derelict building at Kilchoman, Islay, has been approved.

The application includes the erection of a house and installation of a septic tank on land east of Machrie, Rocksidge, Kilchoman.

ROY BRIDGE

JUNIOR shinty sessions have been organised in Roy Bridge Community Hall as part of Lochaber Sports Association's 'Get Fit for 2012' programme.

'First Shinty' for children of Primary1-3 age will be held on Thursday evenings from 5pm-6.30pm. Sessions for the under-12 age group will run on Tuesdays from 5pm to 7pm.

SPEAN BRIDGE

SPEAN Bridge meteorologist Andrew Bootman has completed his summary of weather over December - and it was a pretty remarkable month.

An incredible total of 469.2mms (18.47ins) of rain fell - 108 per cent above average for the month - compared with only 34.5mms (1.36ins) and 82.3 per cent below average last year. Wettest day was Christmas Day (38.8mms or 1.53ins) - and it rained every day of the month.

Average temperature was an above average 3.7°C (38.7°F) compared with a frigid -2.6°C (27.3°F) in 2010. Warmest day was Boxing Day (11.9°C or 53.4°F), while the coldest night fell on the 16th (-1.8°C or 28.8°F). First air frost of the winter came on December 5 and there were seven nights of air frost during the month.

Over 2011, all months had above average rainfall excepting March (-35.5 per cent) and June

(-12.9 per cent). December was the wettest month since Mr Bootman started recording in 2003.

All months had above average temperatures except January and June, while December

proved the warmest month above average.

Rainfall measured 2,964.5mms or 116.7ins - 35.1 per cent above average. The average temperature over the year was 9.3°C (48.7°F), around



Some of the Castlebay secondary pupils who found out what it takes to be a firefighter last month.

Pupils get insight into life as firefighter

YOUNG people from Castlebay Secondary School have been finding out what it's like to be a member of the fire service.

Local fire crews visited the school to give pupils an insight into what it takes to be a firefighter, holding team building exercises such as hose and ladder drills, operating breathing apparatus and carrying out home fire safety checks.

The pupils also received non-fire related training, including incident management at a traffic collision. Finally, pupils learned basic first aid skills, delivered by The Scottish Ambulance Service.

The course was funded by The Big Lottery Fund, with transport funding provided by ADP and Community Education.

IC above average. There were storm force winds in May and on several occasions in December. The coldest night of 2011 came on January 6 with -7.1°C, 19.2°F and the warmest day was July 4 with 23.9°C, 75°F. Mr Bootman told *The Oban Times*: 'There were a total of only 40 completely dry days last year, 26 when a 'trace' was recorded, which is small enough to just notice and, thus, 299 wet ones with noticeable rain!'

JURA

JURA Development Trust has mainly welcomed the proposals affecting the island in the Draft Scottish Ferries Review.

The trust has reached a consensus on the proposals, which include free ferry travel from Jura to Islay for those then travelling on to the mainland and the increase of ferries from Kennacraig coming to Port Askaig.

While the proposals have been widely welcomed, there is disappointment at the lack of support for the Tayvallich passenger ferry service, which the trust says is 'of massive economic benefit' to Jura and Argyll as a whole.

Commenting on the draft proposals, Jura Development Trust secretary Peter Witherspoon said: 'We support in principle the idea that a trip to the mainland will cost the same for a Dürach as an Ileach.'

'The proposal to include the trip across the Sound of Islay in the fare to the mainland and not as an additional cost of over £15 for a car and passenger is particularly welcome.'

'We are pleased that the Government supports the need for more ferries to use Port Askaig terminal.'

'Their support is recognition that the 60-mile round trip across Islay for the people of Jura and our visitors to catch

DUROR

DUROR and Kentallen Community Hall is hosting indoor bowls on Thursday evenings during the winter from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

A SMALL number of comments received on a proposed re-location of Duror Post Office were largely in support of the move, says Post Office Ltd.

The service confirmed last Thursday it would proceed with the relocation of Duror Post Office to the village's community hall.

A statement from Post Office Ltd said: 'Following the end of the formal period of public consultation, and having reviewed the very small number of comments from customers and local representatives, which were mainly in support of the move, the new service will relocate to new premises at Kentallen and Duror Community Centre in Duror.'

'In order to restore a Post Office service to our customers, the new service commenced operating at the new site on Tuesday December 6.'

KINLOCHLEVEN

KINLOCHLEVEN High School has had its bid to join the Olympic Games Get Set network accepted.

The school will receive a plaque, certificate and sticker in the next few weeks and now has the right to use the London 2012 education logo on letterheads, newsletters and its website.

The initiative rewards schools and colleges demonstrating a commitment to the Olympic and Paralympic values - respect, friendship, equality, excellence, inspiration, courage and determination.

It also uses the London 2012 Games to inspire learners of all ages and abilities to get involved in a range of projects and activities.

Other benefits include free tickets to events - most likely football matches at Hampden Park.

INVERGARRY

INVERGARRY Community Council will hold its second meeting of the New Year in Glegarry Community Hall on Monday February 6.

Proceedings start at 7.30pm and all members of the public are welcome.

An appeal from the community council for items for possible inclusion on future agendas produced several ideas.

One resident suggested that instead of the current community benefit fund where people bid for their 'charitable activities', that pot of community windfarm cash should be used to subsidise electricity or heating bills of local senior citizens in need.

The 'hardship fund' would be dependent on sufficient monies being available, the respondent said.

BARRA

Speaking on behalf of the instructors, watch manager William Douglas said: 'We have been delighted to participate with the kids, as we have seen them grow in confidence over the months. This has given our staff new found skills in working with young people and has extended our own personal development.'

Father John Paul MacKinnon, who presented certificates to the young people, said: 'This work has allowed the fire crew to engage with young people in the community, particularly those who would benefit from the positive influence of the fire staff throughout the Highlands and Islands.'

Around the Rurals

KILMORE

PRESIDENT Isabel Smith welcomed a good turnout of Kilmore Scottish Womens Rural Institute members to a meeting on December 14.

After business was dealt with, Isabel welcomed Kilmore member Margaret Whittion who demonstrated and helped members make a table decoration which was a lovely start to the festive season.

Members then enjoyed a buffet. A good night was had by all.

LOCHAWE

BECAUSE of inclement weather conditions the numbers at the Lochawe SWRI December meeting were rather depleted.

Six hardy souls had the privilege of hearing from member Jenny Ogden, who gave a talk and slideshow of her trip from Bruges to Venice on the Orient Express.

Mrs Pat McLeod gave the vote of thanks and a splendid tea was provided by Anne Hay and Janet Buchanan.

Christmas Card Competition: A Hay - gold; P McLeod - gold; E Mackay - silver.

APPIN

APPIN Historical Society's next meeting will be on Saturday January 21 when Dr Iain McNicol will give a talk entitled 'Centenary of the Dewar Report - the Road to the NHS'.

Everyone is welcome to attend the talk in Port Appin Hall at 2.30pm.



Councillors, officials and contractors inspect the new Sir E Scott School in Harris.

Doors open on new Sir E Scott School

THE NEW Sir E Scott School in Tarbert, Harris, formally opened as planned last Monday and welcomed its first intake of secondary pupils.

The school's Old Hostel offices will be demolished later this month for car parking and a bus drop-off, while the 1970s main building will make way for the completion of the main campus. All remaining work should be finished by July, when the primary school and nursery will occupy their new homes in time for the academic term beginning in August.

Elsewhere, the Comhairle's Sgoiltean Ùra project to reduce and modernise its school estate is reaching its final stages.

The second and final phase of work at Point Primary will be completed this week, while three other schools in the £125million Western Isles Schools Project - West Side Primary at

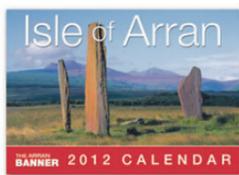
Barvas, the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway and Daliburgh Primary in South Uist - remain on schedule for completion in March, July and August respectively.

Chairman of education in the Comhairle (Western Isles Council), Councillor Morag Munro said: 'The completion of the first phase of works at Sir E Scott is fantastic news for the pupils, staff and community and we look forward to seeing the remainder of the facility fully finished in July.'

The Western Isles Schools Project will deliver five nursery, five primary, two secondary schools and an ICT hub and office accommodation across Lewis, Harris, Benbecula and South Uist.

Following their completion, a 28-year facilities management contract will start to maintain the schools until 2039.

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Mull mini-hydro scheme could drip £150,000 per annum into community

COMMUNITY groups on Mull and Iona could be in line to receive a £150,000 boost every year if a mini-hydro power scheme gets the go-ahead. Every household on the island will receive ballots for February's vote on Sustainable Mull and Iona's plans for a mini-hydro turbine to be installed on

a hill behind Mull Rugby Club between Craignure and Salen. If successful, the group expects the scheme to contribute up to £30,000 to community groups and projects in its first year, with that figure possibly rising to £150,000 per year in later years as the equipment is paid for. It would generate enough

electricity to power 230 homes and the equipment is expected to last more than 50 years. However, the ballot is vital to the scheme's success, as the land required is currently owned by the Forestry Commission. While the commission has a scheme to allow community groups to lease land it cannot

use, a ballot must be held. Over half the islands' residents must take part and, of that, there should be a majority in favour. The chairman of Sustainable Mull and Iona, Nigel Burgess, is urging everyone on the island to take part. 'The future of Scotland's islands relies on the interaction

of individuals with ideas and energy that stimulate confidence in a sustainable future,' he said. 'Let's not leave the future to others. Let's make the most of this simple democratic process to strengthen our communities now and in the future.' Ballots will start landing on

doorsteps around February 15 and should be returned as soon as possible. Groups and community organisations will be able to apply for a share of the profits and it is expected to be able to assist groups ranging from senior lunch clubs to children's sporting activities.

Plans for the project, which is being supported by the Mull and Iona Community Trust, have been in development for two years. Full details will be presented at Mull's next Renewables Fair in Craignure Hall on February 4. For more, see www.garmonyhydro.info.

Woman airlifted off icy Ben Nevis

A WOMAN was airlifted from Ben Nevis to the Belford Hospital in Fort William last Thursday night after falling on the mountain.

Fourteen members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team (LMRT) attended the scene above the Red Burn and called out RAF Lossiemouth's rescue helicopter to assist. LMRT leader John Stevenson said: 'She had suspected pelvic damage and was struggling to walk. I don't think she was badly injured.'

Conditions higher on the mountain were tricky, with verglas - snow covered with a layer of ice - a hazard, Mr Stevenson added.

Spean Bridge Little Chef to close

LOCHABER'S only Little Chef is one of 67 being closed by the roadside eaterie chain in a cost-cutting drive, it has emerged.

The Oban Times understands the Spean Bridge food outlet will close at the end January with the loss of at least three jobs. The company said the sites earmarked for closure have been trading unprofitably for a number of years.

Water plant computers destroyed by lightning

COMPUTERS operating water treatment plants serving Kilchrenan, Taynuilt and Dalmally were destroyed after lightning struck them during this month's storms.

Scottish Water was forced to use tankers to bring clean water into the two plants until replacement systems could be installed.

Most households' supply remained uninterrupted, although water pressure did drop in some homes.

Both plants at Kilchrenan/Taynuilt and Dalmally have now been repaired and supplies returned to normal.

Dalmally demands action at 'near-miss' junction

'We want a sign. Surely that doesn't cost the earth?'

A PETITION of 240 signatures expressing a desire to improve safety at the Surgery Junction in Dalmally was presented to community councillors at their January meeting.

Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council had invited Scotland Transerv customer services manager Cathal MacAskill to its meeting last Wednesday, where the safety of the junction was high on the agenda.

The Surgery Junction petition, lodged by sub-postmistress Gill Chrystal, called on safety improvements to be made following a number of 'near misses'.

The busy junction is the access from the A85 to Dalmally's surgery, post office, pharmacy and community hall and there are 16 houses proposed for the area.

A right turn for east-bound traffic, the junction is also on a straight section of road at the end of the village's 40mph speed limit and Ms Chrystal said she sees overtaking at the junction on a daily basis.

Mr Macaskill said: 'Our north-west region is a huge area with 805 miles of trunk road and there is only so much money to go around. We do listen to communities that tell us of near misses.'

'But the areas we are drawn to first are those where there have been serious or fatal

road accidents.' But Ms Chrystal responded: 'What we want is a sign, warning east-bound traffic that there is a junction ahead and not to overtake. Surely that doesn't cost the earth?'

Mr MacAskill intimated that a sign could be erected but added the community council would have to contact Transport Scotland in the first instance.

Community council chairman David Fellowes commented: 'It just seems to us that until someone is killed, nothing is going to happen. The situation is going to get far worse when the houses are built.'

Views Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, Argyll and Bute Council's transport spokesman, said the council was examining whether the junction gave sufficient views of oncoming traffic, as specified in the planning conditions for the recently-built community hall.

He told the meeting: 'We have to consider how services for Dalmally have moved to that area and the increase in traffic there.'

'The issue will be taken up by us, Transerv and the police at our next roads meeting.'

Those at the meeting agreed there was now also a stronger case for better lighting alongside the road from Glenview to the surgery.

Forestry group search for Glencoe plaque owners

Lack of record causes concern

FORESTRY Commission Scotland is appealing for help in tracing anyone who might have a connection with memorial plaques on benches and picnic tables at Glencoe Lochan.

The plea comes as the commission prepares to upgrade trails around the picturesque spot among woodlands near the former Glencoe Hospital. Work will include replacing some of the wooden seats and picnic tables and the commission wants to ensure the memorial plaques are not lost.

Kirsty Mann of the commission's Lochaber team said: 'Several years ago it was common for us to agree to have memorials sited here but unfortunately many of the benches and tables with plaques have suffered from the elements and now need to be replaced.'

'Back then, no one thought to keep a record of who placed plaques here, so we don't know who to contact

about those that need to be removed from the old equipment. We tend not to agree to new memorials anymore because our main concern is to keep the forest as a natural place that visitors can enjoy for its wild beauty.'

'We were getting so many requests that there was a risk - if we agreed to them - that too many plaques would spring up and begin to have an obvious and intrusive effect on these locations.'

She added: 'We're trying to keep these places special for everyone.'

Any memorial plaques removed during the upgrade works will be kept safe until such time as the owners contact the Lochaber team to discuss what they'd like to do with their plaque.

Anyone with useful information, or an interest in any of the plaques, should contact the Lochaber District office on 01397 702184.



The hunt is on for the owners of memorial plaques fixed to benches around Glencoe Lochan. Photograph by Kim Tapper.

Swimmers set off 'around Small Isles' for 4,000 lengths of Mallaig pool

MALLAIG Swimming Pool's 'Swim Round the Islands' started on Monday ahead of the Swimathon in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care on April 28-29.

The 'virtual' swim from Mallaig round the Small Isles and back represents 4,000 lengths of the Mallaig pool.

Manager Alida Achermann said participants can complete as many, or as few, laps as they want - even if it means being 'marooned' somewhere between Eigg and Muck!

Ms Ackerman, originally from

Cape Province in South Africa, said the virtual swim was a fun way of training for the Marie Curie fundraiser - and burning off some festive calories.

She told The Oban Times: 'You have three months to swim as many lengths as you can, or as you want to. Each staff member has a team, and it's all about trying to get people to swim more and get fitter.'

The nationwide Swimathon has two distances of 2.5kms and 5kms, with an option for a simple 'big splash' for less committed swimmers.

Influx of 'ghostly' gulls causing a flap throughout west coast

BIRD watchers are getting in a flap after a number of unusual 'ghostly' species were spotted across Argyll and the Western Isles.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland is reporting a major influx of Iceland and glaucous gulls to the west coast, with more than 100 recorded in Argyll alone.

It's thought that the recent windy weather may have blown the birds off course, but it's not thought they'll suffer any difficulties as a result as both Iceland and glaucous gulls visit Scotland every winter - even if not in such high numbers.

The charity's conservation officer, Martin Scott, said: 'These are beauti-

ful ghostly birds with a suitably frosty appearance given that they have come down from the Arctic. The two species concerned are very similar although the glaucous gull is generally larger than the Iceland gull. I imagine the recent windy weather must be having an effect and pushing the birds into Scottish waters from the Atlantic.'

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Transport chaos as A890 remains closed at Stromeferry

Call to open new abattoir

THE ONGOING closure of the A890 at Stromeferry emphasises the need for an abattoir in Skye and Lochalsh, says the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF).

West coast crofters and farmers taking their animals to Dingwall for slaughter have faced increased difficulties since a landslide shut the road last month.

Crofting resources programme manager Donald Murdie said: 'Taking animals from some parts of north Skye for slaughter at Dingwall is already a three-and-a-half hour journey. The landslide means that anyone travelling from Skye and Lochalsh to Dingwall has to go via Invermoriston instead. This puts about another hour on the journey. The uncertainty about the A890 and its future increases the case for an abattoir for Skye and Lochalsh. The SCF is in the process of putting an application in to the Scottish Government for funding to cover the cost of a study into options for an appropriately sized community owned abattoir in Skye and Lochalsh.'

Highland Council confirmed this week that there will be no restrictions on the carriage of livestock on the temporary ferry at Stromeferry, provided the total weight of the vehicle carrying the animals is less than 10 tonnes.



Monday morning: Lochcarron children board the Sula Mhor for the first stage of their journey to Plockton High School. A bus was waiting on the south side to take them to school. Photo by Alex Ingram

Boat times extended to ease closure strain

HIGHLAND Council chiefs updated a packed public meeting in Lochcarron village hall on Monday night on efforts to ease transport chaos caused by the ongoing A890 closure at Stromeferry.

The audience of 200 heard proposals on extending ferry times between north and south Strome from daylight hours to 7am to 7pm, and on dualing the adjacent railway as the road until work on the dangerous rock face is complete.

Lochcarron butcher Stewart MacKenzie can now take his van across on Wednesdays for his delivery run to Plockton - and felt the longer ferry operating hours would help.

Speaking to The Oban Times after the meeting, he said: 'I'm more than happy - and so are 95 per cent of the workers on this side. That will suit an awful lot of people. The timescale is to have the road along the railway in place by mid-February.'

The quicker they can get that done the more people will benefit.'

Lochcarron Hotel owner Diane Siggers said: 'The main thing [at the meeting] was when is something going to be done to get the road open?'

'We have had cancellations in bookings, but we have also picked up business from people having to stay in the village because they can't get home.'

Transport committee chairman said on Tuesday: 'Everybody had the chance to air their views - and they were wide and varied about the inconvenience this has caused. People wanted the car ferry to run longer - we have the slipways well lit and we will put this in place as soon as possible.'

'Also there will be a train leaving Inverness at 6am and getting into Kyle at 9am to help people get to work. We are working with Scotrail on an extra return journey.'

Mr Laing was unable to give a timescale for diverting the A890 along the railway, adding the road would be closed 'for at least a month'.

Glenelg-Skye car ferry the MV Glenachulish and passenger ferry the Sula Mhor have been running across Loch Carron since Monday. Passengers on the Sula Mhor included Plockton High School pupils.

Glenachulish skipper, Lochcarron man 'Q' Banting, told The Oban Times 80 vehicles used the ferry on Monday - after an hour's delay in getting the engine started.

'She's not used to having two nights of -5°C,' he said. 'The batteries can't take the cold.'

The council was hosting another public meeting in Achmore last night (Wednesday) to update residents living south of the closure. Rockfalls have closed the A890 since December 22.

Communities toast Sunart distillery plan

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

A MULTI-MILLION pound investment could bring a new malt distillery and up to 10 jobs to one of the West Highland's remotest communities.

Fine whiskies seller Adelphi Distillery Ltd wants to build a whisky plant and visitor centre at Glen More, between Glenborrodale and Kilchoan in Ardnamurchan.

The distillery, possibly to be named Loch Sunart, would join Oban, Tobermory and Ben Nevis on the west coast whisky trail.

West Ardnamurchan Community Council backed the detailed proposals, lodged with Highland Council on January 4, after a presentation from Ardnamurchan Estate and Adelphi director Donald Houston last Monday. The plant would be powered entirely by wood chippings from Ardnamurchan estate, while used draft - the solid waste from fermentation - would feed the estate's cattle and cut haulage costs.

Mr Houston, 51, told The Oban Times on Monday the investment could total £6million, dependent on when revenue from whisky sales began to flow.

Should more than five householders or a statutory consultee such as SEPA object, planning committee councillors would likely rule on the application. However, it was 'possible' officials could process the bid faster under delegated powers if no objections were received.

Ms MacMillan said: 'We do understand the company's keenness, however there is still a process to go through and this proposal has to be looked at carefully. If we can deal with it quicker than that, we will.'

'The application was only received on January 4. After the advert is placed in next week's press, the period for responses is 28 days.'

Jon Haylett, spokesperson for statutory consultees West Ardnamurchan Community Council, said: 'It's a super development and I hope Highland Council have the good sense to support this so it can go ahead. Adelphi understands there's a limited window involved for big investors. They are not prepared to hang around and the danger is they could walk away.'

Police probe Caol disturbance

POLICE have confirmed they are investigating a disturbance at the swing park near Birch Road in Caol in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Inspector Donald Campbell told The Oban Times a number of witnesses had already come forward, but police were still looking for anyone with information about the incident to contact them.

NEWSDESK 01631 568000

Donation lifts Caol school spirits

SPIRITS were lifted at Caol Primary School on Monday when Fort William Football Club donated a new Nintendo Wii to replace one stolen last week.

Three laptops, three overhead projectors, two digital cameras and £780 in cash were also taken when thieves broke through a window last Wednesday night.

Club chairman John Wattman, who lives in Caol, told The Oban Times: 'My wife said I should do something to help.'

'So I made a few calls to people at the club and everybody agreed. "I didn't want to see the kids missing out."

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

P7 pupils Freya MacDonald and Sine MacRae said: 'We are very grateful that Fort William FC came here and gave us a new Wii and Wii games.'

'Everybody loves playing the Wii for a treat in Golden Time.'

'Thank you. We would like to say a huge thank you to the club for doing this. It has cheered everyone up.'

Inspector Donald Campbell told The Oban Times investigations were continuing

into a spate of 'possibly linked' thefts over recent days. Cash was taken from Harbo agricultural premises at Annat, Corrach, last Tuesday night and money was stolen from Direct Pet Supplies at Blar Mhor Industrial Estate on Wednesday night.

Items were stolen from the Stagecoach bus depot on Ardgor Road, Caol, early on Sunday morning, when thieves also attempted to break into the nearby Hawco Volkswagen showroom.

Anyone with information is urged to contact 01397 702361 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.



Fort William FC chairman John Wattman and board member Albert Worsdall present a new Nintendo Wii with games and controllers to the school. 20_032ca0101

Zoe wins Costa Brava trip

Lucky Kinlochleven High School S3 pupil Zoe Hannah is heading for the Costa Brava in June - with the help of an anonymous donor.

The person contacted the school looking to sponsor a child on the cultural trip, which is run in conjunction with outdoor activities group PGL. Every pupil's name went into a bucket and biology teacher Carly Aitken, pictured, who is co-ordinating the visit, pulled Zoe's name out.

Head teacher John McGilp said: 'If there are any other good Samaritans out there who would be willing to sponsor a child, please contact the school



on 01855 832042 or email kinlochleven.high@highland.gov.uk.'



Derek Grier, who faces being pursued by Argyll and Bute Council for thousands of pounds of berthing fees, despite losing nearly £3,000 of equipment when the boat was prematurely destroyed last year. 15_103derek1

Saga of scrapped fishing boat sails on as council pursue for fees

OBAN councillor Neil Mackay has criticised his own council for the way it handled the former fishing vessel Lady Evelyn's premature destruction.

The former Irish-registered boat was broken up at Oban's North Pier by outside contractors on December 29 last year after Argyll and Bute Council bought it for £1.

The vessel's immediate former owner, Derek Grier, claims he was told by the harbourmaster that he would have until January 7 to remove valuables before it was destroyed.

However, he estimates he is nearly £3,000 out of pocket as a result of the early scrapping of the boat, which had seen significant improvement before December's storms toppled it from its temporary supporting

legs, causing irreparable damage.

It has since emerged that the authority is planning to pursue Mr Grier for thousands of pounds of harbour fees, despite repeatedly refusing him access to facilities while the boat was berthed at the fenced off area of the North Pier.

Councillor Mackay has described the situation as 'ridiculous', pointing out that Mr Grier had in fact saved the council as much as £12,000 when he purchased the vessel in October 2010.

Councillor Mackay said: 'The boat had been left there to rot by its previous owner and it was going to cost the council between £10-12,000 for removal.'

'The huge costs involved were to have the boat lifted by

inflatable buoyancy aids before a ship on either side could tow it away.'

'Then Mr Grier bought the Lady Evelyn and we had an agreement to give him some leeway to try and do something with it.'

'He effectively saved the council a lot of money.'

'Personally, I'm glad it's gone as, with the increasing number of cruise ships coming into the town, the last thing you want to see is a half-sunken fishing boat.'

'However, its removal should not be to the detriment of anyone involved.'

Councillor Mackay has now called for Argyll and Bute Council to abandon plans to pursue Mr Grier for outstanding berthing fees.

Mr Grier said: 'The council

have a lot to answer for.'

'If they had seen fit to do something about the Lady Evelyn, then why did they not do anything about it in the two years the boat was lying before I got anywhere near it?'

'The council got what they ultimately wanted, its removal. That should be the end of the matter.'

'I'm prepared to leave it, but I will fight for compensation for my loss of tools and equipment if it's not.'

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Argyll and Bute Council agreed the sale of the Lady Evelyn with the owner before Christmas.'

'Any dates for the work to be carried out would have been agreed between the owner and the contractor carrying out the work.'

Missing Mull diver found by rescue teams on Ardnamurchan shore

RESCUE teams feared for the worst last Tuesday as they searched for a missing scallop diver in the Sound of Mull.

With the light fading as quickly as hopes of finding the casualty, the man was found on a remote shoreline on Ardnamurchan after a four-hour search.

The Tobermory all-weather lifeboat Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey was launched at 4.15pm to search for the diver who had failed to return to the surface, close to the Red Rocks in the Sound of Mull.

The lifeboat, on its first shout of 2012, was joined in the search by HM Coastguard shore teams from Kilchoan, Salen and Tobermory, who scoured the adjacent coastline, as well as the Stornoway Coastguard search and rescue helicopter.

At 6.35pm, following a request from Clyde Coastguard and with rapidly deteriorating weather and visibility, a volunteer crew member from the Tobermory RNLI lifeboat, Grant Carmichael, was put aboard the scallop diving vessel to assist the missing diver's colleagues in the search.

Shortly afterwards, a voice was heard in the dark from the shore, close to an area known as Maclean's Nose, and the missing diver was located.

He was airlifted to safety by the Stornoway Coastguard search and rescue helicopter and taken to hospital in Oban for a check up.

Tobermory RNLI Coxswain Phil Higgs said: 'When the light faded, we feared the worst, but all of the search teams involved carried on. This is a tremendous result for everyone concerned.'

25 Years Ago Those Were The Days The Oban Times Thursday, January 21, 1987 Councillors quizzed over twinning trip implementation of far-reaching reforms urged in a highly detailed SCU report of crofter housing. The report, which contains the first-ever independent analysis of the crofter housing scheme is published today. The report comprehensively demolishes many misconceptions about crofter housing. Far from receiving generous housing help, as has been widely stated, crofters get much less housing assistance than other comparative groups. Now the SCU are looking for a series of reforms designed to put crofters on a par with other people. Lochaber expresses strong cash commitment to skiing - but doubts linger LOCHABER District Council have agreed to contribute £1/2 million to the Aonach Mor ski project. At a special meeting on Tuesday, they voted in favour of using a £540,000 covenant to raise the £1/2million plus their already promised £140,000. The focus is now on Highland Regional Council who are holding a special meeting today to decide whether they too will allocate just over £1/2 million to the scheme. The two councils were forced into the situation of trying to raise the £1.085m cash when the SDA - who were originally given the sum - indicated that they weren't yet ready to commit the cash. Chief executive of Lochaber district council Mr David Blair told the meeting on Tuesday that the SDA had 'expressed reservations' about the weather factor. Mr Blair added that the SDA would review their position over the funding of the scheme in a year's time after receiving technical advice and monitoring weather at Aonach Mor. Summer poll could hit tourism THE possibility of a June election is worrying tourist organisations throughout the Highland and Islands who fear a summer poll could inflict serious damage on this year's holiday trade. While October is still considered the most likely date for the election, many political commentators believe that if pointers are favourable Mrs Thatcher may be tempted to go to the country earlier. Some tourist centres are so concerned at the prospect, they are now considering making formal representation to the Government. Mr Jeremy Inglis, a director of a company which owns large restaurants in both Oban and Fort William, said the effect of a June election could be 'devastating'.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD Across 1 Boot (4) 3 Strained liquid (8) 9 Close friend (7) 10 Look (5) 11 Subversion checkers in force (6,6) 13 Fancy (6) 15 Acetylene (6) 17 Unable to be restrained (12) 20 Organs for baby development (5) 21 Campaign (7) 22 Remorseful (8) 23 Remaining (4) Down 1 Special time (8) 2 Poison plant from the Rhus family (4) 4 Sudden increase in population (6) 5 In music, use an organ a few times, v playing wind (6-6) 6 Chaos (7) 7 Level (4) 8 One who meets (12) 12 Devout (8) 14 Buff material (7) 16 Guiding light (6) 18 Slow (5) 19 A pile of rubbish (4) Last week's solution

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Cold wind of change blows through BBC

THERE are many incidents or occasions when we think 'it could never happen to me'.

This week's shock news that one third of the production staff at BBC Scotland are to lose their jobs is perhaps one of these incidents. If an icon of the media industry can be so drastically affected by the freezing of the TV licence fee until 2017, then perhaps the icy wind of recession is biting deeper than anyone anticipated.

With BBC Scotland aiming to shave up to 20 per cent off their £102m annual budget it would appear that one in 10 jobs could be lost by 2016/17.

There is also a touch of irony that many of the jobs identified as potentially expendable are in the field of political journalism. This at a time when political coverage and debate is at an all-time high. Is this coincidence?

GLASGOW LETTER

Celtic Connections 2012

TONIGHT (Thursday) is the night it all begins and for the next few weeks the Concert Hall will be the main focus for a festival which will also take place at numerous venues throughout the city.

From educational concerts during the day, workshops at weekends, the Danny Kyle Open Stage which is free every evening at 5pm and the variety of concerts there will be something for everyone.

The CCA will be a Gaelic Hub from January 20 until February 4 with workshops, talks, films, songs and late night music sessions. The programme starting time varies but it is usually 4pm or 5pm.

From Thursday January 26 to Saturday January 28 there will be music as advertised in the full Celtic Connections programme. For more information call in at the CCA or visit the Ceol's Craic website.

A tune for Paisley

MOD PHAISLIG and Voices in Paisley are pleased to announce an exciting opportunity to compose a tune for the Royal National Mod to be held in the town in 2013.

To enter the competition email or post a copy of your composition by February 8 to modphaislig2013@yahoo.co.uk or by post to Mod Phaislig 2013, 12 Ben Nevis Road, Paisley, PA2 7LA. Do not put your name on the manuscript as the judging will be anonymous but full contact details should be submitted separately. The organisers would be pleased to receive an audio of the tune being played. The winning tune, which will also earn £150 for the composer, will be the soundtrack to the preparations for the Mod and will be a legacy for the 2013 Mod.

The judges, Duncan Nicholson, Pipe Major of Strathclyde Police Pipe Band, Brian Laurie of the Brian Laurie Accordion School and Andrew Gifford of Fiddlers Bid, will choose what they consider to be the best two tunes. The winning tune will be chosen by the audience, on Saturday March 3, when a number of Gaelic choirs will perform as part of the Weaving Musical Threads extravaganza being held in the town. This concert will replace the event which should have taken place in October 2011 with the choirs taking part in an informal competition for the Provost Celia Lawson Gaelic Cup.

Fergie's back

AFTER a year out of action I am delighted to announce that Fergie MacDonald is back playing again with as much enthusiasm as he had when he started more than 50 years ago.

The good news for all his followers in the Glasgow area is that he is going to be busy as part of Celtic Connections. Tomorrow evening (Friday) he will be taking part in Lochaber Gold, the celebration of 50 years of Lochaber High

School, which first featured at the Blas Festival. Former Celtic footballer John Hartson, whose wife comes from Spean Bridge, will be present at the Lochaber event to talk about what Lochaber means to him.

The following evening Fergie is off with his band for a dance in the Pearce Institute, not far from Govan Town Hall where he performed in the past on many occasions, and then on Tuesday January 24 he will be part of the Box and Fiddle Concert which will look at both instruments past and present.

Clydebank ceilidh

JANUARY'S ceilidh at Clydebank had a theme of 'firsts' with singers Morag Smith and Liz MacEachan on this stage for the first time. Also making their debut were youngsters Anna and Molly MacGregor, pupils at Sgoil Ghaidhlig Glaschu, who played selections on fiddle and clarsach.

Duncan MacDonald and Rachel and Emma Deans sang and the piper for the evening was Robert Wood, one of Scotland's promising young pipers who as well as being a member of Grade 1 Torpichen and Bathgate Pipe Band is a member of the National Youth Pipe Band.

George Paul chaired the proceedings and Kirsteen Grant was the accompanist. Another first for this ceilidh was the absence of hard working secretary Mairi Howieson. I am sure all their friends will wish husband John a speedy recovery as they look forward to seeing them both back amongst the 'Bankies'.

Shinty ceilidh

THE GLASGOW shinty community get together this weekend when Glasgow Mid Argyll and Milngavie and Bearsden hold a ceilidh dance in Milngavie Town Hall on Saturday, starting at 7.30pm. This dance is now established as a great night of traditional family entertainment and everyone is welcome.

Diary dates

Thursday January 19: Opening Concert, Celtic Connections, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 7.30pm.

Saturday January 21: Highlander's Club Dance, Partickburgh Hall, 8pm - Susan MacFadyen's Band.

Wednesday January 25: Islay Inn, Burns Supper, 8pm till late.

Thursday January 26 to Saturday 28: Ceol's Craic - see Celtic Connections above.

Pub scene

NICKY McMichan will be playing in the Park Bar on both Friday and Sunday evenings while Willie Cameron and Martin Pottinger will be playing there on Saturday throughout the day.

In the Islay Inn the music will be provided by Dixie Beaver on Friday and Parting Glass on Saturday.

Neil Murray, Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.



Oban's south pier before development

Jim Donn of Blackburn, Aberdeen, submitted this week's flashback photo which shows Oban's South Pier before it was re-developed. The harbour master's white cottage, at present the headquarters of Oban Lifeboat, can be seen on the left. The lifeboat is on the right. Caledonian MacBrayne's ferry looms large in the background, perhaps a sign that this tranquil scene would not last much longer. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Ferry 'freebie' please

Sir,
So the leader of Highland Council is calling on the Scottish Government to give everyone in the country a free ticket to visit an island in 2012 to celebrate the Year of Highland Culture, report, *The Oban Times*, January 5.

While he is about it, perhaps Councillor Foxley might also ask the First Minister and the Minister of Energy, Enterprise and Tourism for free, all-year-round tickets for residents of Sunart, Ardnarmurchan and Morvern to allow them to cross the Corran Narrows on Highland Council's ferry to and from the ward he represents.

It would be considerably cheaper and bring enormous social and cultural benefits to those communities already 'on the edge'.

Iain Thornber, Knock House, Morvern.

Unforgivable tourism gaff

Sir,
I read a quote from Councillor Mackay in last week's *Oban Times* which said there would be plenty of places which would want to 'pinch' Oban's status as being Scotland's jewel in the crown.

Much as I like and enjoy Oban, it is no more Scotland's jewel in the crown than any town in Argyll and Bute. Are Tobermory, Inveraray or Tarbert any less worthy?

Who gave Councillor Mackay the right to bestow such accolades on his home town?

Councillor Mackay, I fear, is afflicted with the myopia which dulls the vision of all the current administration members, a failure to see further than the boundaries of their own wards.

For a spokesperson who is responsible for all our tourism interests, this is an unforgivable gaff.

If Argyll and Bute is to be the tourism jewel in the crown of Scotland that I know it should be, then our communities have to share that accolade.

The next council tourism spokesperson must be more ambitious for all our communities, not just their own.

Councillor John Semple, South Kintyre.

A83 must be upgraded

Sir,
I would like to offer our company's support for the campaign to upgrade the A83 road between Campbeltown and Glasgow.

We are a seafood processing company based in Ayr and have had a long-standing relationship with fishing boats operating from Kintyre and Argyll ports for more than 20 years.

The value of the shellfish landed there is significant and the quality of the products makes them highly prized and sought after in markets throughout Europe and beyond.

The fishing industry is, as you know, very important in terms of local employment, on sea and land, and for its ongoing contribution to local communities.

It goes without saying, therefore, that the A83 transport is a vital artery in ensuring the

products reach us in time for processing so that there are no delays 'from net to plate'.

Over the last few years we have seen a marked decline in the A83 and an increased number of closures leading to slow and 'dangerous' re-routing on roads not designed for the volume of traffic this creates. As a consequence we have been more frequently 'challenged' and extra costs have been incurred.

The short-term repairs and fixes do little good and the problem, in my opinion, will continue to grow unless addressed properly.

Similarities exist between what is happening on the A83 now and that which happened on the A75 Ayr to Stranraer road a few years back with landslides, re-routing and continual ineffective repairs being carried out there.

Eventually the government had to bow to pressure and take the necessary decision to substantially upgrade the road, finally alleviating the problems. It is crucial for the same to happen to the A83.

Kenneth Hastie, General Manager, Scotprime Seafoods Ltd.

Fragile transport system

Sir,
Oban is only the 'Gateway to the Isles' if people can get to the gate.

Extended closures of the A83 at the Rest-and-be-Thankful are again a real risk.

The alternative route of crossing the Firth of Clyde by vehicle ferry is now in the hands of a single commercial operator and is arguably the most expensive ferry crossing in the world.

There is no mechanism to control prices and no competition on what is a highly profitable route.

We would urge all communities dependent on traffic using the A83 to support our call for the Scottish Government to honour its original promise to vehicle crossings of the Firth of Clyde.

We are supposed to have a robust, integrated, transport network not a fragile system that puts many communities at financial risk from closure of a single road.

Marij Van Helmond, secretary, Dunoona/Gourock Ferry Action Group.

Consult on new Blar Mhor 3G pitch

Sir,
There have been several, unintentionally misleading claims made about the possible future use of the proposed 3G artificial turf pitch at Blar Mhor.

While we are in total support of this project, we urge the project developers to carry out thorough research and consultation with the clubs so that what is being provided will be fit for purpose, value for money and sustainable.

The SFA will not allow any football club to play their home league games on a pitch other than their own.

They would, however, allow the club to play on a FIFA passed 3G pitch on their club ground.

Currently, the Camanachd Association will not allow its member clubs to play senior matches on artificial turf, and this would only change if all their member clubs were to reach agreement.

This is not likely to happen soon as, generally, shinty players would prefer to play the game on grass. The IRB does allow rugby clubs to play on artificial turf that has passed the standards set out in their Regulation 22, thereafter it is a matter of choice for each club. The type of 'rubber crumb' filled artificial surface that is deemed suitable for these three sports, would not be suitable for hockey, which needs either a sand, or water based, surface.

Additionally, it should be taken into account that whenever possible, clubs will opt to play home games on their own club pitch for revenue reasons.

In the light of these facts, therefore, it is questionable whether the talked about viewing stand would represent value for money.

Nevertheless, a new artificial pitch with the correct surface would be invaluable for clubs, schools and community groups to train on, at all levels - especially in view of the fact that the two new grass pitches at Lochaber High School will be of limited community use.

The Board of Lochaber Sports Association.

Ludicrous assertions

Sir,
The easiest way to tell that an election is approaching is to check newspapers for letters from Councillor Bruce Marshall.

The more ludicrous his accusations against the SNP the closer the election must be.

At the Area Committee in Oban in December I argued for some new thinking about ways to deal with the scandalous backlog in roads repair and maintenance.

A backlog which, incidentally, creates the very disincentive to tourism that Councillor Marshall is so scared of losing but one which is the responsibility of the council administration of which Councillor Marshall is a senior member.

In an effort to squirm his way out of that responsibility Councillor Marshall now makes ludicrous assertions, which even his associate Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, the chairman of the local committee, forbore from making at the time.

For the record I do not want to see road tolls in Argyll and Bute. What I and all the residents of Argyll and Bute want to see is a council that can repair roads and keep them in a decent and usable state.

We don't have such a council at present.

Councillor Roddy McCuish, Oban South and Isles.

Windfarm compensation call

Sir,
As the years pass, the march of wind turbines will build up until our beautiful Scotland will be swamped with them to meet targets for green energy.

As if Scotland will have even the remotest effect on the world's climate.

I strongly suggest that compensation is paid to properties in the areas affected by wind farms.

With the passage of time we hear of more and more who are adversely affected by living near them.

The pathetic offer of community benefits, or bribes, when spread around the

population near a farm is tiny. We know that the attraction of a property is adversely affected as people now cannot sometimes sell their homes. If the lowering of value is even in the region of five to ten per cent that is a considerable amount of money. It detracts from the rural feel, ruining the view and may even pose a health hazard.

We seem to have little say in the siting of such farms and even if we try to object it is a long and expensive process. If it is stopped then the Scottish Government can move in and let it through. Some democracy we live in now when a remote MSP can lower the appeal and value of one's home.

G W Stewart, Clachan Seil, Seil Island.

Replace district nurse

Sir,
I feel I must write to join the campaign to ensure that a district nurse is appointed at Kilchoan as soon as possible.

I admire everything that Rosie Curtis and her colleagues have achieved thus far.

I live on the Ardnarmurchan Peninsula too, but not so far west. The cornerstone of the NHS philosophy is that every person in the UK should be looked after when in need from cradle to grave. What has happened here?

It cannot be that difficult to find a replacement nurse, and her family perhaps, to move to this wonderful area to take over Jessie's mantle, but now with a month to go till her retirement, there is not anyone in position, so we will be without a District Nurse for the time being.

I find this absolutely disgusting.

Gill McVicar, rather than having wasted at least a year talking about how they should move forward with the impending retirement of Jessie Colquhoun, should do something about it.

Also, how can our two local doctors - I am registered at their practice - opt out of their responsibilities to attend to people 'out of hours'?

We are a very remote and rural area and need to have the assistance of those with medical training in emergencies and out of hours - anything can happen to anyone at any time - and we must not be marginalised like this just because we live on the edge of the country.

Think back a few years to the wonderful Dr Maris Buchanan - we wouldn't be in this position if she were still in post.

Sally Cameron, address supplied.

Good service from Vodafone

Sir,
Regarding the story in *The Oban Times* about Vodafone not giving their customers good service, after all the signal loss I phoned them and with a less than five minute phone call I received a month's line rental for free. I also got a SureSignal box free of charge - I only had postage and packing to pay.

To me this is a very good service.

With BT, it took 57 minutes to get any compensation for the hassle I had trying to get my phone line repaired.

DJ Barr, Benderloch.

Times Diary

IN THE build-up to Burns Night, a teacher at a west coast secondary school was encouraging pupils to learn more about Burns, the man, the times that he lived in and the issues behind his lyrics.

The project appeared to be going well until the teacher asked that, while we celebrate the Bard's birth on January 29, did anyone know when he died?

One startled girl said: 'Died - you mean he's dead. When did that happen?'

SOME great excuses have been given over the years - in this week in 1973 Beatles favourite and Kintyre farmer Paul McCartney was fined £100 for growing cannabis plants at his farm near Campbeltown.

McCartney claimed that he had merely planted seeds given to him by fans - and was unaware of what might grow from them! Aye right!

WE WERE pleased to receive an email informing us that Clydebank Crime Prevention Panel was inviting visitors to a police station open day where there would be 'a light fingered buffet'.

DURING this period of consultation surrounding Road Equivalent Tariff (RET), Dougie Johnston, originally from Mull, reminded us that when the ferry company introduced reduced rates for islanders travelling with livestock, customers were quick to take advantage and took a sheep with them when going to the mainland, bringing said sheep back on the return journey to gain another concessionary fare.

MARGARET MacLeod tells us that her son Calum failed in his attempt to get a job at a well-known Speyside distillery.

At the interview he was told that the company was looking for two key attributes. The manager told him the first was cleanliness. 'For instance, did you wipe your feet on the mat on the way in?' A nervous Calum answered 'yes'. The manager shook his head before saying: 'The second key attribute is honesty - we don't have a mat. Goodbye!'

WE ARE hesitant to note errors in other publications but we liked a classified advert in a north-based weekly newspaper which offered: For Sale - Antique writing desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers.

MEMORABLE quote: 'It is clear our nation is reliant upon big foreign oil. More and more of our imports come from overseas.' - George W Bush, 2000.



ADVERTS that never made our screens - this cracker came from the makers of Scotland's other national drink. More on this theme can be found at Irn Bru.com.

Share your humorous gems, comments on life or amusing tales with the *Diary*. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to *Diary*, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

The Little Ice Age returneth

Sir,
Historians tell us of the terrible six years of atrocious weather which started in the memorable year of 1314.

Argyll, and much of Europe, suffered from extremes of cold, storms and extraordinary deluges resulting in large scale crop failure, hardship and numerous deaths.

By 1320, the worst was over and more temperate conditions resumed.

The Little Ice Age had passed and was consigned to the history books.

Why do I feel that history is repeating itself!

Peter MacLeod, Oban.

Listen to the 'ordinary punter'

Sir,
I agree with Aonghas Caimbeul, *The Oban Times* December 29. The ordinary punter should be heard.

Unfortunately, having taken part in four elections with an average turnout of 50 per cent it seems to me that many 'ordinary punters' don't want to be heard.

I believe that the right to vote comes in two parts, the first is the vote itself - come on folks it takes ten minutes.

The second is the right to peaceful protest and assembly which casting your vote gives you.

Put simply, no vote, no voice because by waiving the first you've waived the second.

This same argument applies to the Gaelic language.

If people aren't interested, it will die.

No amount of legislation will save it, though it will provide academics with jobs.

With regards legalising gay marriage, when the first

church refuses to perform this ceremony, people will realise how mischievous the act is and far from giving gays rights that they are told they should have, it will cause trouble.

George Doyle, Easdale.

Trigger fish found on Calgary Beach

Sir,
I was very interested to read the article in last week's issue of *The Oban Times* regarding the tropical water trigger fish found near the shore at Sanna Burn on the Ardnarmurchan Peninsula recently.

I found exactly the same kind of fish on the shore at Calgary Beach on the Isle of Mull on January 2 this year. I realised it was a trigger fish and not from these waters and reported the find to the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust in Tobermory. This fish was well above the normal water line on the beach near the grassy area and I attributed this to the recent storms and strong onshore winds.

Unfortunately I had no camera with me and on going back the next day to take a photograph I could not locate it again.

A check on the internet shows that these and other strange and rare fish are found and sighted in Scottish waters from time to time. Indeed, there is actually a report from a diver who discovered one alive and living happily in an underwater crevice on Calve Island at Tobermory on the Isle of Mull.

Additionally, there are reports of them being found alive at Ardtornish Point near Lochaline and at Camas Mor on Muck.

Perhaps not as rare a find after all! Keep your eyes open for the unusual when out walking.

David Crane, Otterburn, Dervaig, Mull.

PRESS POLICY

WE AT The Oban Times do our utmost to make sure that all our reports are fair, accurate and balanced, but we accept that, on occasion, mistakes can occur in the hectic process of producing the biggest local newspaper in the West Highlands.

It is the policy of The Oban Times Group to correct any errors in print. If you find an error of fact on our pages please write to The Editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB giving your day-time telephone number where possible. This statement of policy will appear on this page every week along with any corrections or clarifications.

The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct.

The views expressed in The Oban Times are not necessarily those of this newspaper.

Blacks Town and Country

THE OBAN Times has been asked by the owner of Blacks Town and Country to clarify that the business is separate from the nearby Nancy Blacks, which has gone up for sale.

Blacks Town and Country continues to trade as normal.

Mickey McManus

WE'VE been asked to point out that Mikey McManus is the project manager and not a director of Oban Phoenix Cinema, as we printed in error last week. Apologies for the mistake.

YOUR LETTERS

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including an email, to indicate good faith. A day-time telephone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.



The Dalai Lama.

Dalai Lama to visit Inverness

THE DALAI Lama will give a public talk at Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, on Saturday June 23, on his three-date tour of Scotland.

The Buddhist spiritual leader's theme for the address is 'Be the change', a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi.

Highland Council Convener Councillor Sandy Park said: 'The Highland Council is delighted to welcome His Holiness The Dalai Lama to the Highlands. It is fitting that the focus is on young people, who will, I am sure, be inspired by his presence and talk. He is guaranteed a warm Highland welcome.'

Heating oil stolen

POLICE in Gairloch are investigating two separate thefts of heating oil from a hotel in Gairloch and a private house in the Poolewe area over the festive period.

Anyone with information should contact Gairloch Police on 0845 600 5703 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Pipe band history goes on show

ISLE of Skye Pipe Band has opened an exhibition of photos from past and present and old letters at Portree Community Library on Viewfield Road.

The display, which runs until February 28, illustrates the band's history over the last 50 years.

Camping and picnic site plans lodged

BRITISH Waterways Scotland are seeking planning permission for two camping and picnic areas next to the Caledonian Canal at Leiferfearn, Port MacDonnell, Invergarry, and at Corriegour Lodge, South Laggan.

The sites would also feature toilets and information panels.

Glencoe celebrates 'World Snow Day'

GLENCOE Mountain resort will celebrate 'World Snow Day 2012' on Sunday by organising a series of fun events.

The Fédération Internationale de Ski is working with snow sports bodies across the globe, including Ski Scotland, to mark the occasion.

Eleventh-hour nurse crisis talks

HIGHLAND health chiefs have agreed to an eleventh-hour meeting with Ardnamurchan campaigners as a row over out-of-hours and emergency cover goes down to the wire.

The move follows a fiery letter from West Ardnamurchan Community Council (WACC) demanding talks ahead of district nurse Jessie Colquhoun's retiral next month.

NHS Highland (NHS) and WACC have been at loggerheads for a year since it was announced Ms Colquhoun was leaving.

WACC want her replacement to be based locally and the current district nurse-based emergency response service to continue.

NHS Highland insists the service be based around GPs and the Scottish Ambulance

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Service, backed up by local volunteer 'emergency responders'.

Kilchoan people fear the new model risks leaving critically ill patients without emergency attention until an ambulance arrives from Strontian, an hour away by road. NHS Highland denies that, and maintains present arrangements are 'unsafe'.

WACC was incensed when NHS advertised last month for a new nurse for a 'West Lochaber team', with no stipulation he or she be Kilchoan-based.

In its letter to the chairs and chief executives

of NHS and the Scottish Ambulance Service, copied to health minister Nicola Sturgeon and all local MSPs, WACC explained the community's 'frustration and distress' that their views had 'fallen on deaf ears'.

Chairperson Rosie Curtis told *The Oban Times*: 'The appointee [nurse] will not have to live and work on West Ardnamurchan, nor will he/she have to be part of any out-of-hours emergency response team.'

'Worse, our existing district nurse will be taken off local duties to join the team of roving nurses who serve West Lochaber.'

'This will destroy a tradition of more than 100 years of excellent primary care by our district nurses.'

'It will leave us with no 999 cover at nights, weekends, holidays and for most of the working day - in an emergency, our nearest ambulance is over an hour away and the doctors over 45 minutes away - if they're available.'

'If this appointment goes ahead, it will drive a dagger into the very heart of what is currently a thriving community. People are talking of leaving the area.'

Worried

'Even those who want to stay are desperately worried - particularly the old, those with young children and those with chronic medical problems.'

'Such a sudden and catastrophic deterioration in NHS provision must be unprecedented in

Scotland. If this is the shape of Scotland's NHS-to-come, God help us.' Mid Highland Community Health Partnership General Manager, Gill McVicar confirmed receipt of the WACC letter requesting a meeting.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'Another meeting has already been suggested for this month and we remain keen to continue to work with the community and the Scottish Ambulance Service.'

'The fact that we have advertised the nurse post in no way closes communications with the community, but we need to ensure that core nursing services are maintained whilst discussions on emergency and urgent response continue.'

Hauliers speak out on ferry fare changes

A PACKED meeting in Stornoway on Monday night saw two Scottish Government officials grilled about proposed changes to ferry fares for commercial vehicles in the Western Isles.

The Government plans to scrap the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) for lorries from April 1 and revert to the bulk discount system used before RET was introduced in 2008, which gives bigger discounts for firms transporting more goods.

The RET scheme sets ferry fares to what it would cost to

travel the same distance by road. Around 35 hauliers attended the heated meeting, with a further 20 taking part via video link.

Consulted
Hector MacDonald, director at Stornoway-based Hebrides Haulage, was at the meeting and told *The Oban Times*: 'They were claiming after consultation this was the decision that had been reached but not one person around the table had been consulted.'

'We've just got to keep pushing and pushing until we can come to an amicable agreement.'

'How are we supposed to explain to our customers the prices could be going up by 120 per cent or more?'

Islands MSP Alasdair Allan, who organised the meeting, said afterwards: 'There was also an overwhelming view that if any new fare structures have to be based around discounts, then this must operate much more fairly than similar schemes have in the past and must benefit both large and small companies equally.'

'I have now conveyed the meeting's views to the Transport Minister.'



Far East dream: Katie wants to teach in Malaysia.

Katie's Far East dream

A LOCHABER High School senior pupil is trying to raise £5,100 to fund her dream of spending a year teaching in Malaysia.

Katie Dougan was selected to make the journey by Isle of Coll-based charity Project Trust, which sends volunteers aged 17-19 overseas to teach underprivileged children.

The S6 pupil plans to hold a series of fundraising events over

the coming months, including a 160ft bungee jump in March with two friends. Katie said: 'The prospect of going halfway round the world on my own is very daunting, but I've always wanted to travel and this is an excellent way of doing it as it's benefiting so many others who are less fortunate than us.'

To donate to Katie's efforts visit www.facebook.com/katie.project.trust.

Drink drive trial collapses

A TRIAL against a man accused of drink driving in Ballachulish collapsed after a prosecution witness was unable to identify the driver of the car.

Scott Russell, aged 33, of 26 Moor Park, Prestwick, denied driving on Albert Road while twice the legal limit on October 2. Local man James Maclean told Fort William Sheriff Court he saw a man in a grey suit getting out of a car outside the Larooh Bar, but could not identify him or say if he had been behind the wheel of the vehicle.

Sheriff Douglas Small found Mr Russell not guilty.

Man accused of knife attack

A MAN accused of attacking another man with a knife in Kinlochleven is due to stand trial on Monday January 30.

Andrew Thomson, aged 27, of 426 Dyke Road, Knightswood, Glasgow, pled not guilty to assaulting the man by striking him on the neck with a knife to his injury, permanent disfigurement and endangerment of his life at 13 Glendale Street on February 5.

The jury trial will be held at Fort William Sheriff Court.

Men not related

THE OBAN Times would like to clarify two men named in last week's story 'Fight costs Caol teenager £630', Alan Mathers and Sean Mathers, are not related.

Evidence led in court suggested the two were brothers but this is not the case and they were unacquainted before the incident.

Lotto jackpot

THERE were no winners in the Fort William FC lotto draw on Saturday. Numbers were 01-17-19. The jackpot goes up to £300 this week.



Robert Cairns trawls through The Oban Times archives at Fort William Library for his history of Lochaber Burns Club. 20_103burns01

Club stalwart unearths history of Lochaber Burns Club

LOCHABER Burns Club will be presented with items from its 113-year history at its celebration of the Bard in Fort William's Alexandra Hotel on January 27.

Robert Cairns, the club's fundraiser for the past six years, has spent recent weeks in Fort William Library browsing microfiche back copies of *The Oban Times* dating back over a century.

Mr Cairns is standing down from his role this year and wanted to leave the club a lasting memento.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I hope to have all the information completed by January 27 and present it to president Jim Sutherland, so everyone can access the club's history more easily in future.'

'Donald Maclean at Lochaber High School is taking over from me as fundraiser this year, so I thought it would be a nice tribute to the club if I could gather together excerpts from its long history as well as information on past presidents from 1899-2011. That way, when they get the portfolio, all they will have to do is add on successive years. It's a lot of work - I'm having to stare at the screen all day long - but it will be worth it - and as I continue to research the club further, I am sure more good stories will appear and be documented for the Lochaber Burns Club.'

Nuggets unearthed from *The Oban Times*

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

archives by Mr Cairns, who has been attending Lochaber Burns Club since 1990, include:

1899: Lochaber Burns Club first met to celebrate the Bard in the Palace Hotel, Fort William, with over 80 members attending

1901: The supper was cancelled due to Queen Victoria's death

1906: Portobello Burns Club wrote a poem to their fellow Burnsians 'In wild Lochaber's favourite seat'

1923: Lord Abinger gave a speech to members

1925: new members joined from the North British Aluminium factory

1935: driving snow and wind did not deter Burns Supper members from gathering in Fraser's Café [beforehand]

1936: The Burns Supper was cancelled due to the death of King George V on January 20

Mr Cairns, who is also the chairman of Lochaber Archaeological Society, recently completed a 'War Years Over Lochaber' pamphlet detailing the impact of World War II on the area. 'The library tells me people from all over Britain have been requesting the pamphlet on the project,' he said.

Slipway upgrade brought forward

PROPOSALS to bring forward a £750,000 upgrade of a Skye slipway look set to be approved by Highland Council's transport committee today (Thursday).

Improvements to the Scanser ramp were programmed for 2014-15, but the arrival of a new 'eco-friendly' ferry in 2013 means work must be completed earlier.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL), which owns the CalMac fleet, outlined plans for the new 'hybrid' vessel on the Scanser-Raasay crossing last September.

The Scottish Government has since confirmed Clyde-based Ferguson Shipbuilders as the preferred bidder.

The boat, similar in principle to the Toyota Prius, will use an electrical propulsion system powered by diesel generators and batteries which recharge while the ferry docks overnight.

It is one of two hybrid ferries being built for CMAL's shorter west coast routes at Ferguson's Port Glasgow yard.

The shipbuilder expects to complete the Raasay vessel by May/June 2013 and the second six months later. Both will accommodate 150 passengers, 23 cars or two HGVs. Service speed is nine knots. Batteries will provide at least 20 per cent of the energy consumed on board - cutting carbon emissions by a similar amount.

CMAL chief executive Guy Platten said: 'We are delighted to sign the shipbuilding contracts, securing Ferguson Shipyard as the contractor to build the world's first sea going RORO passenger hybrid ferries.'

Portree dental clinic completed

WORK on a new £1.2million NHS dental clinic in Portree has been completed and will open later this month.

The facility holds three dental surgeries and a room for oral health education. Health bosses have two full-time dentists with another to join part-time in March, but say they will continue looking for another full-time team member.

Currently the only NHS dental service on offer in Skye is at a single-surgery clinic in Dunvegan Health Centre and a temporary clinic in Portree, with 2,244 people on the Skye and Lochalsh waiting list.

Portree dentist Graham Smith said: 'Our team is very excited at the prospect of working in this new purpose built clinic.'



Glencoe House undergoing weatherproofing works last August: now plans have been lodged to convert it into luxury holiday accommodation. 20_103hosp01

Former Glencoe hospital to be transformed into guesthouse

PLANS have been lodged with Highland Council to transform the former Glencoe Hospital into an up-market guesthouse.

Onich man Roger Niemeyer, owner and managing director of Alliance Hotel Consultants Ltd., will convert former wards in the B-listed building into seven luxury bedroom/lounge suites. His sales and marketing

representation company specialises in the travel and tourism industry sector.

Mr Niemeyer, who bought Glencoe House from NHS Highland last year, states in his application that no changes are planned to public paths, rights of way or access. The existing 15 parking spaces will remain. The imposing mansion was

completed in 1897 by Donald Alexander Smith, known as Lord Strathcona, one of the principal builders of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It was an NHS hospital from 1950 to 2009.

Mr Niemeyer said he was unable to give further details about the project until the consultation period with the council ends on February 21.

Fight to save turntable ferry

A NEW charity set up to maintain Scotland's last working turntable ferry is looking for a patron to spearhead fundraising efforts.

The Glenachulish Preservation Trust says it needs a high-profile figure to help keep the *MV Glenachulish* running between Glenelg and Kyleshera on Skye from Easter to October.

Describing the ferry as a 'national treasure', Dr Jennifer Frances, chairman of the board of trustees, said: 'Vital to the continued success of our charity is a figurehead who has a close association with boats, west coast and Highland and Scottish culture.'

'What we seek from our patron is goodwill and one fund raising event a year for a couple of hours, such as a charity auction in Glasgow. Of course there would be a warm welcome in Glenelg any time our patron may care to visit!'

'When the time comes for her to be decommissioned the charity will ensure that the *Glenachulish* will not suffer the fate of her counterparts, and end up abandoned on a Highland foreshore.'

The tiny six-vehicle vessel operated across Loch Leven before the Ballachulish Bridge was built in 1975.

Safety barriers to go up at open level crossings

SKYE, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson has welcomed a decision to install safety barriers at 21 open level crossings in the Highlands.

Network Rail's route managing director David Simpson confirmed the move at a meeting with Mr Thompson at Holyrood.

The MSP has campaigned for the barriers following a series of accidents at open crossings, including a tragedy at Halkirk, Caithness in 2009, when three elderly members of the same family died when a train hit their car.

Mr Thompson said: 'I believe that through this step, the current personnel at Network Rail are doing all they can to bring to an end

the regular toll of accidents at level crossings and I commend them for that.'

Mr Thompson said: 'Network Rail is committed to further enhancing safety on the railway and is working hard to progress the new mini-barrier system which, subject to a successful trial, will be rolled out to open crossings across the Highlands.'

'We are also seeking to close crossings where possible and investing in other additional safety measures such as police CCTV monitoring vans and additional fixed cameras for level crossings to deter driver misuse.'

It is anticipated the roll-out will begin this autumn and be completed within two years.

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SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Will your child be five years of age before 28 February 2013? Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

The next school session starts on 13 August 2012. Children who will be five on or before 28 February 2013 are eligible to be enrolled for Primary 1. Enrolment will take place week commencing 30 January 2012.

Although you may wish that your child attends a school other than your local primary school, you must, in the first instance, enrol your child at the local primary school and then make a placing request to the Area Education, Culture and Sport Office.

Placing requests are not required for Gaelic Medium education or for those eligible to attend a denominational school.

When to enrol your child?	Where	What to bring
3.00pm 30 January - 3 February 2012	Local Primary School	Child's birth certificate

Am bi an leanabhagaibh còig bliadhna a dh'aoisro 28 Gearran 2013?

Bidh? Ma-thà, tha an t-àmann an clàrachadhairsonnasgoile. Bidh an athsheiansgoile a' tòiseachadh air 13 Lùnastal 2012. Faodaidh clann a bhios còig air no ro an 28 Gearran 2013 a bhith air an clàrachadhairson P1. Bidh an t-seachdainchlàrachaidh a' tòiseachadh air 30 Faoilleach 2012.

Ma thasibhairson 's gun tèid an leanabhagaibhsgoileileseach a' bhun-sgoil ionadail, feumaidhsibh an clàrachadhaig a' bhun-sgoil ionadail an toiseach, agus iartras a chur a-steach dèidh sin gu Oifis Foghlaim, Cultair agus Spòrs na Sgìre.

Chan eil feum air iarrtas airson àite-sgoile airson Foghlaim tro Mheadhna Gaidhlig no dhaibhsan a thairidh air roghainn airsonsgoile buidhne.

Cuin a chlàrassibh an leanabhagaibh?	Càite	Dèibheirsibh leibh?
3.00f 30 Faoilleach - 3 Gearran 2012	A' Bhun-sgoil ionadail	Teisteanas breith an leanabh



AS PEOPLE throughout the country embrace the latest holiday trend: a 'staycation' in other words taking a holiday in one's own home country - outdoor holidays in Scotland have leapt to the top of the tourism charts.

So popular is the staycation becoming that it is now on Collins English Dictionary's shortlist of new words to be included in the next edition.

Tourism trade magazine *Travel Weekly* recently published a survey showing that 38 per cent of 2,000 Britons were planning not to go away at all this year but to spend any annual leave at home.

This crest of a wave has boosted demand in the outdoor leisure sector with caravan and camping holidays rediscovering levels of popularity not seen since the '60's. However, few who experienced the family caravanning holiday or the rigours of 10-in-a-tent during that era, could fail to recognise the quantum leap in quality to today's standard of 'van' or under canvas.

If the freedom of the road and tow-your-holiday-home behind you leaves you a little wary, why not try one of the high standard static caravan parks that abound throughout many popular tourism areas of the country. The majority of these offer excellent modern facilities at a very reasonable cost and allow you to experience 'the great outdoors' without going to the extremes. You may find that this first step into caravanning holidays provides all the encouragement you need to go the whole hog and buy your own holiday-centre-on-wheels and embark on regular go where-you-want, when-you want weekends away, tours of the country, or use the touring caravan, parked in a central location, as a base for adventurous day-outs.

There is a huge variety and styles of touring caravan to choose from and, just like buying a family car, you have to carefully select a size, model and price range that suits your expectations and purse-strings best.

Why not contact the Caravan Club who offer an excellent range of tips and considerations on subjects as varied as: 'how, where and when to buy'; 'how do I choose the right caravan for me'; 'what else do I need to know'; all of which are aimed at saving you time and money while ensuring that you get the

maximum enjoyment out of your mobile holiday investment caravan.

A motor-home is another increasingly popular option. Here you have the combination of transport and accommodation rolled into one and a vehicle which is easier to drive, park and maintain by the average travelling tourist. There are many outlets where these vehicles can be hired on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis and while initial hire charges, fuel costs and insurance, may appear steep, you have to balance your overall motor holiday costs against that of a conventional hotel-based break.

If a life under canvas is more to your liking, or perhaps more suited to your pocket, many of the same principles apply.

Scotland's recent countryside access laws have opened up wide swathes of land to walkers, campers and general outdoor enthusiasts. However, much of the code is based on common courtesy and a requirement to take care and nurture our countryside not only for the visitor or holidaymaker but also for those who are custodians of the land and who live there all year round.

There is a very wide range of tents and general camping equipment available and the trick is to select what best suits your personal needs, holiday location and experience - not forgetting that all-important weather.

A visit to your local outdoor specialist retailer should be your first stop. There you will find helpful and knowledgeable staff who can guide you through not only the range of equipment which will cover all your camping needs, but add the local knowledge, hints and tips that may make the difference between a good trip and a great one.

Whatever your choice, the feeling of freedom gained from a caravan, motor-home, or camping break is a great experience in its own right. A 'wandering through Scotland' holiday with so many great locations is a huge bonus. Enjoy!

WIN TICKETS!

SCOTTISH CARAVAN & OUTDOOR LEISURE SHOW 2012 SECC GLASGOW 2-5 FEBRUARY

In association with **madaboutleisure.com**

The Scottish Caravan & Outdoor Leisure Show returns to the SECC for 2012 and will run from Thursday, February 2 to Sunday, February 5. The event will be open from 10am to 6pm each day and will offer visitors the chance to see the latest trends and developments in the sector. To book tickets visit www.caravanshowscotland.com or call 0844 395 4000.

The Oban Times has teamed up with The Scottish Caravan & Outdoor Leisure Show to offer 10 lucky readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to the 2012 show! With over 150 companies showcasing the very latest in Caravan and Motorhome design, the event will display the largest indoor range of static caravans, lodges and holiday homes in the UK.

To enter, simply answer this easy question, complete the coupon and post it to The Oban Times, Caravan Show Competition, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Entries must be submitted by Thursday, January 26, 2012.

In which month does the 2012 Scottish Caravan & Outdoor Leisure show take place?

A January
B February
C March

Answer.....
Name.....
Address.....
Telephone.....
Email.....

Please post your entries to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB
Entries to be in by Thursday, January 26, 2012

Tick here if you would like to receive more information from the Caravan & Outdoor Leisure Show

Terms and conditions: The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entry coupons will not be accepted. The winner may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. This competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. Tickets will be posted to the winners.

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Dancers, old and young, enjoyed a varied programme from the Alan Gardiner Scottish Dance Band

Arisaig looks back on 'productive year' in 2011

ARISAIG Community Trust's New Year activities will get underway on Saturday with a colourful display of entries to its 'Find a Logo' competition. Open to all ages, the competition to design a suitable logo for ACT attracted over 70 entries - many of them from local primary schools. And to celebrate the competition's success, the logos will go on display in Astley Hall in Arisaig from 10am to 12.30pm. Five winning designs, one from each age category, will be among those on public view. Morning coffee, tea and cakes will be available, and the prizes will be presented at 12 noon. It will be the trust's second attempt to run the event - the first was a casualty of the devastating gales in early December which caused disruption and damage across the west Highlands. ACT local development officer Alison Stewart said 2011 was 'a productive year' which saw 'a number of successes'. Those included securing a 50-year lease on the local playing field and a community takeover of the village public toilets to prevent their closure by the council. The year culminated with a Christmas Produce Fair and fundraiser in the Astley Hall, which saw trust members serve seasonal fare to shoppers in the candlelit 'café' clubroom. Ms Stewart told *The Oban Times*: 'The trust hopes to build on these successes in 2012, and will be responding to suggestions for projects put forward in the HIE community survey undertaken last year. Among the hopes and aspirations, a priority will be to progress ideas for sustainable income generation for the Arisaig community, the most likely proposal being some kind of renewable energy scheme. A reliable income generation strand would underpin future sustainable community development in the area.' ACT has recently been accepted as a member of the Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS), which means DTAS is satisfied good progress has been made towards ACT's goal of becoming a relevant, responsive and responsible community body, Ms Stewart said.

Accordian and fiddle club host annual dance

OBAN Accordion and Fiddle Club held their annual dance last Friday in the Argyllshire Gathering Hall, Oban when a good crowd in attendance. Chairman Michael Garvin welcomed everybody before introducing the band for the evening, the Alan Gardiner Scottish Dance Band with Alan, from Biggar on lead accordion, Kevin Gardiner, Larbert, on second box, Marie Fielding, Falkirk, on fiddle and Steven MacInnes, Tobermory on drums. The band played a wonderful varied programme of music and dances which was thoroughly enjoyed by both dancers and listeners. Michael thanked Alan and the band for a great night of dancing and music and the evening was brought to a close with the singing of Auld Lang Syne. The club will host its next club night on Thursday, February 2 in its usual venue of the Argyllshire Gathering Hall when the guest artistes will be the Sileas Sinclair Band

Oban artist opens at London gallery

A NEW exhibition of work from Oban artist Ben Henriques has opened at London's Jonathan Cooper Park Walk Gallery. The opening comes on the back of news that Henriques has been selected by Brian Sewell for the prestigious ING Purchase Exhibition at the Mall Galleries. The Jonathan Cooper exhibition of Henriques' new series of still life and floral paintings includes seasonal flowers he has recorded throughout the year, such as amaryllis, snowdrops and tulips, as well as everyday objects that catch his eye. He says his is often drawn to his subjects by the 'sensuality of shape, colour and feel of the object.'

Henriques, who was born in Cheshire in 1967 but now lives just outside Oban, particularly enjoys the direct and spontaneous response required to capture flowers, saying: 'Everything is in a state of renewal or decomposition. Time and movement are important; they quicken the reaction.' He says painting allows him to create an 'autobiographical' record of his visual experience. He said: 'Locked in the layers of paint, lies the history of this experience of seeing.'

To create the depth of impasto on the surface of the canvas, Henriques uses compounds of metals; mercury, lead, cobalt and iron, combined with earth to vary the weight and intensity of the paint. The gallery is open Monday to Friday, 10am-6.30pm and Saturday 11am-4pm. Admission is free.

Refurbished Atlantis throws doors open

TO MARK the opening of its newly refurbished gym, Atlantis Leisure opened its doors to the public for free on Saturday and welcomed a number of new faces.

As well as having a team of gym instructors on duty, the leisure centre, which operates as a social enterprise, offered classes in body pump, body step, body attack, group cycling and Zumba.

Fitness instructor Andrea James, who runs the GP referral service, was also on hand to give advice.

Manager Nick Wesley said he was delighted with the turnout from members of the public, adding: 'This is the first time we have held an open day in this way but it coincided with the opening of our new gym and offering new classes.'

'It all adds up to an exciting time for Atlantis Leisure; we have a state-of-the-art gym, we're offering more classes than ever and our staff are better trained than any in the 20 years of Atlantis Leisure.'



One of Henriques' works to be shown at the gallery, Two Partridges.

gig argyll guide

your essential guide to live music in argyll

Saturday 21 January >	Club Night
Skipinnish Ceilidh House	10 pm, £5 Entry
Friday 20th January >	Moray MacNiven
Markie Duns	9.30pm
Wednesday 25th January >	Burns Night
Markie Duns	
Thursday 26th January >	Australia Day Party
Markie Duns	

POSTER SALE

first batch of cinema posters will go on sale

Sunday January 22
from 12noon until 4pm

Rowantree Hotel (next to the cinema)

Original posters will be on offer
Prices to suit every pocket
FIRST COME FIRST SERVED

proceeds Oban Phoenix Cinema

The next sale of posters will be at the Oban Phoenix Cinema Bring and Buy Sale in The Argyllshire Gathering on January 29



Atlantis Leisure gym instructors meet two new young members at the leisure centre's open day. 16_03atlantis01

Zumbathon for cinema success

A MOVIE-themed 'Zumbathon' was held at Atlantis Leisure on Saturday, raising £217 for the Oban Phoenix Cinema.

Fun night
The two-hour session was led by Larni Wright, who donated her time for free and combined the usual hot salsa beats with special routines to soundtracks from films such as Austin Powers and Footloose.

Oban Phoenix Cinema director, Laura Russell, said: 'We would like to thank

Atlantis Leisure for hosting this event and all those who took part, making this a great start for our fundraising in 2012.

'Special thanks goes to Larni, who made it a really fun night for those who took part.'

Hopes are high that the cinema can be reopened in April. Meanwhile, another fundraising bring and buy sale will be held at the Corran Halls on Saturday, January 28.

Oban High School pupils prepare for dance show

DANCERS from Oban High School are busy preparing for next week's Dance Show, 'Musical Icons.'

Tribute to teacher
More than 170 S1-S6 boys and girls will be joined by local primary children and guest performers from Ballet West for the show at Oban's Corran Halls on Wednesday and Thursday from 7.30pm.

There will also be a matinee on Thursday at 1pm, when over 250 primary school children will be in attendance.

Senior and Junior Dance groups, solos, duets, Highland dancing, gymnastic squads, Sports Leaders and the Rugby Boys will ensure a colourful and varied programme.

There will also be a tribute to Jim Lay, the school's former principal PE teacher, who died suddenly in December.

Tickets for the show are on sale now from Oban High School office or PE Department and will be on sale at the door if available.

Swan Lake

Ballet West

POSTPONED UNTIL THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 7.30PM
RESERVED TICKETS WILL BE REFUNDED
AT THE CORRAN HALLS BOX OFFICE

7.30pm
£8 (concessions)
Box office 01631 567333



Alyth McCormack and Triona Marshall Red Gold

From the heartland of Ireland to the shores of the Island of Lewis off the Scottish coast, a beautiful blend of harp music and song.

Triona and Alyth came together having toured with The Chieftains over the last few years and have now created a magical duet. Alyth McCormack (vocals), Triona Marshall (harp), Jonny Hardie (fiddle, guitar), Cammy Maxwell (double bass), Noel Eccles (percussion).

Hullion Score And More

The Orkney band's fiddle and mandolin led tunes and dialect songs are as distinctive as ever, and bound to delight their many fans. Twenty years and four albums on Hullion still enjoy playing together, albeit with a few changes in line-up.

Annie Grace The Bell

Hints of jazz and blues are melded with contemporary songs in the folk vein. The multi-instrumentalist and superb singer Annie Grace has lots of experience through her work with The Iron Horse, The Unusual Suspects, Scottish Women and others.

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Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd

A bheil ùidh agad Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh san sgìre agad?

Tha an sgeama taic-airgid seo a-nis fòsgailte airson tagraidhean ùra agus ag amas air taic a chumail ri pròiseactan a bhios a' fas agus a' neartachadh ionnsachadh agus cleachdadh na Gàidhlig ann an coimhearsnachdan.

Gheibhear barrachd fiosrachaidh agus foirm iarrtais air làrach-lìn Bhòrd na Gàidhlig www.gaidhlig.org.uk neo cuir fòn gu 01463 225454. 'S e **Diluain 6 Gearran 2012** an latha mu dheireadh airson tagradh a chur a-steach.

Are you interested in more Gaelic being used in your area?

This funding scheme is now open to new applications, aiming to support projects that will increase and strengthen the learning and usage of Gaelic in communities.

Further information and application forms are now available via the Bòrd na Gàidhlig website www.gaidhlig.org.uk or by calling 01463 225454. The closing date for applications is **Monday 6th February 2012**.

www.gaidhlig.org.uk

Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd

Rodeo Race Night

Argyllshire Gathering Hall
28th January 2012
Doors open 7.30pm
Entry £6 including light supper
Dust of your spurs for a great night in aid of Atomic Piseag

For more details phone 01631 720334

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies

competition 2012

In association with **The co-operative good for everyone**

WIN £500 worth Vouchers

ENTRY FORM

Child's name.....

Child's date of birth.....

Tel:

Address:

Name of parent/guardian.....

Signature of parent/guardian.....

I agree to all terms and conditions applied to this competition.....

Please post to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Terms & conditions: The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2012 competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. Only one entry per child. By entering the competition and by filling in the parental consent form that is provided with your entry you - the parent or guardian - consent to the reproduction of your child's photograph in The Oban Times Bonnie Babies features in the paper and online and in any other related Oban Times Bonnie Babies promotions. If you do not wish for your child's photo to appear in the newspaper or online then you should not enter the competition. The Oban Times cannot take responsibility for the safe delivery and safe return of the entrant's photograph. Photos posted in without an enclosed stamped addressed envelope will not be returned. Poor quality photographs, which are out of focus, difficult to see the child's face, ripped, torn or folded, will not be accepted as an entry and will be returned to the sender providing a stamped addressed envelope is supplied by the entrant. By sending your photograph, you agree that Wywex Media Ltd and The Oban Times have the right to publish the images and details of the entrant without payment for the purpose of promoting The Oban Times Bonnie Babies campaign(s). The winner must be willing to take part in publicity. Employees of Wywex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter. Photocopied entry forms will not be accepted.

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies Competition 2012

We'll soon be printing photographs of the most loveable babies for a number of weeks. This time, it will be up to you, our readers, to decide who wins the title of Bonniest Baby and £500 of shopping vouchers to spend in co-operative stores! Full details will be announced later this month.

How to enter
We are now open for entries! Bonnie Babies 2012 is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. You can enter a child by posting us a photograph along with a signed entry coupon (see left) to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Please make sure you write the name of the child, date of birth and a contact telephone number on the back of the photo. Should you wish for your photo to be returned, please also enclose a stamped addressed envelope. We will do our best to return your photo but please make a copy just in case.

After you have entered your child into the competition, look out every week in The Oban Times to see when your baby appears. The closing date for entries will be announced in a future issue. You can find all the competition rules and terms and conditions online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies or call 01631 568 000.

Burns Club of Oban
Admission to this year's

BURNS SUPPER

On 27th January
Will be by ticket only

Tickets may be purchased at the Regent Hotel on 16th, 17th & 23th January between 6.30 and 8pm.

Alternatively ring
Roy Wood 01631 562042
or Ken Oxland 01631 566010

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

<p>Highlands & Islands Music & Dance Festival SOUP LUNCH</p> <p>Saturday 21 January 12 noon - 2pm Guide Hall, Oban Baking Stall, Raffle £3 adults, £2 children</p>	<p>Quiz Night</p> <p>In Aid of Oban Pipe Band</p> <p>Friday 27th January, 2012 7.30pm In the Masonic Lodge Albany Street Entry: £3 per person</p>	<p>Netherlorn Piping Society Oban Pipe Band (Grade 3A World Champions)</p> <p>Wednesday 25th January 2012 The Argyllshire Gathering Halls At 7.30pm Admission: Adults £3; Children Free</p>	<p>To advertise in the WHAT'S ON COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD</p> <p>Telephone: 01631 568000</p>
<p>An Comunn Gàidhealach MEUR CHRUAICHAIN (Cruchan Branch)</p> <p>CEILIDH in TAYNUILT VILLAGE HALL</p> <p>SATURDAY, 21st January 2012 at 7.45 p.m.</p> <p>Donald Morrison - Piper Singers: Morag MacNeil, Riona McCormick, Gordon McKeeve, Ruairidh Morrison - Accordion, Maurice Duncan - Fiddle, The Eilidh MacInnes Dancers Bean an Taighe: Isabel Banks</p> <p>Admission £4.00, Members £3.00, Children (15-16years) £2.00 Tea and Raffle</p> <p>Funds collected promote The Gaelic Language, Music and Culture.</p>	<p>VOLUNTEER INFORMATION AFTERNOON</p> <p>Drop in to the Kilmartin House Museum</p> <p>26 January</p> <p>anytime between 1.30 pm - 3.00 pm ask questions and enjoy free tea & cakes more info from www.kilmartin.org Tel: 01546 510278</p>	<p>APPIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY CENTENARY OF THE DEWAR REPORT - THE ROAD TO THE NHS:</p> <p>Dr Iain McNicol</p> <p>Saturday 21 January 2.30pm Port Appin Village Hall ALL WELCOME! www.appinhistoricalsociety.co.uk Scottish Charity No. SC029411</p>	



It takes a lot to cope with all that's been going on during the hectic last few weeks – the excitement and excesses of Christmas, then New Year and all its challenges, but if there's one time of the year when you really want to be at your best, it's the arrival of Springtime. So let's look forward to it!



With 2012 well and truly upon us, it is time to start thinking about the ways to make this year one that counts. There are countless ways to enable positive change, and often it is the little steps that make a big difference.

If you feel you look your best, your confidence will grow and you'll find you can cope with it all, simply because you do feel so good about yourself.

There's no simple explanation for this, but in nature, grooming is an important part of all animals' routine of daily living. In the animal kingdom, only the well groomed become successful and survive, so it is obviously a deep-rooted need that has nothing at all to do with vanity.

So where do you start? You begin in the only place where you cannot hide the truth, in the privacy of your own home, in front of the mirror before you dress.

Be brutally honest!

Take stock of what you see. Are there any unnecessary bulges? Is your skin dull and lifeless? Does your hair resemble a hedgerow? Does your posture resemble a flower wilting in a vase? How about your feet, does the thought of pushing them into shoes make you wince in advance? Are your toe nails unfit to be seen? If the answer to any or all of these is 'yes', you had better get down to serious work to remedy the situation before it gets out of hand.

You can of course, assemble a routine yourself, at home and get to work without further ado. Given the average person's level of willpower, available time and specialist knowledge, you would probably be better advised to place yourself in the hands of relevant experts and be sure of getting the job well done. It could be time to join a weight loss group – Slimming World in Oban now has a new consultant and a new venue with classes starting soon, so there's nothing to hold you back. Bulges and excess weight can be honed down by

a brisk course of well-planned exercises at your local health club. Don't forget to get your doctor's blessing first though. If you are keen to lose a few pounds and improve your health, Energie Fitness Oban has an offer that you would be mad to miss; '£s for lbs' gives new members the opportunity to turn the weight they lose in to money off their memberships.

Your local beauty salon will be able to formulate a program that will improve your skin tone and quality. A course of facials, exfoliation, massage and a sauna perhaps, will all help matters along. You may also wish to think about alternative treatments - holistic therapies, as offered by Alpine Holistic, considers the person as the whole self, body mind and spirit and provides caring and non-invasive remedies. A little regular attention will work wonders.

Now that you're thinking about health and well-being, maybe it's time to give some thought other improvements. If you have been admiring the increasing amount of 'Hollywood smiles' that don our TV screens and magazines, it is worth speaking to your dentist about the ways you can achieve that 'perfect' form. A combination of whitening, crowns and veneers can help to improve position, proportion, alignment, and colour of the teeth. Argyll Square Dental Surgery are welcoming new both new and NHS patients, so why not arrange an appointment to find out about the best options for your smile.

If 2012 is year you want to know by your friends and family as fashion-conscious and full of good taste, perhaps it is time to consider using the services of a styling and personal shopping consultant. Tonic, styling for women, offers a range of services, from colour consultation to making your existing wardrobe work for you. You can also get your friends involved with Fashionista House Parties.

Pampering yourself at night can make you feel that extra bit special. Sampling a special bottle of wine and going for a long bath, lighting the candles and getting some 'me' time will make you feel a million dollars – a nice alternative to a night out on the town.

What about doing a good deed by helping out the planet by starting to recycle? With community organizations, such as LORI (Lorn and Oban Reuse Initiative), there are ample ways to get involved; as well as donating and volunteering, take advantage of the wonderful array of nearly-new goods and furnishings. It's the perfect way to give your home a bit of a revamp at a low cost, and will also help generate income to support the project.

Perhaps this is the year to think about expanding your horizons. There are many organizations, such as Argyll College and the Highland Council, offering a range of courses and classes ideal for your personal development. In addition, look out for community groups putting on specialist talks and workshops – Kilmartin House, for example, offers something for everyone, whether it be science, nature, history or art you are interested in. More than just a way to get you out of the house during the long, dark winter nights, classes are an excellent way to meet new people and develop your learning and skills base. Who knows where it could take you; it may even open the door to a new career.

As you begin to achieve improvements in all the above departments, you'll start to look better, you'll also begin to feel better. Your step will lighten, your posture will straighten, your face will reflect a new, inner peace. You will be a healthier, more beautiful you, not only for the arrival of Spring but, if you keep it up, also for the coming year right through.

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• Working in the Community
Courses will run between January and July 2012 and places will be limited.
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Valentine's Dinners
Seafood Night
European Evening
www.kilmartin.org or call 01546 510278 for full details

Gaelic Ulpan Classes Lochaber - 2012
Beginners Classes (These classes will run for 14 weeks)
Unit 1 to 14 (Evening Class) - Monday, 7pm to 9pm Lochaber High School. Starting 20th Feb.
Unit 1 to 14 (Day-time Class) - Thurs. 1pm to 3pm Venue to be confirmed. Starting 23rd Feb.
Cost - £88 / £56 for Gaelic medium parents and Highland Council staff.
Intermediate Classes (These classes will run for 16 weeks)
Unit 64 to 79 (Evening) - Wed. 7pm to 9pm Lochaber High School. Starting 1st February
Unit 64 to 79 (Day-time) - Wed. 1pm to 3pm Venue to be confirmed. Starting 1st February
Cost - £72 or £36 for GM parents and HC Staff.
Mallaig - Beginners
Taster session - 21st January, Mallaig High School. Saturday Classes thereafter.
For further information about these classes and to enrol please contact Margaret Mulholland, Gaelic Team, Highland Council. margaret.mulholland@highland.gov.uk or 01463 724278.

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Supporting People & Communities

Carr Gomm is a national charity and not-for-profit company. The main focus is Supported Living - supporting people to lead their lives, access services and achieve their hopes and dreams. The first service started in 1989.

DAY AND NIGHT SUPPORT ASSISTANTS - ARGYLL AND BUTE
Full time or Part time: £13,548 - £15,133 pa
Relief: £6.95 per hour

Support Work covers the whole range of tasks to help people live in their own homes safely, to follow their interests, develop friendships and deal with health issues. If you believe that everyone has a right to live the life they want, we would like to meet you. The people we support have different lifestyles and interests, so you will need to have the energy and flexibility to take part. You may be experienced and be looking to develop your career with opportunities for advancement, or you may be new to this work and have the right personal qualities to build on. Either way, this is a chance to help people to make a real change to their lives. Membership of a close team will provide support, learning opportunities and comradeship. There will be an on-call rota.

Carr Gomm has opportunities for full time, part time and Relief Support Assistants across Argyll & Bute based in the following areas: Dunoon, Oban, Rothesay, Helensburgh, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, as well as the Isles of Mull and Islay.

As our services deliver throughout Argyll & Bute, car use is desirable, with mileage and travel time between visits paid.

We offer excellent terms and conditions including: pension, enhanced annual leave, training and career advancement opportunities. We aim to provide services and recruit staff without discrimination. For an application pack visit our website: www.carrgomm.org, e-mail: recruitment@carrgomm.org, Tel: 0131 659 4770, or contact Carr Gomm, SPACE, 11 Harewood Road, Edinburgh EH16 4NT.

Closing Date: Noon, Monday 6th February 2012.

Carr Gomm: previously Carr Gomm Scotland. A company limited by guarantee in Scotland: SC 236436 Scottish charity: SC 033491

Leading the way in Learning Disability

ENABLE Scotland is a dynamic, vibrant and expanding organisation dedicated to improving the lives of people with learning disabilities across Scotland.

OBAN

Personal Supporters
Ref: OS/0101. Female only* for 35 hour contract. Ref: OS/0102. Female only* for 16 hour contract. *Qualifies under section 7(2)(b) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
Ref: OS/0103. Male/Female for 30 hour contract. Salary for above posts: £13,936 per annum, pro rata for part time.

Sessional Personal Supporter
Ref: OS/0104. Salary: £6.87 per hour plus holiday pay. Hours are flexible to meet the needs of the service.

We are looking for reliable and enthusiastic individuals who have a genuine interest in working with people to work in our community support team. As a Personal Supporter you would work directly with older people, people with learning disabilities or people who have mental health issues to enable them to be included in their local community.

Working largely on your own initiative but as part of a team, the ideal candidates will have a flexible person-centred approach to work practices; they will be friendly, non-judgemental, enthusiastic, practically minded, flexible and adept in a variety of domestic and social situations. Candidates for these vacancies must have a full driving licence, good communication skills, proven problem solving and organisational abilities as well as basic recording and reporting skills.

You will work a variety of hours as part of a shared rota system which is determined by the needs of the people we support, therefore early morning, evening, and weekend work is included. If you believe you could be a flexible, reliable and available addition to our team we would love to hear from you.

As an organisation, we are committed to developing all of our staff, providing an extensive training and development programme and career opportunities within ENABLE Scotland. We offer positive terms and conditions, including a contributory pension scheme.

For an application pack, please telephone 01631 565 062 or e-mail rhona.ferrier@enable.org.uk quoting the relevant post reference number. We particularly welcome applications from candidates with a disability and make our forms available in alternative formats.

To view and apply for all our vacancies, please visit www.enable.org.uk

Completed application forms should be returned to: Rhona Ferrier, ENABLE Scotland LTW, Oban Services, Unit 3, McLeod Building, Lochavullin Estate, Oban, PA34 4PL or email rhona.ferrier@enable.org.uk

Closing date: Tuesday 31st January 2012

These posts will be subject to a PVG Check.

ENABLE Scotland is an equal opportunities employer. Scottish charity number SC009024.

Putting Tenants First

ACHA
Argyll Community Housing Association

Vacancies for Independent Board Members

We are looking for voluntary Independent Board Members who can help to lead our organisation in offering high quality services to customers and help us to enhance the Argyll & Bute communities where we work.

ACHA's Board of Management continually undertake self assessment to identify areas on the Board where the recruitment of specialised skills would be beneficial to the Association.

What are we looking for?
People with experience in:
• Financial management/ Insurance • Building sector
• Housing sector • Governance or Legal compliance
• Human Resources • General business
• Performance management • Customer services

Having recently been granted charitable status for our parent company, we are now setting up a separate trading subsidiary to allow us to extend the way we currently manage our day to day response repair service, and to continually improve our delivery of emergency and routine repairs. At the same time we are adapting to the significant economic, political and policy changes affecting the housing sector in Scotland today. We are committed to addressing the challenges by working with partners and the community to find solutions by adopting good practice, improved performance and efficiency.

What commitment will you require?
• Approximately 1.5 days a month supporting Association business
• Please note: we generally hold our Board meetings on a Thursday morning, once a month, usually in Inveraray

What can we offer you in return?
• Support, training and development
• Out of pocket expenses
• The satisfaction of giving something back to the community

If you are interested in obtaining an application pack, please contact Lesley Lindsay, PA to the Board of Management, Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd, 50 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh, G84 8TQ. Telephone: 01546 605971 or email: lesley.lindsay@acha.co.uk or visit the Association's website at www.acha.co.uk where application packs can be downloaded

Closing date for applications is: Friday 3rd February 2012.

ACHA welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

The Scottish Salmon Company
Companaidh Bhradan na h-Alba

The Scottish Salmon Company is a leading independent producer of high quality Scottish Salmon. We are committed to high standards of animal welfare, sustainable operations and promoting a responsible environmental policy.

We are currently recruiting for the following located at our Marine Site located on Loch Fyne:

MARINE OPERATIVES
(REF MO/AR/01/12)
(SALARY £15,965 TO £19,570 PER ANNUM DEPENDANT ON EXPERIENCE)

The ideal candidate will be enthusiastic, self-motivated, have good communication skills and be able to demonstrate prior experience of working within a small, focused team in a constantly changing and challenging environment. Previous aquaculture and boat handling experience is desirable but not essential as the company will also offer further development opportunities through its in-house training and also through external providers.

Working hours are normally 40hrs per week Monday to Friday, with weekend working required on a rota basis. Overtime is paid at enhanced rates.

A full, clean driving licence is also essential for these positions.

In return, the Company offers a comprehensive pay and benefits package including entry into the Company Pension Scheme after the qualifying period.

For an application form and job description, please contact:
HR Department, The Scottish Salmon Company, Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, Argyll, PA26 8BH.
Tel. No. 01499 600 435 / 415
Email: cairndowhr@scottishsalmon.com
Closing date for applications: 5.00pm Friday, 3rd February 2012
Visit our website at www.scottishsalmon.com

Female Carers Required: Rural Location in Cowal

Applicants must be 18+ as you will be providing personal care and working occasional nights. Experience and references required. Applicants should be capable of dealing with a 25 year old female who requires 24hr personal care. One full time, live in, carer also required. Would suit someone with no ties. Own room with en-suite. Duties will involve all aspects of care. Own transport is essential. Successful applicants are required to provide a disclosure. Disclosure expense will be met by applicant. Immediate start. Email your CV including a photograph to: mailto:cranbreh.jobs@btinternet.com

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Historic Scotland is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Ministers and is an equal opportunities employer. We operate a Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme.

ACHA - Putting Tenants First.
We are on target to create homes and places across Argyll & Bute where people want to live. Can you help us achieve that vision?

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Location: Argyll, Scotland
35 hours per week, permanent contract
Starting salary £42882 with increases dependant on performance

This is an exciting and challenging new post created to enable us to fundamentally change and improve our service to our tenants and other customers, and to develop a subsidiary maintenance company.

This will enable us to bring all responsive repairs activity in house through the development of an internally managed in house repairs team function, with the future potential to expand this to wider capital and cyclical works.

This role, and our vision, means you need to be ready to break new ground in restructuring the service delivery models currently in place. The job will be challenging and varied. You will need strong leadership skills, the ability to think strategically and be focused on achieving effective resource management across a wide geographical area, and providing excellence in the quality of the services you deliver.

This will involve a primary early objective of establishing a viable business plan. After the planning stages, this will involve the set-up and ongoing management of our subsidiary maintenance company (including reporting to the subsidiary Board). This will mean acting as 'contractor' for our routine maintenance services.

Previous commercial experience of developing and delivering a large scale response and planned repairs service and setting up a similar subsidiary company would be advantageous.

ACHA welcomes applications from all sections of the community and is committed to promoting equal opportunities.

To apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk ;
Tel 01546 605859 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk
Closing Date: Friday 27th January 2012
Interviews for this post will be held in Inveraray on Monday 13th February 2012

Dunstaffnage Marina Ltd

Have a number of vacancies for yard/marina staff with various skills, although this is not essential, from basic engineering and full time yard worker to qualified marine engineer.

Also an office junior to work within the business in three onsite locations to assist with general office duties including cash and credit card payments:

Please apply in writing with your CV to **Dunstaffnage Marina Ltd**
Dunbeg, Oban, PA37 1PX
Or Email to: mike@dunstaffnagemarina.com

ACHA
Argyll Community Housing Association

Customer Services Assistant
Lochgilphead
17.5 hours per week (Job Share)
(Wed pm., Thur, Fri)
Salary Grade 7 (£15,646 - £17,385) (pro rata)

To apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk;
Tel 01546 605 859 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk

Closing Date for applications: 12 noon on Friday 27th January 2012
Interviews for this post will be held February 2012
Previous applicants need not apply

ARGYLL HOMECARE

Argyll HomeCare provides a professional, flexible, friendly and reliable service for those requiring care at home. We cover all aspects of personal and domestic care.

Mid Argyll areas - Homecare workers
Full Time, Part Time & Bank staff required.

Care experience is desirable but not essential as comprehensive training is provided.

A full driving license and access to a vehicle is essential for all the above posts.

For further information and an application pack please contact 01546 600333
Closing date: Saturday 4th February 2012
All staff are subject to an enhanced disclosure check.

DUNOLLIE HOUSE, OBAN WANTED

1) A rather special person, able to combine the twin roles of facilities assistant, dealing with clan visitors from all over the world, some catering, and working with volunteers at Dunollie House; along with the more practical duties of a housekeeper. Hours flexible, but likely to involve some evening & weekend events; approx. 30 hrs. per week.

2) garden contractor able to deal with grass cutting and general garden maintenance on hourly "as required" basis. Please quote terms.

3) Gardening enthusiast, willing to devote voluntary time to tending and restoring Victorian garden, in return for having a large vegetable patch available for own personal use.

Contact Mike Robertson, Estate Factor, on mjr@dunol.co.uk

THE MAJESTIC LINE

Experienced Marine Engineer
required for small cruise vessels operating on the west coast of Scotland, April to October inclusive.

Good understanding of diesel engines and mechanical/electrical mind is necessary. Job spec also requires people and hospitality skills.

Further details and CVs from/to Andrew@themajesticline.co.uk
Tel: 01369 707951

THE GREEN WELLY STOP

Retail and Food & Beverage Team Leaders

We are looking for two dynamic people one to help run our Retail Departments and one for Food & Beverage.

Excellent leadership, customer care skills and previous experience are necessary. Full time salaried positions. Contact main office for an application form on 01838 400271 or e-mail mail@thegreenwellystop.co.uk
Closing date 31st January 2012
Also recruiting general staff for 2012 season

Tralee Bay Holidays Benderloch

Are currently seeking cleaning staff for the coming season, Immediate Start

Seasonal with a minimum 2/3 day week
Rate of pay £54.00 per day (6.5hrs)
Please apply by phoning 01631 720 255

THE GEM BOX

Sales Assistant Required
Full time position
Apply in writing to
The Manageress, The Gem Box,
Oban PA34 5PT

MACLEOD
MINI FIBRE CONSTRUCTION LTD

REQUIRE
HGV Drivers for Low-loader / Flat / Tipper Work

Clean Driving Licence essential
APPLICATIONS IN WRITING, OR C.V., TO:-
MR HARRY ROSS
MACLEOD CONSTRUCTION LTD
KILMORY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
LOCHGILPHEAD, PA31 8RR
E-mail - harry@mkmacleod.co.uk

Book keeper & Payroll Manager
for about 10 hours a month.
£9.50 ph.
Oban area.
E-mail Marc at marconix@hetnet.nl

Scottish Sea Farms

Freshwater Technician - Coudloran Hatchery Kishorn
Scottish Sea Farms Ltd has a vacancy for a Freshwater Technician at Coudloran Hatchery.

Applications are invited from individuals who have an interest in aquaculture and feel that they could play a key part in strengthening an already skilled team responsible for producing Atlantic salmon Fry, Parr and Smolt. Previous experience in the industry would be an advantage, but is not essential, as training will be supplied. A full clean driving license is required for this position.

The successful applicant would be required to carry out a variety of tasks including:

- Routine stock husbandry
- Environmental monitoring
- Stock health and welfare monitoring
- Site and equipment maintenance
- Weekend working and alarm cover on a Rota basis

An attractive salary package is on offer and assistance with accommodation may be available for the successful candidate. To obtain an application pack, please contact Claire Scott on 01786 445521 or email claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com.

For an informal chat about the position, please call Niall McCallum, Coudloran Site Manager on 01520 733248.

Closing date for applications is Friday 17th February 2012

Manager, Mid Argyll Community Pool

We are seeking a dynamic and highly motivated individual to lead the team at the Mid Argyll Community Pool and to help to develop the enterprise to the benefit of the local community.

Salary will be in the region of £22 - 25,000/ annum dependent on experience

To find out more about this opportunity and to download an application form, please visit www.macpool.org.uk

Closing date 31st January 2012

Administration Assistant

Craobh Marina has a fulltime vacancy for an administration assistant. The duties include:

Reception - dealing with boat owners, handling telephone calls and taking and recording payments

Chandlery - assisting customers with purchases

Administration - control of banking and petty cash maintenance of the sales ledger and credit control

Applicants with suitable clerical experience would be preferred but this is not essential as full training will be given.

Please send your CV to Jim Berry, Craobh Marina, Craobh Haven, By Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8UD

Outreach Support Worker
30 hours per week - £15,690
Fixed Term for one year subject to continuation funding

This is a new and innovative post which requires a highly motivated individual who understands issues affecting carers. You will work across the Islands and remote areas in North Argyll identifying hidden carers in particular older carers with particular focus on the Scottish Government's Respite Care for Older People Programme.

For an application pack or more information contact the Carers' Centre on 01631 544422 or Email: nuth@northargyllcarers.org.uk

Successful applicants will be required to join the PVG Scheme. Use of car and a clean driving license essential.

North Argyll Carers Centre's commitment to Equal Opportunities is reflected in our selection process. The post is fixed term for 1 year • CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 3rd February 2012 at 12 noon Interview date 15th February 2012. Registered Charity no: SC040902

More recruitment on page 14

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02003/PP	Erection of timber summerhouse.	Fasgadh Port Kilcheran Isle of Lismore Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 5UQ	Sub Post Office Lismore
11/02461/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse (renewal of planning Permission 06/02183/DEI)	Land east of Keepers Cottage Aros Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Isle of Mull
11/02477/PP	Installation of replacement windows/french doors/balcony doors	Kirkcarr And 1 - 26 Glen Isal Tobermory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6PX	Tobermory Area Office
11/02478/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse (amended design relative to planning permission 08/0437/DEI)	The Old Mill Portsonachan East Lochaweside Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Dalmally
11/02535/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land South Of Achnacarron Farm Kilcheran Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Taynult

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Dalriada House, Lochneil Street, Lochgilphead, PA31 8ST or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02553/PP	Windfarm comprising 11 turbines (121metres high to blade tip) erection of meteorological mast, switchgear building, construction compound, access works and ancillary development.	Land South of Glen Lonan Between Loch Nell And Beinn Ghlas East of Kilmore by Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02580/PP	Installation of replacement windows and doors.	16 Toberonnoy Isle of Luing Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4UE	Oban Area Office

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02356/PP	Demolition of existing building and erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and construction of new access road.	Land 325 Metres South of Kilmory Farmhouse Ballygrant Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA45 7QW	Sub Post Office Port Askaig
11/02536/PP	Refurbishment of dwellinghouse including re-roofing and re-rendering (retrospective)	11 Texa Crescent Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7EH	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
11/02542/PP	Refurbishment of dwellinghouses including re-roofing and re-rendering	1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 Corrsgeir Place Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7EJ	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
11/02543/PP	Refurbishment of dwellinghouses including re-roofing and re-rendering	2, 4, 6 Corrsgeir Place Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7EJ	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
11/02544/PP	Refurbishment of dwellinghouses including re-roofing and re-rendering	13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 Corrsgeir Place Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7EJ	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
11/02545/PP	Refurbishment of dwellinghouses including re-roofing and re-rendering	29, 31, 33, 35 Corrsgeir Place Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7EJ	Sub Post Office Port Ellen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02367/PP	Demolition of existing garage, conservatory and porch and erection of extension to dwellinghouse, detached domestic garage/store and formation of new vehicular access.	Shepherds Cottage Kilchoman Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA49 7UX	Sub Post Office Bridgend

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1999 NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 13

Planning Application Reference Number: 11/02553/PP
Proposed development at Land South Of Glen Lonan, Between Loch Nell And Beinn Ghlas, East Of Kilmore By Oban, Argyll And Bute
Notice is hereby given that an environmental statement has been submitted to Argyll and Bute Council by Wind Prospect Developments Ltd relating to the planning application in respect of Windfarm comprising 11 turbines (121metres high to blade tip) erection of meteorological mast, switchgear building, construction compound, access works and ancillary development., notified to Argyll and Bute Council.

A copy of the environmental statement and the associated planning applications may be inspected during office hours in the register of planning applications kept by the Planning Authority, at Dalriada House, Lochneil Street, Lochgilphead PA31 8ST; Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AW and by logging on to the Council's Website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and going through the 'Online planning and Building Standards Application Information' system during the period of 28 days beginning with the date of this notice.

THIRD SECTOR GRANTS 2012

Application forms for grants to third sector organisations for 2012 are now available at local area community learning offices. They can also be accessed using the following link: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/third-sector-grants. The closing date for applications for a decision in April is 24 February 2012. For further information please phone 01546 604189 or email Communitydevelopment@argyll-bute.gov.uk

COUNCILLOR SURGERY

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee (E.W.5 Oban North and Lorn)
Councillor Glen-Lee will be holding a surgery in Appin Village Hall on Monday 23 January 2012 from 3.30pm - 4.30pm. No appointments are necessary. Councillor Glen-Lee can be contacted by e-mail louise.glen-lee@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by phoning 07717 526 999 or Tel: 01546 604209

The Scottish Government

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
A83 REST AND BE THANKFUL 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 proposal to improve 1.23 kilometres or thereby length of the A83 Tarbet - Lochgilphead - Kennacraig Trunk Road at the top of the Rest and Be Thankful pass within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park 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.

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
A830 LOCH EILT 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 proposal to re-surface 1.241 kilometres or thereby length of the A830 Fort William - Mallaig Trunk Road at a location approximately 2 kilometres or thereby east of Lochailort 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.

ART ANDERSON
A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF.
9th January 2012.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (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; online at www.highland.gov.uk and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected
11/04060/FUL	Glas-dhoire South Laggan Forest 1110m North West of Corriequar Lodge South Laggan Spean Bridge	Installation of a double composting toilet, camping and picnic areas, shelter and information panels	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04440/FUL	24 Leven Road Kinlochleven	Change of use from shop to residential	Kinlochleven Service Point (14 days)
11/04477/FUL	Glencoe Hospital Glencoe Ballochulish	Alterations and change of use from hospital to guest house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04478/ABC	Glencoe Hospital Glencoe Ballochulish	Alterations and change of use from Hospital to Guest House	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office Regulation 5 - affecting the character of a listed building (21 days)
11/04651/FUL	Land South West of Fort William Health Centre Camaghaol Fort William	Application under Section 42 to delete condition 1 of application 09/00423/MS/CLD to allow timescale for implementation to revert back to the original permission 08/00065/OUTLO	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04715/FUL	Land 155m North East of 2 Fasslem Cottages Fasslem Kinlochail	Erection of house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: elanning@highland.gov.uk

CROFTERS COMMISSION COIMISEAN NAN CROITEARAN

NOTIFICATION OF COMMISSION DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS TO CREATE NEW CROFTS

1. Application by North West Mull Community Woodlands Company Limited, owner of 9 subjects numbered 1-9 Langamull Woodland Approved

Parties with an interest in the above application may appeal our decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days. Information on how to appeal is available from the Crofters Commission.

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES
Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

DECRETING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

Name, Croft, Extent/Reason, Conditions, Case number
Mr C Sloss
Broils Croft 2, Ardcattan & Muckkairn
0.079 ha - Site for a dwelling house
4.86.36094
Conditions: 1, 2, 3, 4

Mr S A MacLeod
14 Clovullin, Ardour
0.111 ha - Amenities ground
4.86.36169
Conditions: n/a

Comments can be made to the Crofters Commission by any member of the crofting community within the locality of the land, within 14 days of the date of this newspaper. Crofters Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW info@crofterscommission.org.uk

(1) Purchase area within 5 years of the date of direction.
(2) To provide a site for a dwellinghouse
(3) Complete enclosure of the land with a stock proof fence within 4 months of the proposed development completion
(4) That fence shall be maintained in good order and repair by each successive owner or occupier of the land.

Any person with an interest in the application may appeal against a decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days of the date of this advert.

FORM 9 FORM OF ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE TO Court Ref. no. B90/11

An action has been raised in Oban Sheriff Court by Santander UK plc, Pursuer calling as a Defender Suzanne Elizabeth Frost whose last known address was at A, 11 Tweeddale Street, Oban, PA34 5DD and whose present whereabouts are unknown.

If Suzanne Elizabeth Frost wishes to defend the action she should immediately contact the Sheriff Clerk at Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AL from whom the service copy initial writ may be obtained. If she fails to do so decree may pass against her when the case calls in court on 09/02/2012 at 10:00.

Date: 06/01/12
Sheriff Clerk (depute)
Telephone no. 01631 562414

ACHA
argyll community housing association

Acha seeks expressions of interest from suitably experienced contractors wishing to tender for our solid fuel servicing contract on Islay.

Respondents submitting expressions of interest should send copies of any relevant qualifications and a brief resume of experience in this field of work, to establish their suitability.

Short listed contractors will then be invited to submit a tender through a selective competitive tender procedure. Expressions of interest should be made in writing to Norrie Lamont email address norrie.lamont@acha.co.uk by 12 noon on Monday 6th February 2012.

Glencruitten Tenants and Residents Association

Extra Ordinary AGM

Monday 23rd January 7.30pm

Undercroft, Glencruitten Church Hall

Please support us or this will be our last meeting

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West Coast property service
www.westcoastpropertyguide.co.uk

RECRUITMENT

McEwens
A long established family owned independent store group with branches in Perth, Inverness, Ballater, Oban & Aberdeen.

McEwens in Oban is looking to recruit an experienced Senior Sales Assistant & flexible part-time staff.

*Are you customer focused?
Enjoy selling? Love Fashion?
Give exceptional service?*

If the answer to the above is yes we would like to hear from you.

Applications in writing or email please to:
Mrs Audrey Hunter, Oban Shop Manager
McEwens of Perth,
113-115 George Street, Oban PA34 5NT
j.cleisham@mcewensofperth.co.uk

Agricultural/HGV Mechanic required

An experience Mechanic to work on the Isle of Islay and Jura

Flexibility to work on HGV and agricultural machinery
Rate negotiable

Please apply in writing with C.V to:
Box No.74, The Oban Times
P.O Box 1 Oban PA34 4HB

Family Help Campbeltown

6-8 hrs/wk for school/nursery drop off and pick up and light housework.
Some flexibility would be helpful.
Own car use is essential.
07766 160 801

TO LET

2 bedroom flat

Fully furnished, Oban, immediate entry, no DSS, £550pcm + bills.
Telephone 07789515826 or 07769738479

LANDLORDS

We urgently require 1 & 2 Bedroom properties in the Oban area

Call West Lettings: 01631 569 466
westlettings.co.uk

CAIRNBAAN - HOUSE SHARE

Immaculate double room in idyllic fully modernised cottage, to lodge with owner.

All mod cons inc: Wi-Fi, Sky & power showers. £380 pcm (inc most bills).

Apply: enquiries@radius-consulting.com

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The regional press is perfectly placed for property advertising. Almost one-in-five adults choose their local paper as their main source for this information, more than any other media.

Regional Press

COMMERCIAL FOR SALE

NANCY BLACK'S CHANDLERS

18/19 Argyll Square, Oban, Argyll

An opportunity to buy this iconic business selling ships chandlery, camping and quality outdoor clothing established for nearly 50 years in an ideal trading position in this busy tourist town.

Offers for sale with an open lease to be negotiated with the landlords.

Telephone in the first instance to Ian Wallace on 01631 730369.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

FOR LEASE

SITE 15A CRANNOG LANE, LOCHAVULLIN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, OBAN

Site 15A is an industrial site located within the Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, at the top end of Crannog Lane. The site is fenced and extends to 515 square metres or there by.

Offers over £4,380 per annum are invited.

Closing date for offers is Friday 10th February 2012
For further information: Estates Office, Blairnadam, Helensburgh G84 8ND
Tel: 01436-658957

TO LET

Three bedroom house, near Campbeltown

Available from beginning of February.

For more details please telephone 01526 378337 or 07740553003.

West Coast Property Guide

C & D Mactaggart Solicitors KINTYRE ESTATE AGENCY

FOR SALE

49 MACINTYRE TERRACE, LOCHGILPHEAD, PA31 8TF

Mid-terrace house with garden pleasantly situated in a quiet road. Hall, lounge, kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom and downstairs WC. There is double glazing and off-peak electric heating. The property is in need of refurbishment and redecoration and this is reflected in the asking price. Offers around £70,000

Castlehill, Campbeltown, Argyll, PA28 6AR | 57 Lochneil Street, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8JN
Telephone (01586) 552317 Fax (01586) 554719 Telephone (01546) 602581 E-mail: mail@cdm-law.co.uk
(24-Hour Answering Service)

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SYKES cottages

West Coast Property Guide

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Mature professional local gentleman, in full time employment, with well behaved adult dog seeks rented accommodation. Long term let, excellent references available. Oban or within 7 mile radius.

Tel: 07926172458

Retail Unit to let Lynn Road, Oban

Contact Iain
07795 972665



01631 566 122
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Grab a share of the easy life



View of Oban Bay



**Development at Glenshellach
Oban, Argyll
£105,000 each for 80% share**

New development of six affordable cottages with NHBC Warranty.

Specially designed for the elderly retired market, with tailored amenities.

Within easy reach of the town centre and local facilities.

The development will comprise: Six 2-bedroom cottages with fully fitted amenity showers/WC areas and newly-fitted kitchens.

Double glazing. Dimplex Duo heat electric panel heating. Benefits from solar panel water heating.

Managed gardens to the front and rear, with patios to the rear.

Dedicated off street parking for each property. Bus service close by.

Adjacent smaller cottages are also available to rent through Bield Housing Association.



images are illustrative only and not necessarily representative



The properties have been specially designed by Bield Housing Association (www.bield.co.uk), a non-profit organisation with charitable status who devise innovative housing methods and care services aimed for the recently-retired and older market, in order to enable people to retain as much independence as possible. Properties available on a shared ownership basis £105,000 represents an 80% share of the property

S & S Services Heathfield, Ayr.

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ORDER YOUR NEW VEHICLE THIS WEEKEND
AT THE S & S ROADSHOW



THE NEW SUBARU XV IS ON ITS WAY.



We will have information on all these and new exciting models. Including the new XV Crossover vehicle and Coupe. We will also be taking orders for those who want to be at the top of the list for New vehicles.

ISUZU RODEO DENVER SPECIAL EDITION

ONLY £15,490 + VAT

*price based on non metallic paint excluding road tax and subject to availability



Our special edition comes as standard Isuzu Rodeo Denver Plus a towbar with single electrics, bedliner and rubber mats. 3000 kg towing capacity, 136 bhp, digital tachograph compatible, alloy wheels, air con and electric windows all as standard.

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new car index

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vmaclean@mict.co.uk or Tel: 01680 812900

Crofting course to be held on Mull

THE SCOTTISH Crofting Federation in conjunction with the Mull and Iona Community Trust are to run a 10-week part-time Entry Level Crofting Induction Course starting on Thursday February 9.

This highly acclaimed evening course is designed specifically for new, aspiring crofters, or anyone else interested in this traditional way of life.

Prior enrolment is essential as places are limited for this course, which has been made possible with funding from the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

For further information and an enrolment form please contact Vanessa Maclean Tel: 01680 812900 or Email: vmaclean@mict.co.uk



Sheep tagging and recording courses to be held throughout the west coast

SHEEP farmers throughout the west coast recognize the increasing importance of getting sheep tagging and record keeping right.

Record workshops
With that in mind the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) has launched a Scotland wide programme of short workshops to provide a simple but comprehensive guide on all aspects of sheep tagging, recording and record keeping.

This week saw the new course rolled out in Islay, Campbeltown and Mid Argyll.
SAC Consultants have noticed a significant increase in queries from farmers about sheep record keeping. It reflects the nervousness producers feel as they try to come to terms with the complexity of sheep tagging, recording and EID regulations. A failure to correctly tag and record risks significant penalties to Single Farm Payments. Less Favoured Area support, Scottish Beef Calf Scheme

and Rural Priorities Annual Recurrent Claims.
According to Consultant Robin Mair at SAC's Farm and Rural Business Service office in Stirling, Government inspectors are discovering tagging and recording discrepancies regularly.
He said: 'Sheep tagging and recording guidance can be hard to interpret and many farmers are encountering problems at inspection which then incurs penalties. Farmers need to know exactly what it is inspectors will be looking for and what is not acceptable. There are approximately 10,000 IACS registered businesses with sheep and we believe at least 50 per cent of them will benefit from training. We have worked very hard to ensure the information on the course and in the packs farmers receive is correct and up to date,' said Robin.

Developed by Robin Mair and senior consultant Colin MacPhail of Mull, the new, 'Sheep-Record Right' workshop was tested at a number of events during the Christmas holiday period and received very positive feedback.
In addition to clarifying the requirements for tagging and recording, the 2-3 hour course demonstrates procedures to eliminate problems at inspection.
Farmers will also receive both the A4 'Sheep - Record Right' pack and the handier sized 'Shepherd Right' guidance folder incorporating tagging and recording information for on-farm use.
The next courses are scheduled for Treen on Wednesday, January 25; Mull on Tuesday, January 31; Mallaig and Fort William on Tuesday, February 7; Isle of Seil near Oban on Wednesday, February 15; Taynuilt and Inveraray on Thursday, February 16; with courses on the Isle of Coll and Colonsay still to be confirmed.
To book a place on one of these courses, contact SAC Oban on 01631 563093 or frs@oban.sac.co.uk

Mull man is new 'Caley Marts' director

CALEDONIAN Marts have co-opted 37-year old Colin MacPhail of Callychally Farm, Aros, Isle of Mull on to their Board of Directors following the retirement of Tom Brown, West Adamton.

Colin has had experience in the procurement of prime stock and is currently Senior Consultant at Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Consulting based in Stirling.
Colin said that he was excited about joining a company that was reaching a milestone of 50 years in business and were very supportive of the west coast livestock farming industry from their base in Oban. He hoped to add value to the society in both their Stirling and Oban centres and is looking forward to attending his first Board meeting.

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BIRTHS

GORDON - Colin (formerly of Isle of Seil) and Carolyn are delighted to announce the arrival of their son Kieran James, born January 5, 2012 at the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow. A brother for Emma and second grandchild for John and Kathleen Gordon, Easdale, Isle of Seil.

HUTTON - Suddenly, but peacefully, after a short illness, borne bravely, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, Lochgilhead, on January 12, 2012, Geoff Hutton, aged 61 years of Dunavent, Victoria Park, Minard. Beloved husband of Marion, loving father of Michael and step-father to Linda, Maureen and Jane. Adored grandpa and papa. Cherished brother of Diana and a dear uncle and cousin to all the family. A good friend and work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held today, Thursday, January 19, at 2.00pm, at Christ Church, Lochgilhead. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Erskine Hospital.

MACNICOL - Suddenly, but peacefully, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, Lochgilhead on January 8, 2012, Netta MacNicol, aged 87 years, of 39 Highbank Park, Lochgilhead. Beloved daughter of the late William and Christine MacDonal. Loving sister of Catherine MacDonal (Tayness, Kilmartin). Funeral service will be held in Lochgilhead Parish Church today, Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 12 noon, thereafter to Achabreac Cemetery.

MACPHERSON - Peacefully in her sleep in Toronto, Canada, Sandra, sister of Myrette, San Francisco and twin sister of Donald, Ellenbeich. A memorial service will be held at a future date.

McLEAN - Peacefully at Victoria Hospital on January 16, 2012. Walter (Scottish Golf Union) beloved husband of Sheena, dear father of Janice and Allison, father-in-law of Mark and Paul. A much loved grampa to Emma, Alex and Lucy.

SCROGGIE - Ann (nee MacRae) died peacefully after a short illness on Friday, January 13, 2012 at Wishaw Hospital. The funeral will be held at Craignure Church, Isle of Mull on Monday, January 23, 2012 at 11:30 am. Much loved mother of Fiona and Paul and sister Marie. Family flowers. Donations for the Macmillan Fund.

TIMMS - Margaret Hannah "Nancy" nee Arlet Peacefully, at home, with her family by her side, on Thursday January 5, 2012, of Elangene, Les Nouettes, Forest, aged 84 years. Loved wife of Bryn, loved and cherished mother of Neil and Linda, and Penny and Bill, and loved grandmother of...

Daniel, Naomi and Will. A celebration of Nancy's life will be held at St Andrews Church of Scotland in the Grange, on Wednesday January 25 at 11.00am. All who knew Nancy are welcome to join the family at this time. Family flowers only, but donations in lieu may be sent to Guernsey Society for Cancer Relief (Bulstrode), c/o Mrs S J Butler, Meldrum Way, Bray Road, Vale, GY3 5PR or Motor Neurone Disease Association, c/o Mr K Trebert, The Treasurer, Ti-Amo, Rue de l'Ecole, Vale GY3 5LJ.

WHYTE - Peacefully at the Southern General Hospital on January 3, 2012, Aileen Fiona, aged 47 years, of Bunanuisge, Bowmore, beloved daughter of Iain and Maimie and dear sister of Alasdair, Marie and Duncan. Interred in Bowmore, Islay on January 9, 2012. Very sorely missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMPBELL - Elsie, Fiona, Derek and Innis would like to thank family and friends for all their help and support they have received after their sudden loss of their father Angus. Special thanks to Rev Beaton who comforted both Dad and Mum during a difficult time and Hamish Hoey and Son for their kindness and efficiency. The retrieval collection was £655.99 on behalf of the British Heart Foundation.

CARLYLE - The family of the late Morag Carlyle would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind support and expressions of sympathy cards, flowers, telephone calls and visits. Sincere thanks to the girls from homecare doctors and nurses of Mallaig Health Centre for their caring support and contributing to Morag's wish to remain at home. Special thanks to Rev. R Corbett for comforting service, Mrs Flemming for playing the organ and Ewen and John from John McLellan's for their efficient funeral arrangements. Also thanks to the West Highland Hotel for their buffet refreshments and all who paid their respects at church and graveside. The collection raised £400 for The River Fund.

MACCALLUM - The family of Fergus would like to very sincerely thank all the kind friends who have been so generous in sending flowers, cards, letters and delicious food. Also joining us at the service to celebrate Fergus's life. Great thanks to Robert Brookes and Ian Walter for leading the service with such compassion and Euan Dewar for piping. Also special thanks to all the doctors, Macmillan Nurses, nurses and all the domestic staff at the Lorn and District Hospital who looked after Fergus with such kindness and consideration throughout his illness and stay in hospital - the accommodation that was so kindly offered to his friends who came from all over the world was unbelievably welcomed and helpful. The extremely generous donations gifted will be divided between Amnesty International, Oban Mountain Rescue and Macmillan Cancer Care. You have all been such a support to us.

MACKENZIE - The family of the late Marjory MacKenzie would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind support, assistance and expressions of sympathy following their sad loss. Special thanks to the Cardiology Department of the Jubilee Hospital, Glasgow, staff at the Oban Hospital, Rev. Robert Brookes for his kind words and to D and A Munn for funeral arrangements.

SKINNER - Thomas, Robert, Marion and families wish to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy following the loss of their mother Jean, on December 10, 2011. Special thanks to Libby and staff at Mosspark Nursing Home for their care and attention during her brief stay. Thanks also to Rev Richard Corbett for his comforting service. Special thanks to Mike McFall and staff for their help, efficiency and compassionate handling of the funeral arrangements, also to Tosh's for refreshments. Thanks to all who paid their last respects to Jean from far and near both at the church and graveside and who so generously donated over £400 which has been distributed to Mosspark and Step Down Ward, Belford Hospital.

MEMORIALS

BARRIE - Treasured memories of our beloved mother Dorothy (nee MacBeth) who passed away January 19, 1961. RIP. A heart of gold for all to behold. A true mother and friend. Forever sadly missed. - Wendy, Matthew, and Clelland.

BRYSON - In loving memory of my dear sister Charlotte (Daisy), a dear sister and aunt, who passed away on January 24, 2011. Always remembered. - Morag and family.

CAMPBELL - Loving memories of our dear mother and granny Marion who died January 17, 1997. You left a place no one can fill. We miss you mum and always will. - Lorne, Kathie and Alisdair, Christine. Loved always.

CLARK - Treasured memories of Angus Ross Clark a much loved husband, father, father-in-law and adoring Grampa, who passed on January 19 2009. "He lives on forever within our hearts" Remembering also Donald Brown, a loving father and grandfather, who passed away January 19 1973. Loved and remembered every day by all the family.

POTTER - 11th Anniversary of our youngest daughter and sister Jennifer Jane, tragically killed on January 20, 2001 aged 17. Loved and missed. - Mum, Dad and family at home and away. xxx

POTTER - In loving memory of my granddaughter Jennifer Jane killed January 20, 2001, aged 17 years. Sadly missed. - By Nana

POTTER - Treasured memories of Jennifer who died tragically on January 20, 2001. Always in our thoughts. - Stephen, Kirsty, Findlay and Susannah.

FORDHAM - Brilliant memories of my amazing dad, Bobby who passed away January 19, 2008 in Belford Hospital, Fort William. Proud to call you my dad, always. We miss you every day. Louise and Michael. Grandad, we miss your cuddles and big smiles. Love you lots, Michael James and Ellie.

GALBRAITH - In loving memory of George, of Drumfingal, Dervaig, Mull, who died January 20, 1995. - Brenda and family.

KENNEDY - In loving memory of Sandy, father, grandfather and great grandfather who died January 21, 1990. A daily thought. A silent tear. A constant wish that you were here. Always remembered. - Emily, Ken, Kathleen, Roddy, Iain, Louise, Bruce, Mairi, Jenna and Norman.

MACBETH - Lizzie Unforgettable mother, granny and great granny, died January 24, 2010. The roses will bloom again. - Mima and family, Fort William, Arbroath and Darlington.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of our dear brother and uncle Willie, who died 21 January, 2009. Never forgotten.

Also remembering loved ones gone before and since. - Kathleen, Wally and Gary, Farnborough and Maimie, Charlie and family, Inverness.

MACDOUGALL - Precious memories of my darling son and brother David, died tragically in a road accident on January 23, 1996, aged 31 years. Also my darling husband Duncan, father, father-in-law and papa who died on August 26, 1996. Behind a smile there's many a tear. For ones we lost and loved so dear. To a beautiful life came a sudden end. He died as he lived, everyone's friend.

- Inserted by Mum, Ann, Darren, Liam, Siobhan and Aiden. **MACIVER** - Duncan passed away January 12, 2007. Dear husband, father, father-in-law and grandpa. Remembered with love. - Bunty, Kevin, Lindsay, Beverley, Daniel, Duncan, James and Emily.

MACMILLAN - In loving memory of my dear sister Jasmine Fiona who was taken from us on January 2, 2008. - Love from Dunriona and family.

MACRAE - Treasured memories of Len a loving husband, dad and grampa, who died January 18, 2003. Sadly missed in so many ways. Quietly remembered every day. - Love Kate and families.

PEARSON - Treasured memories of our precious son Jamie, tragically taken from us on January 24, 1996 aged 27. They say in time you do forget. To some that may be true. But no morning dawns, no night returns. Without a thought of you. Loved always, Mum and Dad.

In memory of Jamie, a loving brother, brother-in-law and uncle. Remembered and missed every day. Audrey and Gregor. Love you and miss you loads. Gemma xx and Ashleigh xx

POTTER - 11th Anniversary of our youngest daughter and sister Jennifer Jane, tragically killed on January 20, 2001 aged 17. Loved and missed. - Mum, Dad and family at home and away. xxx

POTTER - In loving memory of my granddaughter Jennifer Jane killed January 20, 2001, aged 17 years. Sadly missed. - By Nana

POTTER - Treasured memories of Jennifer who died tragically on January 20, 2001. Always in our thoughts. - Stephen, Kirsty, Findlay and Susannah.

FORDHAM - Brilliant memories of my amazing dad, Bobby who passed away January 19, 2008 in Belford Hospital, Fort William. Proud to call you my dad, always. We miss you every day. Louise and Michael. Grandad, we miss your cuddles and big smiles. Love you lots, Michael James and Ellie.

GALBRAITH - In loving memory of George, of Drumfingal, Dervaig, Mull, who died January 20, 1995. - Brenda and family.

KENNEDY - In loving memory of Sandy, father, grandfather and great grandfather who died January 21, 1990. A daily thought. A silent tear. A constant wish that you were here. Always remembered. - Emily, Ken, Kathleen, Roddy, Iain, Louise, Bruce, Mairi, Jenna and Norman.

MACBETH - Lizzie Unforgettable mother, granny and great granny, died January 24, 2010. The roses will bloom again. - Mima and family, Fort William, Arbroath and Darlington.

Thought for the Week

Hope for tough times

WE KNOW times are tough when retail giant Tesco announces a drop in sales. We know times are tough when Robert Peston's doom-laden economic forecasts are a constant feature of our 24/7 news media.

There's not a lot of good news. Cheer up, we're told. Just wait for the Olympics! Well, I'm sure I'll enjoy watching them but I'm not so sure what benefit they will bring to the Highlands and Islands. And now that the Christmas and New Year celebrations are over it seems to be a case of struggling on as best we can.

All very Rev. I. M. Jolly!

What exactly were we celebrating a few weeks ago? The birth of someone unique, described as the Saviour of the world, and as Immanuel, God with us. And if that means anything it surely means not just with us in the good times but all times. One of the songs in the Old Testament affirms God as a present help in troubled times. Jesus came to be just that.

Jesus was well aware of the tough times of ordinary folk in his day. Often we are told that Jesus had compassion on the crowds described as harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Not so different it seems from our own day. Perhaps we need to face the reality that we are not as independent or self-sufficient as we imagine. Jesus had a message of hope then and it's the same for today. Many then and since have taken him at his word.

What about us? 'Come to me all of you who are tired and have heavy loads and I will give you rest. Accept my teaching and learn from me because I am gentle and humble in spirit and you will find rest for your lives.'

CONTENTIOUS plans to move Barra's statutory pre-school provision from Barra Children's Centre to Castlebay School will be discussed at a public meeting next month.

Locals will be able to hear directly from representatives of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar the reasons why they decided to go to consultations on proposals that would close the purpose-built community-run Children's Centre.

Full details of the plan have now been published for consultation and are available online at cne-siar.gov.uk. Views are to be returned to CnES by 5pm February 29.

Speaking last month, Abigail Treffy, one of the directors of Barra Children's Centre, said: 'We're saddened and frustrated that CnES have decided to go to consultation on the proposed relocation of pre-school provision.'

'The move requires a capital investment of £62,000 and will effectively reduce the quality of what is on offer to service users in terms of the loss of purpose built toilet facilities, outdoor play areas and sensory garden and ease of access to the provision.'

To respond to the consultation, either write to Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, Lewis, HS1 2BW or email schoolconsultations@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Castlebay nursery goes to public meeting

Quintet Zambra entertain at Oban's St John's Cathedral



Quintet Zambra takes the applause of a good crowd in St John's Cathedral on Sunday. The concert, hosted by Oban Music Society, featured pieces such as The Magic Flute Overture by Mozart and Dvorak's American Quartet. 16.1034unit001

Birks Cinema gains another boost

PLANS to re-open Aberfeldy's Birks Cinema remain in the balance despite the second £100,000 boost this month.

Arts body Creative Scotland on Thursday confirmed it was granting the money to the group, which needs to raise £1.8million by the end of the month to secure the match funding required if ambitious plans for the old picture house are to be realised.

Failure to raise the remaining £220,000 would see the Friends' plan to turn it into an arts hub for Highland Perthshire fail, despite already owning the building.

Chair of the Friends of the Birks Cinema group, Charlotte Flower, said: 'We are delighted to have been awarded this vital grant from Creative Scotland. It takes us to within sight of the finish line to raise the funds to get the project up and running.'

'We are pleased to invest in the provision of top quality cinema facilities in rural Perthshire and wish the Friends of the Birks success in raising the balance of funds needed to complete the package.'

A last big push is now underway to raise the remaining funds by the end of the month. Funding applications are still pending, while the group is awaiting the response from last week's direct mail appeal to locals and businesses.

The group must match the Scottish Government Rural Development Programme grant which was awarded last year by the end of January in order to still retain it. For more information on the Birks Cinema campaign and details of how to support the project, go to www.birkscinemafriends.org.uk.

Scottish Water say no problems at Bonawe

SCOTTISH Water has moved to dispel rumours that a troubled £1.7million treatment plant in Bonawe is still not working, saying it has been fully operation since September.

The utility operator admitted defeat with a pioneering crystal water cleansing system in March of last year, after nearly two years of trying to make the plant work.

During the outage, tankers regularly visited the plant to remove untreated water. Tankers continue to visit the site, but Scottish Water say that is normal practice.

A spokesperson for Scottish Water said: 'It is delivering substantial improvements to the natural environment because it has put an end to private discharges of raw sewage into the waters of Loch Eive.'

'Scottish Water removes sludge from the septic tanks in the system to go to Oban for treatment and disposal. 'We have not removed any untreated water. We have only removed this sludge and that is part of our normal operational practices.'



Irene McLaren to Allan MacDougall, married at Croftfoot United Free Church, Glasgow on January 19, 1962. Congratulations from all the family. Present add. Strathallan, Soroba Road, Oban.

DEATHS

CORBETT - Muffi (Margaret Catherine) of Kinlochspelve, Lochbuie, Isle of Mull and Binley, Hampshire. On January 8, 2012 after a short illness bravely fought, aged 66. Darling wife and best friend of Peter. Adored mother of Katie, Richard, Emma (d.1974) and Charlie. Loving grandmother of Tom, Skye, Maisie and Johnny. Mother-in-law of Edward, Bebe and Mary. A Service of Thanksgiving will take place at St Peter's Church, St Mary's Bourne, Hampshire SP11 6BE on Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 2.00pm. Family flowers only. Donations to Ward C4, Southampton General Hospital c/o Richard Steel & Partners, Alderman House, City Road, Winchester SO23 8SD (enquiries 01962 862333).

CHAMBERLAIN - Peacefully, on January 17, 2012, at The Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, Margaret Hall Chamberlain, beloved wife of the late Chick Chamberlain, 30 Lorn Avenue, Dunollie, Oban, dear mother of Morvan and Marion and a much loved granny to all her grandchildren. Funeral will take place from The Church of Scotland, Glencairn Road, Oban on Friday, January 20, 2012 at 1.00 p.m. Thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery.

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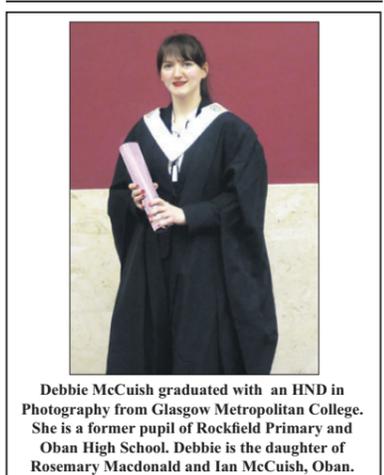
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GRADUATIONS



Debbie McCuish graduated with an HND in Photography from Glasgow Metropolitan College. She is a former pupil of Rockfield Primary and Oban High School. Debbie is the daughter of Rosemary Macdonald and Ian McCuish, Oban.

WEDDINGS



Alice Miller and Tommy Johnston were married on 5th November 2011 at Loch Melfort Hotel. Photo by Bill Baillie of rainycloudimages.com

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Controversial ending to Fort William game

The disputed goal overshadowed a decent Fort performance

REPORT BY RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

AFTER last weekend's controversial loss at home to Brora Rangers, Fort William face a tough trip to take on Deveronvale this Saturday.

Manager Danny Conlon has a number of players who are doubtful for the tie, including Mark and Michael Gillespie, Iain Foggo and Darren Duncan.

He told The Oban Times: 'It's going to be a really hard game for us. They're going reasonably well. They've been a bit hot and cold so far but they are still there or thereabouts in the league and it's always a tough place to go.'

'We're not scoring many goals at the moment. We don't have someone here who's going to

score the goals, and the problem is with the resources we've got, where are we going to get one?'

Last Saturday's controversy came at the end of a game dominated by the Lochaber men, when the referee stopped play following an injury to Fort midfielder Mark Gillespie. Brora striker Liam Baxter indicated he would pass an uncontested drop-ball back to the home side, but instead lobbed Stewart Gray from 30 yards out, much to the anger of the Fort William players and bench.

Conlon, who was sent off for his protests, said he didn't blame the Brora player for the goal. 'Baxter is only a young lad. The referee stopped the game because one of our players is injured, so he should have taken charge of the situation.'

FOOTBALL

'We feel because we're a small club struggling down at the bottom of the league we're looked on differently to the others. It's always been a sore point for us.' The disputed goal overshadowed a decent Fort performance, with the Claggan side creating plenty of opportunities despite seeing Michael Ellis sent off for a second bookable offence after 60 minutes.

Sean Ellis' left foot curler from the edge of the box had given Fort the lead in the 48th minute, but the home side were unable to increase the gap and slack defending allowed Brora to nick two goals in the 60th and 79th minute before their contentious late score.



Fort defender Darren Quigg fights off a Brora player during his side's loss on Saturday.

Drew re-appointed Scotland manager

SHINTY

FORMER Fort William boss and player Drew MacNeil has been kept on as Scotland manager for another two years.

MacNeil, who was appointed Glenurquhart manager in October, took up the job in 2010 and recorded a memorable victory at Croke Park, Dublin that year before a narrow loss in last year's series. He will be assisted by George Hay and Kenny Ross.

Kingussie star Ronald Ross takes on the role of Under 21 coach for the national side, with James Perlich and Jason Latto as his assistants. The trio take over from Donnie Martin, Ted McDonald and David Stafford, who held the positions for six years before stepping down.

Alleycats are still the top dogs

TEN PIN BOWLING

ALLEYCATS remain top of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling league scratch division after eight weeks of play.

Council are still three points back in second place on 35 points while Ardtoe/Nevis Radio moved into third on 27.

Underdogs lead the handicap division with 27 points with Alleycats now second on 25 points and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio in third, also on 25 points.

The highest team games of the week came from Alleycats with 536 scratch, and Phoenix with 762 handicap. Alleycats also had the highest two game scratch total with 1,039.

Leisure open up an eight point gap

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LOCHABER Leisure took a giant step towards the Ali Young Premier League sixes title with a 5-3 victory over rivals Goon Squad at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

The gap between the two is now eight points, and Goon Squad now have Tn United for company in joint second after the latter overcame AA Young 7-3.

Stroke City pulled off the shock of the night with a 6-2 defeat of Ballachulish, who remain in fourth alongside Steaua Sookabreast, easy winners against bottom club Bayern Bru 7-1. Elsewhere, Achintore FC dumped The Granite House 5-2 to move up to sixth, while Livercol edged out HWEnergy No Stars 2-1.

Get fit for 2012

SPORTS ASSOCIATION

LOCHABER Sports Association has published its 'Get Fit For 2012' listing to encourage more people to start the New Year by getting fitter and more active.

And to back up the initiative, LSA is launching two competitions, one for community centres and schools, the other for sports clubs, to recognise groups doing the most to support healthy activity in the community. Winners will be announced at the LSA AGM in October.

Fort lose out to Inverness

SQUASH

FORT WILLIAM Squash Club's top men lost out narrowly to Inverness Sign Centre in their Highlands and Islands premier division at Lochaber Leisure centre on Thursday night.

Inverness' best two players, Ally MacCorquohale and Kyle, have featured in the Scottish junior squad and were up against Fort captain Andrew MacMaster and Alan Love, respectively.

The visitors eventually prevailed 3-0 and 3-1, but those scores failed to reflect the closeness of the games.

Fort fought back when Stuart Cameron's excellent shot placement gave him a 3-0 win and Rah

Douglas' gritty play earned him a 3-2 victory. However, it wasn't quite enough and Fort lost the exciting match 8-7.

Fort William is one of six teams in the top division. Over the season two home and two away matches are played against each.

Before Fort's players took the court, they took delivery of new strips as part of a £500 sponsorship deal with Plumline. The firm's showroom manager Jane Childs made the presentation.



New kit: Fort William Squash Club players, back left, Andrew MacMaster (captain), Rah Douglas, Alan Love and Stewart Cameron, and front, Archie MacGillivray and Neil Worsdall with Plumline showroom manager Jane Childs. Missing from the line-up is Allan Ross.

New sponsors of the Highland League Cup

FOOTBALL

THE SCOTTISH Highland Football League has announced Bredon Aggregates as new sponsors of the Highland League Cup.

The largest independent aggregates company in the UK, Bredon employs over 800 people in Scotland and England and

almost half their sites fall within the SHFL catchment area.

Bredon Aggregates Scotland chief executive Alan Mackenzie said: 'The Highlands of Scotland are our heartland. We look forward to working with the Highland League to make the coming season one of the most

successful ever.'

The draw for the first round of the Bredon Aggregates Highland League Cup will take place next Tuesday, January 24th at Inverurie Loco Works Social Club.

Plaudits for boxers

BOXING

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club have earned plaudits from the sport's governing body in Scotland for its inclusive training programme for local youngsters.

The club's free of charge non-contact boxing lessons every Tuesday have proved very popular with around 40 children taking part in the opening week. The numbers were deemed so impressive by Amateur Boxing Scotland Ltd, that they sent their representative Craig MacAvoy to Fort William to see what the fuss was about.

Every week those present learn a new skill until they are deemed knowledgeable enough to earn an achievement award.

The club would like anybody interested to know that missing any of these lessons will not be a problem as the youngsters can easily be brought up to speed.

Meanwhile, preparations continue for what promises to be a busy second half of the season.

Boxers James Aitchison, Chris Bradley and Igor Sliwinski all travelled to Inverness recently to

take part in the North of Scotland trials for the Scotland squad.

All three were selected out of a total of only nine chosen from all the boxers in the whole of North of Scotland stretching from Kinlochleven to Aberdeen. Last Sunday they ventured to Motherwell to take part in national Scotland squad training. During the course of the two-hour session involving bagwork, sparring, circuits and technical work the boys proved they truly belong at this level.

Coach Niall Clark said: 'The next few months should prove very eventful as over the last few years as the club has grown in stature they now have boxers able to compete at national level at most age groups and seniors.'

Anyone interested in joining the club in any capacity whether it be non-contact lessons, or the full club itself can contact Niall Clark (07554994744), Vince Lopez (07979321025) or Steve Docherty (07767069532).

Peter takes the tape in Riverbank race

ATHLETICS

SOME 56 runners from across Scotland flocked to Fort William to take part in Lochaber Athletic Club's annual Riverbank Splodge race on Sunday.

The athletes faced the usual wet and muddy conditions for the challenging five mile course, which started at Claggan Park and included negotiating tree roots, barbed wire fences and burn crossings.

Lochaber man Davie Rodgers led at the halfway point of the race but was overtaken by Peter Davenport of Bellahouston, who won in a time of 27minutes and 29seconds, while LAC's Allan Ross came in third.

Lochaber runner Amanda Blackhall finished second in the women's race in 35m 41s, just over a minute behind Jess Halliday of Shettleston.

Race organiser Graham Macnab said: 'Apart from the winners, there were other notable performances from Mike Bossard, who cycled from Oban straight to the start and then

cycled back; Jim Hamilton, who ran five miles to the start and Suzanne Duncan who accidentally felled a tree half way through the race. Many thanks to Christine Dougan and Shonda Macnab for their assistance with the finish and results.'



Peter Davenport overtakes local man Davie Rodgers to win the Riverbank race.

Lochaber no match for RAF Lossiemouth

RUGBY

DESPITE travelling to RAF Lossiemouth with a full squad of 22, Lochaber were unable to shake off the effects of their long lay-off and were beaten by a strong, fit and efficient team 83-0.

The visitors started well enough as 'Lossie' appeared to be happy to see what they were up against, and Lochaber had a couple of early opportunities to score that might have put a different complexion on the game.

Sadly though, Lochaber's general lack of fitness soon became apparent through missed tackles and a failure to control rucks, and Lossiemouth went on to score three tries in the first half.

Lochaber started the second half strongly, and with some tactical and injury changes made, appeared to be taking the game to their hosts with some good passages of play. But a failure to execute their chances cost them dear and with fitness

again found wanting the RAF side scored three more tries.

Score lines such as this may suggest to some that Lochaber are not a good side - but they do not paint a true picture of how things are.

There is a good team spirit and the Banavie club has some very talented individuals - what is needed is even greater commitment to the club to personal fitness.

On a lighter note, veteran prop

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Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

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

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Scottish Amateur Cup
4th round replay
Dynamo EK 2
Oban Saints 3

SAINTS travelled to East Kilbride last Saturday to take on Dynamo in the 4th round Scottish Amateur Cup replay and this time the Oban side got things right after a lacklustre performance the previous Saturday and travelled back up the A85 with a hard-fought 3-2 win under their belts.

The narrow and muddy pitch at Kirktonholme was not conducive to playing attractive football, but it was the visitors who were trying to get the ball down and pass it about with Dynamo quite content to play the long ball forward to strikers Stuart Kyle and Stephen Russell.

The visitors started well and Ryan Campbell was unlucky with a good effort in the first minute.

The next chance also fell to the visitors when Donald Campbell headed a Ross Maitland free kick over the bar.

Saints took the lead in the 18th minute after a fine move between Craig MacEwan and Donald Campbell resulted in the ball being flicked into the path of Chris Graham who buried a well placed shot high into the net past Dynamo keeper Kevin Cassidy.

If any criticism could be levelled at the Saints players it was that they were standing off their opponents, giving them too much time on the ball and not closing them down quickly enough.



Alex Craik.

With half time approaching, the home side drew level after Stuart Kyle fired over a dangerous cross which wasn't cleared properly. The ball fell kindly for his strike partner Stephen Russell who wasted no time in slotting it past Graham Douglas to make the half time score 1-1.

The superior fitness of the Oban side was beginning to tell as the half wore on and they could have taken the lead in the 65th minute

when Craig MacEwan set up Donald Campbell, but Kevin Cassidy made a good save with his legs.

However, the much-needed second goal came one minute later when skipper Keith Miller fed Donald Campbell wide on the left. Donald jinked past his marker before sending over a great cross which was met at the far post by central defender Alex Craik who fired the ball into the net.

The narrow lead lasted only four minutes though as the home

FOOTBALL

side drew level when Mark Elliott hit a tremendous low drive from fully 30 yards that Saints keeper Graham Douglas managed to get a hand to but only succeeded in pushing the ball onto the post and then into the net.

This goal stunned the visitors, but they came storming back and re-took the lead in the 74th minute when Craig MacEwan dispossessed central defender Chris Martin and raced through on goals. Craig drew the keeper before unselfishly squaring the ball to Ross Maitland who slotted the ball into an empty net.

The home side battled away and put the Saints rearguard under pressure as the clock ran down and were unlucky when a Derek Bell header hit the post.

Saints weathered the pressure and created a couple of half chances themselves, but in the end they were delighted to go through with a narrow 3-2 win.

Manager Iain Jackson was happy with the result and performance. He said: 'We knew we would be in for a tough game and that's exactly the way it panned out, but the boys battled hard and we ran out deserved winners in the end.'

This Saturday, Saints face a tough test in the 5th round of the Scottish Cup when they take on Aberdeenshire Premier League outfit Echt. The match will be played at Glencruitten Pitch 2 with a 2pm kick off with referee D Rorison from Ayr in charge.



Ewan Shearer is looking forward to leading out Scotland at Murrayfield against the 'Auld Enemy'. 16_103ewan01

Ewan to lead Scotland out against the 'Auld Enemy'

A TAYNUILT 10-year-old says he is the envy of all his friends after being chosen to lead out Scotland in the Six Nations clash with England at Murrayfield.

Ewan Shearer plays rugby for Eive Vikings, a club twinned with Oban Lorne RFC, and when the Oban-based club was allocated one of the 15 mascot positions, Ewan's number - lucky 13 - was drawn out of the hat.

'I was just jumping up and down when my dad told me I was going to be a mascot,' said Ewan. 'I didn't know I was even entered for the draw.'

RUGBY

'My friends keep telling me they are very jealous but they are excited for me too.'

Scotland line up against the Auld Enemy on February 4 and Ewan hopes to walk out of the tunnel at Murrayfield alongside his favourite player, Allan Jacobson.

The Taynuilt Primary School pupil will be given Scotland training kit ahead of the match, as well as tickets for his parents, Gordon and Lucy, his twin sister, Eilidh, and younger sister, Rona, aged 8.

Primary footballers back in action

THE OBAN Express Primary Football roared back into action on Sunday after the festive break at the Community Pitch.

The day started with a cracker of a game between Pumas and Scorpions with the Pumas showing some fine team work and passing moves which deservedly got them the opener through Connor Moore. However, the Lochgilphead side eventually over turned the score with goals from Craig Millar and Cammy Williamson.

Despite their good overall passing game the Pumas went down two nil to Jags who had Mark McKnight and Alistair Trafford on target but this was to be the Jags only win of the day as they crashed to defeats against both Red Star and the All Stars who had goalkeeper Ross MacAskill in good form. But in

the end Danny MacCuish and Craig Easton scored to keep their record intact and the Boys would have won the match had it not been for a last minute incredible save from Jamie Forgive.

Thistle proved to be the team of the day and were in good form against Tralee with both Cameron Hill and Keir MacLean scoring twice. In their next match, Scott Mossman went one better with a hat trick in their win over Red Star. Red Star had earlier defeated Thistles stable mates Jags so this was an important result for Thistle.

The Galaxy opened their day with a double from Ellis Hunter against Wasps but it was to be their only win on the day despite some good football in both their next matches against Tralee who had Stuart Black score the only goal of the game after some good

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

saves from the Galaxy 'keeper Fergie Carmichael and also against Scorpions who recorded a win although Galaxy had been impressive in the first half.

Tralee also recorded a win over Wasps thanks to a great double from Ryan Henriksen but when Wasps pulled a goal back, Tralee had to rely on some good defending by Rowan Howe and Angus Scott to keep their noses in front. The seniors go head to head again next week at the High School pitch.

The youngest teams of the junior league returned to Atlantis leisure after the break and this week all eight teams were well represented with all the players improving and fooling the coaches that they actually listen to them occasionally!

Taynuilt and Whiteinch share the points

Central Scottish Welfare League
Taynuilt 3
Whiteinch 3

TAYNUILT Amateurs welcomed league leaders Whiteinch, who have only lost one game all season, to Glencruitten last Saturday.

Whiteinch were the last team to beat Taynuilt back in September.

The game started off at a ferocious pace with both midfields battling away. Whiteinch edged the first 20 minutes with quick breaks down the left and some excellent movement from their lone striker.

Stephen Kelly was linking up well with Kris Gillies down the right for Taynuilt but were only able to create half chances.

Ben Pollock in goals for Taynuilt made some fine saves and was coming to collect the

ball confidentially. The game was evenly contested and the first goal came from a Whiteinch corner kick when one of their midfielders met the cross with an unstoppable header which made the half time score 1-0.

Taynuilt came out after the break and found another gear with Scott Maitland making excellent tackles and using the ball well.

In 53 minutes, Taynuilt nearly equalised; a smart pass from Maitland found Craig Campbell who sent a thunderbolt of a shot from 25 yards crashing off the post which hit the keeper in the face and went out for a corner.

Taynuilt hadn't long to wait before they equalised. A cross came in from the left which Craig Campbell met with a powerful downward header which bounced in front of the keeper and went through his legs. Did it

cross the line? The ref thought so and the goal was awarded 1-1.

Taynuilt started taking the game to the league leaders with Stephen Kelly showing great skill and power to beat several players. At the other end Ben Pollock kept the scoreline at 1-1 with a breathtaking save that was top corner bound.

Momentum

Whiteinch went back in front in the 64th minute from another corner with their No 9 heading home from close range. This goal affected the Taynuilt momentum as in 67 minutes it was 3-1. There was a great run from the visiting right midfielder who slipped the ball through to the striker who beat the outgoing Pollock.

The heads started to go down, so manager Stuart Reid brought on Mark Ferguson for Chris McGrath with Josh Rippon moving up top to partner Kris Gillies.

FOOTBALL

The home side showed what they were all about with a stunning comeback. It started off from a corner and a scramble in the box with Scott Maitland finding time to send the ball into the net.

A great ball from Mark Ferguson put Kris Gillies through and with a bit more composure would have levelled the game.

Taynuilt equalised in the 82nd minute when Kris Gillies bent a great free-kick round the Whiteinch wall with the ball nestling in the bottom corner of the net.

The game ended in a deserved draw and a hard game for both teams.

This Saturday Taynuilt are at home to Yoker in the league at Glencruitten with a 2pm kick-off.

14-man Lorne lose to Cumbernauld

RBS West Division 2
Cumbernauld 25
Oban Lorne 8

A DEPLETED Oban Lorne squad of only 14 players made the trip to play Cumbernauld last weekend looking to widen the gap on bottom place Uddingston in the table.

Oban were missing several players through work commitments meaning the home side were handed a one man advantage from the start of the match. One positive was the return of Ryan Jackson from a long term shoulder injury.

Despite the man advantage the hosts found themselves under pressure from a determined and hardworking Oban team who dominated the first 10 minutes of play. The home side conceded regular penalties allowing Oban to retain the ball in the 22 but failed to find the tryline.

RUGBY

Cumbernauld used their extra man to good advantage on their first visit to the Lorne half creating a try with an overlap to take the lead. Oban however didn't let this dampen their spirits and produced some more fantastic rugby near the home tryline. Some good work upfront, in particular by Corrie Louw and 2nd row Kieran Connolly.

Penalty

Oban were rewarded with a penalty attempt that was converted by Angus MacCallum to narrow the gap to 5-3 at half time.

With the Oban team tiring the hosts made their man advantage count in the second half and ran in four further unconverted tries to put the game out of sight.

Despite this Oban held strong and gained a try of their own from Calum MacLauchlan. Oban created a few other

RUGBY

chances in the second half and were unlucky not to add to their points for the afternoon.

The score line finished 25-8 to the hosts but did not reflect well on the excellent performance and hard work put in by the Oban players.

The Oban team were left proud of their efforts but knew that there would have been a different outcome if they had fielded a full strength team.

A bigger effort is required from the players for the rest of the season in order for the team to move away from the relegation zone.

Oban Lorne face league leaders Strathendrick on Saturday - kick off 2pm at Glencruitten.

Oban Minis continue to train every Sunday 1-2pm at the club. All welcome.

Weather

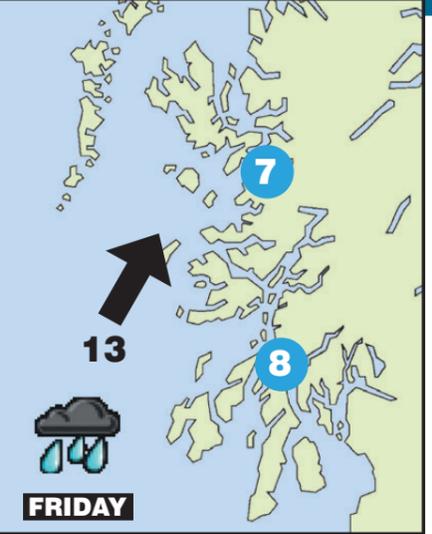
Thursday Cloudy.
Winds moderate, south westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C

Friday Heavy rain
Winds light, south, south westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.

Weekend Sunny intervals.
Outlook Winds moderate, west, north easterly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

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



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 19, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	02.09 3.2 07.59 1.5 14.52 3.2 20.55 1.5	
Fri	03.25 3.4 09.18 1.4 16.00 3.4 21.59 1.3	
Sat	04.19 3.6 10.25 1.2 16.47 3.6 22.50 1.1	
Sun	05.01 3.9 11.17 1.0 17.25 3.7 23.35 0.9	
Mon	05.40 4.1 12.02 0.9 17.59 3.8 ** ** *	
Tues	00.17 0.8 06.17 4.2 12.44 0.9 18.32 3.9	
Wed	00.57 0.7 06.53 4.2 13.22 0.9 19.04 3.9	

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

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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Sometimes pages that appear in the Fort William edition do not appear in the main edition (and vice versa).

As an electronic subscriber you get the main edition plus the pages that appear in the Northern edition.

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A-Z OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

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CARAVANS and CAMPING

Feature on Page 10



Transport chaos as A890 remains closed at Stromeferry

Call to open new abattoir

THE ONGOING closure of the A890 at Stromeferry emphasises the need for an abattoir in Skye and Lochalsh, says the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF).

West coast crofters and farmers taking their animals to Dingwall for slaughter have faced increased difficulties since a landslip shut the road last month.

Crofting resources programme manager Donald Murdie said: 'Taking animals from some parts of north Skye for slaughter at Dingwall is already a three-and-a-half hour journey. The landslip means that anyone travelling from Skye and Lochalsh to Dingwall has to go via Invermoriston instead. This puts about another hour on the journey. The uncertainty about the A890 and its future increases the case for an abattoir for Skye and Lochalsh. The SCF is in the process of putting an application in to the Scottish Government for funding to cover the cost of a study into options for an appropriately sized community owned abattoir in Skye and Lochalsh.'

Highland Council confirmed this week that there will be no restrictions on the carriage of livestock on the temporary ferry at Stromeferry, provided the total weight of the vehicle carrying the animals is less than 10 tonnes.



Monday morning: Lochcarron children board the Sula Mhor for the first stage of their journey to Plockton High School. A bus was waiting on the south side to take them to school. Photo by Alex Ingram

Boat times extended to ease closure strain

HIGHLAND Council chiefs updated a packed public meeting in Lochcarron village hall on Monday night on efforts to ease transport chaos caused by the ongoing A890 closure at Stromeferry.

The audience of 200 heard proposals on extending ferry times between north and south Stromeferry from daylight hours to 7am to 7pm, and on dualing the adjacent railway as the road until work on the dangerous rock face is complete.

Lochcarron butcher Stewart MacKenzie can now take his van across on Wednesdays for his delivery run to Plockton - and felt the longer ferry operating hours would help.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* after the meeting, he said: 'I'm more than happy - and so are 95 per cent of the workers on this side. That will suit an awful lot of people. The timescale is to have the road along the railway in place by mid-February.'

The quicker they can get that done the more people will benefit.'

Lochcarron Hotel owner Diane Saggars said: 'The main thing [at the meeting] was when is something going to be done to get the road open?'

'We have had cancellations in bookings, but we have also picked up business from people having to stay in the village because they can't get home.'

Transport committee chairman said on Tuesday: 'Everybody had the chance to air their views - and they were wide and varied about the inconvenience this has caused. People wanted the car ferry to run longer - we have the slipways well lit and we will put this in place as soon as possible.'

'Also there will be a train leaving Inverness at 6am and getting into Kyle at 9am to help people get to work. We are working with Scotrail on an extra return journey.'

Mr Laing was unable to give a timescale for diverting the A890 along the railway, adding the road would be closed 'for at least a month'.

Glenelg-Skye car ferry the MV *Glenachulish* and passenger ferry the *Sula Mhor* have been running across Loch Carron since Monday. Passengers on the *Sula Mhor* included Plockton High School pupils.

Glenachulish skipper, Lochcarron man 'Q' Banting, told *The Oban Times* 80 vehicles used the ferry on Monday - after a hour's delay in getting the engine started.

'She's not used to having two nights of -5°C,' he said. 'The batteries can't take the cold.'

The council was hosting another public meeting in Achmore last night (Wednesday) to update residents living south of the closure. Rockfalls have closed the A890 since December 22.

Communities toast Sunart distillery plan

A MULTI-MILLION pound investment could bring a new malt distillery and up to 10 jobs to one of the West Highland's remotest communities.

Fine whiskies seller Adelphi Distillery Ltd wants to build a whisky plant and visitor centre at Glen More, between Glenborrodale and Kilchoan in Ardnamurchan.

The distillery, possibly to be named Loch Sunart, would join Oban, Tobermory and Ben Nevis on the west coast whisky trail.

West Ardnamurchan Community Council backed the detailed proposals, lodged with Highland Council on January 4, after a presentation from Ardnamurchan Estate and Adelphi director Donald Houston last Monday. The plant would be powered entirely by wood chippings from Ardnamurchan estate, while used draff - the solid waste from fermentation - would feed the estate's cattle and cut haulage costs.

Mr Houston, 51, told *The Oban Times* on Monday the investment could total £6million, dependent on when revenue from whisky sales began to flow.

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

All required consents from SEPA had been secured and full environmental impact and tourism assessments submitted, but timescales were critical, Mr Houston said.

'We are hoping for a determination by the end of March. If we don't get it by then it will be delayed two months for the elections. That could delay us by a whole year, because our stills manufacturer has said if we can't place a firm order, they have others on the books they must fulfill.'

'The funds available to us today can't be sitting around for an indeterminate decision date. Let's hope Highland Council doesn't miss the opportunity.'

The council's Lochaber planning team leader Susan MacMillan said the buildings' scale in relation to nearby settlements, water intake on a site of special scientific interest and amenity concerns meant a decision could take four months.

Should more than five householders or a statutory consultee such as SEPA object, planning committee councillors would likely rule on the application. However, it was 'possible' officials could process the bid faster under delegated powers if no objections were received.

Ms MacMillan said: 'We do understand the company's keenness, however there is still a process to go through and this proposal has to be looked at carefully. If we can deal with it quicker than that, we will.'

'The application was only received on January 4. After the advert is placed in next week's press, the period for responses is 28 days.'

Jon Haylett, spokesperson for statutory consultees West Ardnamurchan Community Council, said: 'It's a super development and I hope Highland Council have the good sense to support this so it can go ahead.'

Adelphi understands there's a limited window involved for big investors. They are not prepared to hang around and the danger is they could walk away.'

Police probe Caol disturbance

POLICE have confirmed they are investigating a disturbance at the swing park near Birch Road in Caol in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Inspector Donald Campbell told *The Oban Times* a number of witnesses had already come forward, but police were still looking for anyone with information about the incident to contact them.



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Donation lifts Caol school spirits

SPIRITS were lifted at Caol Primary School on Monday when Fort William Football Club donated a new Nintendo Wii to replace one stolen last week.

Three laptops, three overhead projectors, two digital cameras and £780 in cash were also taken when thieves broke through a window last Wednesday night.

Club chairman John Wattman, who lives in Caol, told *The Oban Times*: 'My wife said I should do something to help.'

'So I made a few calls to people at the club and everybody agreed.'

'I didn't want to see the kids missing out.'

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

P7 pupils Freya MacDonald and Sine MacRae said: 'We are very grateful that Fort William FC came here and gave us a new Wii and Wii games.'

'Everybody loves playing the Wii for a treat in Golden Time. Thank you'

'We would like to say a huge thank you to the club for doing this. It has cheered everyone up.'

Inspector Donald Campbell told *The Oban Times* investigations were continuing

into a spate of 'possibly linked' thefts over recent days. Cash was taken from Harbro agricultural premises at Annat, Corpach, last Tuesday night and money was stolen from Direct Pet Supplies at Blar Mhor Industrial Estate on Wednesday night.

Items were stolen from the Stagecoach bus depot on Ardour Road, Caol, early on Sunday morning, when thieves also attempted to break into the nearby Hawco Volkswagen showroom.

Anyone with information is urged to contact 01397 702361 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.



Fort William FC chairman John Wattman and board member Albert Worsdall present a new Nintendo Wii with games and controllers to the school. 20_032ca001

Zoe wins Costa Brava trip

Lucky Kinlochleven High School S3 pupil Zoe Hannah is heading for the Costa Brava in June - with the help of an anonymous donor.

The person contacted the school looking to sponsor a child on the cultural trip, which is run in conjunction with outdoor activities group PGL. Every pupil's name went into a bucket and biology teacher Carly Aitken, pictured, who is co-ordinating the visit, pulled Zoe's name out.

Head teacher John McGilp said: 'If there are any other good Samaritans out there who would be willing to sponsor a child, please contact the school



on 01855 832042 or email kinlochleven.high@highland.gov.uk'

Council puts ferry support on record

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) is to make a written submission to Transport Scotland backing a South Uist-Mallaig ferry - at the second time of asking.

An earlier oversight meant the comhairle failed to lodge any statement during public consultations on the draft ferries plan, published on December 21. The document made no mention of the comhairle's views and proposed no action on commissioning the Mallaig link meantime.

However, evidence is still being taken for the final 2013-19 ferries plan - and the comhairle wants its support for the Mallaig link put on record.

A spokesperson told *The Oban Times*: 'I can confirm that a presentation on the draft ferries plan is to be made by officials from the government's ferries unit to the comhairle's transportation committee on Wednesday February 8 2012.'

'We shall then be preparing a draft response to the draft plan for approval by the comhairle

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

at the March series for submission prior to the consultation deadline of 31 March 2012.'

A Transport Scotland spokeswoman said: 'We did not receive any submission from Western Isles Council following their consultation but any comments the council wishes to make in response to the draft ferries plan will be carefully considered.' She added: 'The Draft Ferries Plan acknowledges the strength of feeling held by some of the Uist community regarding a Mallaig to Lochboisdale service and as part of the consultation, we will further consider the economic viability of this service in the context of other planned improvements to services to, and within, the Western Isles.'

As outlined in last week's *Oban Times*, the report recognised in comparison to other communities, South Uist was notably less happy with its

destination port [Oban]. Islanders were also more likely to use the ferry more if harbour location was changed to Mallaig.

That, believes Lochaber councillor Donald Cameron, could mean more business for the Mallaig to London Caledonian sleeper.

He said: 'We need to be proactive in promoting the whole experience of travelling overnight from London to the Highlands and Islands. Moreover we need to push the case for the introduction of a Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry to connect to this service. 'Dinner in London, breakfast on Rannoch Moor and lunch on the Minch would not only be an unforgettable experience for the traveller but it would be a boost for the economy of the Highlands and Islands.'

'Councillors Henderson and Foxley have done a lot of work on these separate issues and I will discuss this with them with a view to opening discussions with our counterparts in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.'

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The Dalai Lama.

Dalai Lama to visit Inverness

THE DALAI Lama will give a public talk at Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, on Saturday June 23, on his three-date tour of Scotland.

The Buddhist spiritual leader's theme for the address is 'Be the change', a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi.

Highland Council Convener Councillor Sandy Park said: 'The Highland Council is delighted to welcome His Holiness The Dalai Lama to the Highlands. It is fitting that the focus is on young people, who will, I am sure, be inspired by his presence and talk. He is guaranteed a warm Highland welcome.'

Heating oil stolen

POLICE in Gairloch are investigating two separate thefts of heating oil from a hotel in Gairloch and a private house in the Poolewe area over the festive period.

Anyone with information should contact Gairloch Police on 0845 600 5703 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Pipe band history goes on show

ISLE of Skye Pipe Band has opened an exhibition of photos from past and present and old letters at Portree Community Library on Viewfield Road.

The display, which runs until February 28, illustrates the band's history over the last 50 years.

Camping and picnic site plans lodged

BRITISH Waterways Scotland are seeking planning permission for two camping and picnic areas next to the Caledonian Canal at Leiferfearn, Port MacDonnell, Invergarry, and at Corriegour Lodge, South Laggan.

The sites would also feature toilets and information panels.

Glencoe celebrates 'World Snow Day'

GLENCOE Mountain Resort will celebrate 'World Snow Day 2012' on Sunday by organising a series of fun events.

The Fédération Internationale de Ski is working with snow sports bodies across the globe, including Ski Scotland, to mark the occasion.

Eleventh-hour nurse crisis talks

HIGHLAND health chiefs have agreed to an eleventh-hour meeting with Ardnamurchan campaigners as a row over out-of-hours and emergency cover goes down to the wire.

The move follows a fiery letter from West Ardnamurchan Community Council (WACC) demanding talks ahead of district nurse Jessie Colquhoun's retiral next month.

NHS Highland (NHS) and WACC have been at loggerheads for a year since it was announced Ms Colquhoun was leaving.

WACC want her replacement to be based locally and the current district nurse-based emergency response service to continue.

NHS Highland insists the service be based around GPs and the Scottish Ambulance

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Service, backed up by local volunteer 'emergency responders'.

Kilchoan people fear the new model risks leaving critically ill patients without emergency attention until an ambulance arrives from Strontian, an hour away by road. NHS Highland denies that, and maintains present arrangements are 'unsafe'.

WACC was incensed when NHS advertised last month for a new nurse for a 'West Lochaber team', with no stipulation he or she be Kilchoan-based.

In its letter to the chairs and chief executives

of NHS and the Scottish Ambulance Service, copied to health minister Nicola Sturgeon and all local MSPs, WACC explained the community's 'frustration and distress' that their views had 'fallen on deaf ears'.

Chairperson Rosie Curtis told *The Oban Times*: 'The appointee [nurse] will not have to live and work on West Ardnamurchan, nor will he/she have to be part of any out-of-hours emergency response team.'

'Worse, our existing district nurse will be taken off local duties to join the team of roving nurses who serve West Lochaber.'

'This will destroy a tradition of more than 100 years of excellent primary care by our district nurses.'

'It will leave us with no 999 cover at nights, weekends, holidays and for most of the working day – in an emergency, our nearest ambulance is over an hour away and the doctors over 45 minutes away – if they're available.'

'If this appointment goes ahead, it will drive a dagger into the very heart of what is currently a thriving community. People are talking of leaving the area.'

Worried

'Even those who want to stay are desperately worried – particularly the old, those with young children and those with chronic medical problems.'

'Such a sudden and catastrophic deterioration in NHS provision must be unprecedented in

Scotland. If this is the shape of Scotland's NHS-to-come, God help us.' Mid Highland Community Health Partnership General Manager, Gill McVicar confirmed receipt of the WACC letter requesting a meeting.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'Another meeting has already been suggested for this month and we remain keen to continue to work with the community and the Scottish Ambulance Service.'

'The fact that we have advertised the nurse post in no way closes communications with the community, but we need to ensure that core nursing services are maintained whilst discussions on emergency and urgent response continue.'

Hauliers speak out on ferry fare changes

A PACKED meeting in Stornoway on Monday night saw two Scottish Government officials grilled about proposed changes to ferry fares for commercial vehicles in the Western Isles.

The Government plans to scrap the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) for lorries from April 1 and revert to the bulk discount system used before RET was introduced in 2008, which gives bigger discounts for firms transporting more goods.

The RET scheme sets ferry fares to what it would cost to

travel the same distance by road. Around 35 hauliers attended the heated meeting, with a further 20 taking part via video link.

Consulted

Hector MacDonald, director at Stornoway-based Hebrides Haulage, was at the meeting and told *The Oban Times*: 'They were claiming after consultation this was the decision that had been reached but not one person around the table had been consulted.'

'We've just got to keep pushing and pushing until we can come to an amicable agreement.'

'How are we supposed to explain to our customers the prices could be going up by 120 per cent or more?'

Islands MSP Alasdair Allan, who organised the meeting, said afterwards: 'There was also an overwhelming view that if any new fare structures have to be based around discounts, then this must operate much more fairly than similar schemes have in the past and must benefit both large and small companies equally.'

'I have now conveyed the meeting's views to the Transport Minister.'



Far East dream: Katie wants to teach in Malaysia.

Katie's Far East dream

A LOCHABER High School senior pupil is trying to raise £5,100 to fund her dream of spending a year teaching in Malaysia.

Katie Dougan was selected to make the journey by Isle of Coll-based charity Project Trust, which sends volunteers aged 17-19 overseas to teach underprivileged children.

The S6 pupil plans to hold a series of fundraising events over

the coming months, including a 160ft bungee jump in March with two friends. Katie said: 'The prospect of going halfway round the world on my own is very daunting, but I've always wanted to travel and this is an excellent way of doing it as it's benefiting so many others who are less fortunate than us.'

To donate to Katie's efforts visit www.facebook.com/katie.project.trust.

Drink drive trial collapses

A TRIAL against a man accused of drink driving in Ballachulish collapsed after a prosecution witness was unable to identify the driver of the car.

Scott Russell, aged 33, of 26 Moor Park, Prestwick, denied driving on Albert Road while twice the legal limit on October 2. Local man James Maclean told Fort William Sheriff Court he saw a man in a grey suit getting out of a car outside the Larooh Bar, but could not identify him or say if he had been behind the wheel of the vehicle.

Sheriff Douglas Small found Mr Russell not guilty.

Man accused of knife attack

A MAN accused of attacking another man with a knife in Kinlochleven is due to stand trial on Monday January 30.

Andrew Thomson, aged 27, of 426 Dyke Road, Knightswood, Glasgow, pled not guilty to assaulting the man by striking him on the neck with a knife to his injury, permanent disfigurement and endangerment of his life at 13 Glendale Street on February 5.

The jury trial will be held at Fort William Sheriff Court.

Men not related

THE OBAN Times would like to clarify two men named in last week's story 'Fight costs Caol teenager £630'. Alan Mathers and Sean Mathers, are not related.

Evidence led in court suggested the two were brothers but this is not the case and they were unacquainted before the incident.

Lotto jackpot

THERE were no winners in the Fort William FC lotto draw on Saturday. Numbers were 01-17-19. The jackpot goes up to £300 this week.



Robert Cairns trawls through The Oban Times archives at Fort William Library for his history of Lochaber Burns Club. 20_03burns01

Club stalwart unearths history of Lochaber Burns Club

LOCHABER Burns Club will be presented with items from its 113-year history at its celebration of the Bard in Fort William's Alexandra Hotel on January 27.

Robert Cairns, the club's fundraiser for the past six years, has spent recent weeks in Fort William Library browsing microfiche back copies of *The Oban Times* dating back over a century.

Mr Cairns is standing down from his role this year and wanted to leave the club a lasting memento.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I hope to have all the information completed by January 27 and present it to president Jim Sutherland, so everyone can access the club's history more easily in future.'

'Donald Maclean at Lochaber High School is taking over from me as fundraiser this year, so I thought it would be a nice tribute to the club if I could gather together excerpts from its long history as well as information on past presidents from 1899-2011. That way, when they get the portfolio, all they will have to do is add on successive years. It's a lot of work – I'm having to stare at the screen all day long – but it will be worth it – and as I continue to research the club further, I am sure more good stories will appear and be documented for the Lochaber Burns Club.'

Nuggets unearthed from *The Oban Times*

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

archives by Mr Cairns, who has been attending Lochaber Burns Club since 1990, include:

1899: Lochaber Burns Club first met to celebrate the Bard in the Palace Hotel, Fort William, with over 80 members attending

1901: The supper was cancelled due to Queen Victoria's death

1906: Portobello Burns Club wrote a poem to their fellow Burnsians 'In wild Lochaber's favourite seat'

1923: Lord Abinger gave a speech to members

1925: new members joined from the North British Aluminium factory

1935: driving snow and wind did not deter Burns Supper members from gathering in Fraser's Café [beforehand]

1936: The Burns Supper was cancelled due to the death of King George V on January 20

Mr Cairns, who is also the chairman of Lochaber Archaeological Society, recently completed a 'War Years Over Lochaber' pamphlet detailing the impact of World War II on the area. 'The library tells me people from all over Britain have been requesting the pamphlet on the project,' he said.

Slipway upgrade brought forward

PROPOSALS to bring forward a £750,000 upgrade of a Skye slipway look set to be approved by Highland Council's transport committee today (Thursday).

Improvements to the Sconser ramp were programmed for 2014-15, but the arrival of a new 'eco-friendly' ferry in 2013 means work must be completed earlier.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL), which owns the CalMac fleet, outlined plans for the new 'hybrid' vessel on the Sconser-Raasay crossing last September.

The Scottish Government has since confirmed Clyde-based Ferguson Shipbuilders as the preferred bidder.

The boat, similar in principle to the Toyota Prius, will use an electrical propulsion system powered by diesel generators and batteries which recharge while the ferry docks overnight.

It is one of two hybrid ferries being built for CMAL's shorter west coast routes at Ferguson's Port Glasgow yard.

The shipbuilder expects to complete the Raasay vessel by May/June 2013 and the second six months later. Both will accommodate 150 passengers, 23 cars or two HGVs. Service speed is nine knots. Batteries will provide at least 20 per cent of the energy consumed on board – cutting carbon emissions by a similar amount.

CMAL chief executive Guy Platten said: 'We are delighted to sign the shipbuilding contracts, securing Ferguson Shipyard as the contractor to build the world's first sea going RORO passenger hybrid ferries.'

Portree dental clinic completed

WORK on a new £1.2million NHS dental clinic in Portree has been completed and will open later this month.

The facility holds three dental surgeries and a room for oral health education. Health bosses have two full-time dentists with another to join part-time in March, but say they will continue looking for another full-time team member.

Currently the only NHS dental service on offer in Skye is at a single-surgery clinic in Dunvegan Health Centre and a temporary clinic in Portree, with 2,244 people on the Skye and Lochalsh waiting list.

Portree dentist Graham Smith said: 'Our team is very excited at the prospect of working in this new purpose built clinic.'



Glencoe House undergoing weatherproofing works last August: now plans have been lodged to convert it into luxury holiday accommodation. 20_03hosp01

Former Glencoe hospital to be transformed into guesthouse

PLANS have been lodged with Highland Council to transform the former Glencoe Hospital into an up-market guesthouse.

Onich man Roger Niemeyer, owner and managing director of Alliance Hotel Consultants Ltd., will convert former wards in the B-listed building into seven luxury bedroom/lounge suites. His sales and marketing

representation company specialises in the travel and tourism industry sector.

Mr Niemeyer, who bought Glencoe House from NHS Highland last year, states in his application that no changes are wanted to public paths, rights of way or access. The existing 15 parking spaces will remain. The imposing mansion was

completed in 1897 by Donald Alexander Smith, known as Lord Strathcona, one of the principal builders of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It was an NHS hospital from 1950 to 2009.

Mr Niemeyer said he was unable to give further details about the project until the consultation period with the council ends on February 21.

Fight to save turntable ferry

A NEW charity set up to maintain Scotland's last working turntable ferry is looking for a patron to spearhead fundraising efforts.

The Glenachulish Preservation Trust says it needs a high-profile figure to help keep the *MV Glenachulish* running between Glenelg and Kyleshera on Skye from Easter to October.

Describing the ferry as a 'national treasure', Dr Jennifer Frances, chairman of the board of trustees, said: 'Vital to the continued success of our charity is a figurehead who has a close association with boats, west coast and Highland and Scottish culture.'

'What we seek from our patron is goodwill and one fund raising event a year for a couple of hours, such as a charity auction in Glasgow. Of course there would be a warm welcome in Glenelg any time our patron may care to visit!'

'When the time comes for her to be decommissioned the charity will ensure that the *Glenachulish* will not suffer the fate of her counterparts, and end up abandoned on a Highland foreshore.'

The tiny six-vehicle vessel operated across Loch Leven before the Ballachulish Bridge was built in 1975.

Safety barriers to go up at open level crossings

SKYE, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson has welcomed a decision to install safety barriers at 21 open level crossings in the Highlands.

Network Rail's route managing director David Simpson confirmed the move at a meeting with Mr Thompson at Holyrood.

The MSP has campaigned for the barriers following a series of accidents at open crossings, including a tragedy at Halkirk, Caithness in 2009, when three elderly members of the same family died when a train hit their car.

Mr Thompson said: 'I believe that through this step, the current personnel at Network Rail are doing all they can to bring to an end

the regular toll of accidents at level crossings and I commend them for that.'

Mr Simpson said: 'Network Rail is committed to further enhancing safety on the railway and is working hard to progress the new mini-barrier system which, subject to a successful trial, will be rolled out to open crossings across the Highlands.'

'We are also seeking to close crossings where possible and investing in other additional safety measures such as police CCTV monitoring vans and additional fixed cameras for level crossings to deter driver misuse.'

It is anticipated the roll-out will begin this autumn and be completed within two years.

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Admin: rhona.sharp@highland.gov.uk

The Scottish Salmon Company

The Scottish Salmon Company: Isle of Mull Community Information Events

The Scottish Salmon Company have proposed two new fish farming facilities, to be sited on the Isle of Mull. We will be holding an open community consultation and information session at the following venues and dates:

- **Bunessan Village Hall:** Tuesday 31st January from 4pm to 8pm
- **Tobermory Western Isles Hotel:** Wednesday 1st February from 10am to 2pm
- **Craignure MICT building (Alice Lambert Room):** Wednesday 1st February from 4pm to 8pm

Participants will have the opportunity to view details of the proposed plans. They will also have a chance to speak to staff from The Scottish Salmon Company, ask questions and offer feedback on the proposals.

The proposed plans include;

- A new salmon farming facility near Ardmearach, Loch Scridain
- A new salmon farming facility near Gometra, Loch Tuath

The event is open to all. If you would like to register your interest, or simply find out more please don't hesitate to contact Mark Edmonds at mark.edmonds@scottishsalmon.com or by phone on 07810 834779.

Uncertainty over Peacocks' jobs

THERE was uncertainty over the future of 13 Oban retail jobs on Tuesday, after clothing giant Peacocks announced it was considering going into administration.

The multi-national company, which also runs stores in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, is in talks to renegotiate its £240million debt on Tuesday.

Staff at all branches were notified of the possibility of administration in a brief email on Monday evening.

While the company recorded operating profits of £27million in April 2010, bank loans and overdraft payments resulted in a pre-tax loss of £56million.

Oban's £1.8m CHORD project plan needs council approval

PLANS to spend more than £1.8million of CHORD project funding on easing traffic flow in Oban will go to the council for approval next month.

The proposal has been approved by the CHORD project board and programme board, but will require final approval from the council's executive committee on February 2.

The work will see a re-configuration of the bay, including pontoons at the North Pier which would provide facility for cruise ship tenders.

Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute appointed

FOUNDER and managing director of Inverawe Smokehouses, Robert Campbell-Preston is carrying on a family tradition after being appointed Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute.

As well as running a successful Argyll business, Mr Campbell-Preston has devoted much time to charitable work.

He follows in the footsteps of his uncle, the late Lt Colonel Robert Campbell-Preston OBE, who was for many years Vice Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute.

NEWSDESK
01397 703003

Storms rip sand off Ganavan



Ganavan beach's famous sands have disappeared due to storm damage throughout December and January. 15_103beach2

ONE of Oban's most famous iconic assets may have to change its name after Ganavan's golden sands were simply washed away.

Tidal erosion
Recent storms and high tides combined to literally suck the sand off the beach, exposing stones and foundations of the beach's long since demolished huts.

Ganavan resident, Richard Bingham, who fell in love with the scenic setting not long after moving to Oban some 37 years ago, says its the worst he has

ever seen the popular family spot, which attracts hundreds of visitors a day during the busy summer months.

While it is not unusual for the weather to cause levels of sand on the beach to fluctuate, it is thought to have been many decades since Ganavan has been so acutely affected.

Argyll and Bute Council are now considering what to do to restore the beauty spot to its former splendour, but admit it could take years for the beach to recharge naturally through tidal action.

Mr Bingham has been shocked by the beach's rapid facelift. He said: 'The beach has been absolutely destroyed. I've been here since 1975 and I've never seen anything like it.'

The council's tourism spokesperson, Oban councillor Neil Mackay, has been similarly shocked by the beach's striking new look, but admits the council's already limited coffers may not stretch to artificially recharging Ganavan Sands. He said: 'I've certainly never

seen it as bad as that before.

'It has to be acknowledged that Ganavan's beach is one of the best assets we have. Like most people from the area, my parents took me there as a child and I in turn took my children to the beach. I certainly hope that is a tradition that continues.'

'We have to look at every option we have to rectify it. The decision is whether we take action or wait for nature to take its course.'

'We will do what we can with what resources are available to us.'

Traveller's luggage falls out of new bus boot

A PASSENGER aboard the Oban to Clydebank bus was left bamboozled on Monday after her luggage fell out the back of the bus minutes after departure.

However, she was oblivious until the bus reached Clydebank two hours later - even though the driver was aware of the problem 12 minutes into the journey.

The bag slid out the brand new

vehicle as it climbed out of Oban and was witnessed by a passer-by who took it to the local bus station. West Coast Motors' staff transported the bag to Clydebank by van and apologised for the error.

Company managing director, Colin Craig, said the luggage area is at the rear of the bus and therefore cannot be seen by the

driver from his cabin.

A remote closure mechanism failed, as did a fail-safe which prevents the bus moving until all doors are closed. He said: 'We would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused by this incident but I would hope that our swift response in solving a problem caused by teething problems with a brand new

coach has kept any inconvenience to the person affected to an absolute minimum.'

Meanwhile, traffic on the A85 at Connel had to be diverted on Friday evening after one of the company's buses suffered a gearbox failure. Oil had leaked onto the road resulting in a diversion being put in place to accommodate rush-hour traffic.

Lorne Highland Games organisers aim for new evening tourist attraction at Mossfield Stadium to complement traditional Argyllshire Gathering

ORGANISERS behind a proposed new Highland games for Oban this summer have called on help to get the project swinging into action.

But they insist the evening Lorne Highland Games, which

will be held at Mossfield on July 18, will complement the Argyllshire Gathering, not detract from it.

Duncan MacIntyre, who has been involved in Highland games' as an athlete and judge

for more than 30 years, was approached by Adam Crawford, Hon. Life Vice-President of the Scottish Highland Games Association (SHGA), to start new games in the town.

'The Argyllshire Gathering

is a great event but it is on midweek during the day, when a lot of locals are working.

'By having the Lorne Highland Games during the evening more locals will be able to come.'

The timing of the Lorne event is also designed to catch the travelling heavy and light-field athletes, who will have competed at Inveraray the previous day and will be on their way to Tobermory for Thursday.

It is envisaged the new games would also feature piping, a hill race and Highland dancing.

Duncan added: 'Some Highland games are folding and the SHGA is desperate to keep them going but they are also

keen to find places where new games could take place.'

A meeting to help take forward the new event will be held in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls next Tuesday, January 24, at 7.30pm.

Roughcast row set to rumble on

Soroba residents hit with crumbling buildings' bill

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
Steven Flanagan

sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk



Alistair McGregor, the chief executive of ACHA says residents and ACHA face a tough choice

HOMEOWNERS in Soroba could be forced to pay up to £18,800 each to repair crumbling roughcasting, despite some saying the costs are 'unaffordable.'

The warning from Alistair McGregor, the chief executive of Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) which owns the majority of homes in the scheme's tenement blocks, comes as talks with private tenants to find an agreement to do the essential work continue to falter.

While reluctant to do so, he says ACHA could apply for statutory notices from the local authority to ensure the work goes ahead.

The other option is to do nothing, but that would not only allow cold and damp to seep into more homes, but it would cause the buildings' condition to deteriorate further.

He further warned private tenants that, if ACHA are forced to renegotiate tenders for the work, agreed last year, the cost per property could rise well above the current proposal.

Meanwhile, work to repair the roughcasting on two of the housing scheme's tenements, at 19 Shuna Terrace and 9 Colonsay Terrace, which ACHA owns completely, will start in the coming weeks.

decline in terms of common repairs and thermal efficiency. 'The association could also approach the local authority to consider the serving of statutory notices to allow the works to be carried out.'

He hopes though that, once completed, the work at 19 Shuna Terrace and 9 Colonsay Terrace will show the benefits of signing up to the scheme.

ACHA has set aside £1.1million to redo roughcasting on ten tenement blocks in the scheme. Of those 88 households, 21 are privately owned and 67 ACHA properties. Each private tenant would be asked to pay somewhere between £18,200 - £18,800.

The size of that bill prompted anger and disbelief from homeowners, who said the bill was 'unaffordable.'

One of those was Shuna Terrace resident, Helen Reid, whose share of the work would cost £16,620.

At 63, she wouldn't be able to get a loan to finance the work and while grants were available she would have to pay £5,000 up front - with no guarantee her application would be successful.

She said: 'There's not many - if any - individual owners who can afford this, especially now.'

Mr McGregor said both residents and ACHA face a tough choice - either get the work done, or see Soroba rot.

He said: 'If owners do not sign up in the near future for works that are required then the association may have to re-tender and that price will be dictated by market forces at the time.'

'If agreement cannot be reached with owners then there is an option to do nothing and allow substantial parts of the Soroba estate to continue to



Derek Grier, who faces being pursued by Argyll and Bute Council for thousands of pounds of berthing fees, despite losing nearly £3,000 of equipment when the boat was prematurely destroyed last year. 15_103derek1

Saga of scrapped fishing boat sails on as council pursue for fees

OBAN councillor Neil Mackay has criticised his own council for the way it handled the former fishing vessel *Lady Evelyn's* premature destruction.

The former Irish-registered boat was broken up at Oban's North Pier by outside contractors on December 29 last year after Argyll and Bute Council bought it for £1.

The vessel's immediate former owner, Derek Grier, claims he was told by the harbourmaster that he would have until January 7 to remove valuables before it was destroyed.

However, he estimates he is nearly £3,000 out of pocket as a result of the early scrapping of the boat, which had seen significant improvement before December's storms toppled it from its temporary supporting

legs, causing irreparable damage.

It has since emerged that the authority is planning to pursue Mr Grier for thousands of pounds of harbour fees, despite repeatedly refusing him access to facilities while the boat was berthed at the fenced off area of the North Pier.

Councillor Mackay has described the situation as 'ridiculous', pointing out that Mr Grier had in fact saved the council as much as £12,000 when he purchased the vessel in October 2010.

Councillor Mackay said: 'The boat had been left there to rot by its previous owner and it was going to cost the council between £10-12,000 for removal.'

'The huge costs involved were to have the boat lifted by

inflatable buoyancy aids before a ship on either side could tow it away.

'Then Mr Grier bought the *Lady Evelyn* and we had an agreement to give him some leeway to try and do something with it.'

'He effectively saved the council a lot of money.'

'Personally, I'm glad it's gone as, with the increasing number of cruise ships coming into the town, the last thing you want to see is a half-sunken fishing boat.'

'However, its removal should not be to the detriment of anyone involved.'

Councillor Mackay has now called for Argyll and Bute Council to abandon plans to pursue Mr Grier for outstanding berthing fees.

Mr Grier said: 'The council

have a lot to answer for.

'If they had seen fit to do something about the *Lady Evelyn*, then why did they not do anything about it in the two years the boat was lying before I got anywhere near it?'

'The council got what they ultimately wanted, its removal. That should be the end of the matter.'

'I'm prepared to leave it, but I will fight for compensation for my loss of tools and equipment if it's not.'

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Argyll and Bute Council agreed the sale of the *Lady Evelyn* with the owner before Christmas.'

'Any dates for the work to be carried out would have been agreed between the owner and the contractor carrying out the work.'

Missing Mull diver found by rescue teams on Ardnamurchan shore

RESCUE teams feared for the worst last Tuesday as they searched for a missing scallop diver in the Sound of Mull.

With the light fading as quickly as hopes of finding the casualty, the man was found on a remote shoreline on Ardnamurchan after a four-hour search.

The Tobermory all-weather lifeboat *Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey* was launched at 4.15pm to search for the diver who had failed to return to the surface, close to the Red Rocks in the Sound of Mull.

The lifeboat, on its first shout of 2012, was joined in the search by HM Coastguard shore teams from Kilchoan, Salen and Tobermory, who scoured the adjacent coastline, as well as the Stornoway Coastguard search and rescue helicopter.

At 6.35pm, following a request from Clyde Coastguard and with rapidly deteriorating weather and visibility, a volunteer crew member from the Tobermory RNLI lifeboat, Grant Carmichael, was put aboard the scallop diving vessel to assist the missing diver's colleagues in the search.

Shortly afterwards, a voice was heard in the dark from the shore, close to an area known as Maclean's Nose, and the missing diver was located.

He was airlifted to safety by the Stornoway Coastguard search and rescue helicopter and taken to hospital in Oban for a check up.

Tobermory RNLI Coxswain Phil Higson said: 'When the light faded, we feared the worst, but all of the search teams involved carried on. This is a tremendous result for everyone concerned.'

25 Years Ago

Those Were The Days

The Oban Times

Thursday, January 21, 1987

Councillors quizzed over twinning trip

A COUNCIL chairman and his chief executive were to be questioned about visits they made last month to Yugoslavia and France.

Wednesday's meeting of Argyll and Bute District Council was due to debate a motion alleging that the trip by chairman, Douglas Currie, and chief executive, Michael Gossip, had been made without the authority of the council.

The motion, put forward by councillor Allan Macaskill and James Walsh expresses concern that the chairman and chief executive visited Korcula in Yugoslavia and Paris, at a cost of not less than £1,400 without the council's permission.

But in a stinging reply at the weekend, Mr Currie claimed the allegation was totally without foundation and described it as mischievous.

The council delegation visited Korcula on twinning business and on the way home stopped off in Paris to meet representatives of Amberg Sulsback (Bavaria) another of Argyll and Bute's twins.

Crofters press for more aid

THE SCOTTISH Crofters Union are seeking a meeting with Mr John MacKay, Scottish Office Minister for Agriculture, to press for

implementation of far-reaching reforms urged in a highly detailed SCU report of crofter housing.

The report, which contains the first-ever independent analysis of the crofter housing scheme is published today.

The report comprehensively demolishes many misconceptions about crofter housing. Far from receiving generous housing help, as has been widely stated, crofters get much less housing assistance than other comparative groups. Now the SCU are looking for a series of reforms designed to put crofters on a par with other people.

Lochaber expresses strong cash commitment to skiing - but doubts linger

LOCHABER District Council have agreed to contribute £1/2 million to the Aonach Mor ski project.

At a special meeting on Tuesday, they voted in favour of using a £540,000 covenant to raise the £1/2million plus their already promised £140,000.

The focus is now on Highland Regional Council who are holding a special meeting today to decide whether they too will allocate just over £1/2 million to the scheme.

The two councils were forced into the situation of trying to raise the £1.085m cash

when the SDA - who were originally given the sum - indicated that they weren't yet ready to commit the cash.

Chief executive of Lochaber district council Mr David Blair told the meeting on Tuesday that the SDA had 'expressed reservations' about the weather factor.

Mr Blair added that the SDA would review their position over the funding of the scheme in a year's time after receiving technical advice and monitoring weather at Aonach Mor.

Summer poll could hit tourism

THE possibility of a June election is worrying tourist organisations throughout the Highland and Islands who fear a summer poll could inflict serious damage on this year's holiday trade.

While October is still considered the most likely date for the election, many political commentators believe that if pointers are favourable Mrs Thatcher may be tempted to go to the country earlier.

Some tourist centres are so concerned at the prospect, they are now considering making formal representation to the Government.

Mr Jeremy Inglis, a director of a company which owns large restaurants in both Oban and Fort William, said the effect of a June election could be 'devastating'.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Boot (4)
- 3 Strained liquid (8)
- 9 Close friend (7)
- 10 Look (5)
- 11 Subversion checkers in force (6,6)
- 13 Fancy (6)
- 15 Acetylene (6)
- 17 Unable to be restrained (12)
- 20 Organs for baby development (5)
- 21 Campaign (7)
- 22 Remorseful (8)
- 23 Remaining (4)

Down

- 1 Special time (8)
- 2 Poison plant from the Rhus family (4)
- 4 Sudden increase in population (6)
- 5 In music, use an organ a few times, v playing wind (6-6)
- 6 Chaos (7)
- 7 Level (4)
- 8 One who meets (12)
- 12 Devout (8)
- 14 Buff material (7)
- 16 Guiding light (6)
- 18 Slow (5)
- 19 A pile of rubbish (4)

Last week's solution

S	C	A	R	C	E	J	A	G	G	E	D
E	W	O	N	L	R	R					
D	E	F	A	C	T	O	I	M	A	G	E
A	U	K	N	B	P	A					
T	U	L	I	P	S	L	I	T	H	E	R
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I	R	O	C	I							
G	N	O	C	H	I	S	E	V	E	N	
N	M	A	F	C	I	T					
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Strike threat still hangs over Argyll and Bute landfill sites

STRIKE action at Shanks' landfill sites across Argyll and Bute over pay and conditions was averted at the last minute on Friday.

Staff at the waste disposal company had voted through the GMB and Unite unions to take industrial action in a row over a significant cut to sick pay entitlement and a one per cent pay increase offer, spread over three years.

Shanks operate in five of the county's

burghs, with transfer stations and civic amenity sites at Oban, Campbeltown and Rothesay. Landfill sites are coupled with civic amenity sites at Dunoon and Lochgilphead.

Workers had intended to close the gates on Monday morning between 8am and 10am, but Shanks' decision to return to the negotiating table meant the action was cancelled.

The company has been warned

though that the 30 workers affected will hold the two-hour strike on February 6 if a satisfactory agreement cannot be found.

Further disagreement would result in a two-day strike.

Tom Connarty, whose Unite union represents 11 of the employees, said: 'Until now, staff at Argyll and Bute's landfill sites have been entitled to six months' full sick pay and six months

half. Shanks have offered 18 weeks on a sliding scale. The offer of a one per cent pay increase over three years is derisory anyway, but across the central belt the increase has been between two to 2.75 per cent. If we can't come to an agreement by February 6, we will strike from 8am to 10am and there will be a ban on overtime. This is always the last resort.'

Alex McLucky of GMB said: 'The

company has agreed to have a further round of negotiations and we're quite happy with that. We've given them four weeks to come to a satisfactory conclusion. If there's still no satisfactory conclusion, we'll look at taking action again.'

One of Shanks' Oban employees said: 'We do a difficult job and for not much money. The industry we work in, there are odours and gasses. It's not

always pleasant, but we don't get the pay that reflects the job we do. This has been very stressful for everyone and morale is low. It really has got to the stage where it is difficult to concentrate on work.'

A spokesperson for Shanks said: 'We continue to meet with union representatives through ACAS. While discussions are ongoing it would be inappropriate for us to comment.'

Injury halts Ballet West performance

BALLET West has been forced to cancel this weekend's performances of *Swan Lake* at Oban's Corran Halls after principal male lead Jonathan Barton injured himself in training.

Jonathan has been preparing for the role of Prince Siegfried since September, but his injury comes just days before the company's production of Tchaikovsky's spectacular ballet was due to open.

The Oban performances have been re-scheduled and reduced to a single date on February 16 and the company is now looking for a new lead to dance as Prince Siegfried before their next show, at Stirling on February 4, which is now the first date in a month-long tour.

The company hasn't ruled out hiring a new couple to play both principal roles. While Sara Maria-Smith is filling the lead female role of Princess Odette, she has only prepared with Jonathan. It is hoped Jonathan will recover in time to take up the rest of the tour.

Tickets for this weekend's performances will be refunded, with an option for the February 16 show at the Corran Halls.

For more information, contact Ballet West.

Senior councillors are subjects of complaint

MSP highlights actions of Argyll and Bute members

THE CONDUCT of three of Argyll and Bute's most senior politicians is to be investigated after a complaint from a local MSP.

The Scottish Government's education secretary, Michael Russell, has lodged a complaint with the Commission for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland alleging that the council's deputy leader, Ellen Morton, and senior councillors Duncan MacIntyre and Robin Currie, misrepresented him.

The complaint revolves around a motion lodged on November 24 last year by Ilay councillor Robin Currie and seconded by Duncan MacIntyre.

The motion alleged Mr Russell had, at a meeting on May 23 last year, promised on behalf of the Scottish Government to help with future funding of the Jura passenger ferry if the council funded it in 2011 - something that is not in Mr Russell's remit.

However, the councillors involved say they are 'surprised' that the complaint was lodged, denying any wrong-doing in the process.

Mr Russell said: 'I've made it clear from the beginning that this accusation was serious and, as it was untrue, I have sought an apology which has not been forthcoming.'

'Accordingly, I have made a complaint under the Commissioner's Code of Conduct. It must be allowed to take its time to consider the matter.'

Mrs Morton said: 'It is very disappointing that he's found it fit to lodge a complaint then go public about it without having the decency to tell me it was being lodged.'

'I did receive an email from him asking for an apology. I didn't make one because I haven't done anything wrong.'

'I didn't move or second the motion. I voted for it, but so did others so I can't understand why there's a complaint about me.'

'I can understand him complaining about the mover and seconder.'

Mr MacIntyre said: 'I'm certainly surprised and disappointed. I don't see the problem; the Ferries Review has assured the future of the Jura Ferry for the next couple of years anyway.'

'While I didn't hear his comments first hand, Ellen Morton is pretty accurate in these sorts of things.'

'He's not the minister for transport, but he was fully supportive of taking this forward.'

Mr Currie was contacted for comment but was unavailable at the time of going to press.

Connel cover girl Tracy is a shadow of her former self

A MOTHER of one from Connel has gone from a size 26 five months ago to a trim, size 12 cover girl.

Tracy Davies' tremendous slimming efforts transformed her look completely and saw her named Scottish Slimmers Slimmer of the Year in October.

The 37-year-old financial controller was then whisked into a photo studio to complete her transformation from frumpy mum of one into a stunning cover-girl for Scottish Slimmers Boost magazine.

She said: 'I used to hide from the cameras so now I can't believe I'm a cover girl.'

She is joined in the magazine, by another local slimmer, 51-year-old Caroline Nicolson from Kinlochleven, who also features in the January edition of the publication.

The medical receptionist lost over seven stone, dropping five dress sizes in the process.

The pair achieved their results by following the group's Positive Eating Plan.

Self motivation

While the plan encourages plenty of self motivation, Tracy had a special reason of her own to shed more than six stone of excess baggage.

She said: 'I'd lost my dad when he was only 44 and I was only



Tracy Davies prior to joining Scottish Slimmers and shedding more than six stones.



And Tracy now, as she appears on the front cover of Scottish Slimmers Boost magazine.

Smart phone helps rescue team find walkers

OBAN Mountain Rescue Team found two hill walkers lost in the Glen Orchy area thanks to the assistance of smart phone app technology.

The team was called out on Saturday night when the

walkers became lost on the Ben Achallader - Ben a Creachain ridge. After the rescue team had set out, one of the walkers downloaded a smart phone app which allowed him to find their latitude and longitude co-

ordinates via his phone Global Positioning System (GPS).

These were sent by phone to rescue leader Ian Campbell's wife, who passed them to Oban Police who, in turn relayed them to Ian. He converted the

details to ordnance survey grid references before radioing his team, allowing the 'lost' walkers to be pinpointed at the top of Ben a Creachain.

They were found at midnight and walked off the hill by 2am.

myself out and join Scottish Slimmers.

'I feel very comfortable at this weight - and absolutely love looking like this.'

'My husband loves my new look, too. In fact, he now calls me his sexy wife!'

Scottish Slimmers' marketing director Alexandra Howie said: 'Tracy and Caroline are amazing ambassadors for us and we think they look sensational!'

dramatically increased my risk of serious health problems, especially heart disease. However, despite my constant health fears, the final straw was when my husband and I booked a family holiday to Egypt.

Overweight

'The thought of being so overweight in such a hot country took the shine off my excitement about our holiday - and that's when I finally decided to sort

LORN LINES

OBAN Speakers Club got the New Year off to an excellent start last week when members heard three interesting speeches from Iain Fullarton, Malcolm Black and Archie Mephaill.

Iain talked on 'Golf - a good walk spoiled'. Malcolm, making his first speech to the club, chose his recollections of 'Wartime in Tobar-mory' and Archie entertained with his talk on 'Geronimo'.

The speakers and their critics, Roy Wood, Donnie Graham and Jim Fraser, were introduced by Bill Leech. Frank Walton was responsible for the topics session and gave an interesting variety of subjects to Eamonn Arthur, Ian Crawford, Guido Faccenda, Bill Leech, Jim Fraser and Martin Wilson.

Timekeeper for the evening was Alec Clark and a fair and comprehensive general evaluation was given by Tom Clegg. The next meeting will be held in Soroba House Hotel on Thursday January 26 at 8pm.

A PHOTOGRAPHER turned children's book illustrator has used the landscapes of Argyll in publishing her latest work.

Lorna Freytag, who is married to Oban man Daniel, has worked in Dubai, New York, London and Australia but says Argyll's landscapes are the best in the world.

The 34-year-old came up with the concept for 'Wild Child' over a number of years and publishers Walker Books jumped at the idea.

Lorna, who lives in Glasgow, explained: 'The story is about a little girl who lives on her own in the wild because she doesn't want to be found by the grown-ups and be made to go to school.'

'All the picture backgrounds are taken from around Argyll and the west coast because they give the best indication of the wilderness.'

'Children's books are a new thing for me but something I always wanted to do. When I was up visiting family in Argyll I would take a lot of photos and that helped me come up with the concept of 'Wild Child'.

'So when Walker Books approached me to do a traditional children's book, I told them about this concept and they went with it.'

The book, out now, is written by acclaimed children's author Jean Willis and features landscapes of Oban, Kerrera, Kilmelford, Tralee and many others.



Book illustrator Lorna Freytag.

OBAN Photographic Club's first speaker of the New Year was David McLellan of Carluke Camera Club with his subject of 'West Highland Highway'.

David, who retired from his insurance business through serious illness, fought back to full recovery and now uses his love of the Scottish mountains to fund raise for charity.

How about climbing 30 Munros in 16 days! His photos and narrative of the mountains was truly inspirational to everyone.

The next meeting of the club is on January 23 when Stephen Lipton, who attended the club as a judge last year, will present 'My Photography'.

PARK Primary School's class of P4 is set for a trip to Ibrox to watch Rangers play Aberdeen, thanks to pupil Chloe Hamilton.

The seven-year-old Rangers season ticket holder was selected at random to invite her Oban classmates along to watch a game at the famous stadium for free, and the class is now gearing up for this weekend's clash.

Every pupil attending can take an adult

too and transport has been arranged by Chloe's mum Fiona Gibb.

On arrival, the group will be given Super 7s t-shirts, before being taken onto the pitch at half time in front of 50,000 fans. Their names will also appear in the match programme.

Fiona said: 'It's quite good. Chloe's uncle bought her a season ticket and I think what they do is pull names out of the hat and the winner gets to invite their classmates.'

Tourism group take positive Oban and Lorn message to Scotland's Central Belt

AN OBAN-based tourism group is hoping there will be an influx of visitors from Glasgow this summer after a high-profile showcase of the area's assets.

Oban and Lorn Tourism Association's (OLTA) weekend-long high profile interactive display and information stand at Glasgow's Silverburn shopping centre enjoyed a potential audience of around 100,000 people.

Representatives of those businesses and organisations who took part were inundated with enquiries throughout and it is hoped

the event will prove more than worthwhile when this year's tourist season gets into full swing.

Chairperson of the OLTA Linda Battison was delighted with the response.

She said: 'It is the first time we've ever done this.'

'It was very interesting to get feedback from Glaswegians and exciting to raise Oban's profile down there.'

'The kids that came to our stands were very interested in displays such as our kayaks and the star fish in our touching pool.'

'It was very interactive and that worked well. Dunollie came along and the Broach of Lorn was on display and was also very popular.'

'Silverburn is a shopping mall where more than 40-50,000 people per day visit, so it was very busy.'

'We think it was worthwhile.'

While a success, it did highlight one of the biggest problems Oban and Lorn faces when trying to attract people from the central belt.

'We had one guy who was certain Oban was north of Inverness. He refused to believe me and I ended up having to load Google Maps to

show him. What we found is that a lot of Glaswegians haven't been to Oban since they were children, but there was lots of interest in coming back. And of those folk who thought they knew Oban, some weren't sure where we are and didn't know what the town has to offer.'

'We did get the opportunity to put that right though, so that was worthwhile.'

It is hoped that the promotional exhibition can be held again in future, though its success or otherwise will be monitored this summer.

Oban pier pub name change ends 'MacBrayne's' dispute

A DISPUTE over the name of Oban's newest bar has been resolved, with the former Waterfront Bar to be called 'Sloan's'.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) succeeded in forcing the consortium behind the Railway Pier pub to change its name from 'MacBrayne's' after highlighting a clause in the original 1963 lease of the building.

One of the local businessmen behind the venture, Calum MacLachlaine, said: 'I am disappointed that they chose to revert to a minor clause in a 1963 lease to enforce their wishes as their initial case is weak and would not stand up in a court of law. However, I am

pleased that they have offered extra ground on the seaward side of the waterfront to extend the restaurant.'

The new name was picked after a competition was held on the bar's Facebook page, he added.

A spokesperson for CMAL said: 'The owner has now agreed to remove the sign and CMAL is working with him to ensure minimal impact to his business.'

'We are in discussions with the owners at present regarding a small strip of land which we understand would be used to accommodate a fire escape stairway.'

SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Will your child be five years of age before 28 February 2013? Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

The next school session starts on 13 August 2012. Children who will be five on or before 28 February 2013 are eligible to be enrolled for Primary 1. Enrolment will take place week commencing 30 January 2012.

Although you may wish that your child attends a school other than your local primary school, you must, in the first instance, enrol your child at the local primary school and then make a placing request to the Area Education, Culture and Sport Office.

Placing requests are not required for Gaelic Medium education or for those eligible to attend a denominational school.

When to enrol your child?	Where	What to bring
3.00pm 30 January - 3 February 2012	Local Primary School	Child's birth certificate

Am bi an leanabhagaibh còig bliadhna a dh'aoisro 28 Gearran 2013? Bidh? Ma-thà, tha an t-àmann an clàrachadhairsonnasgoile.

Bidh an athsheiansgoile a' tòiseachadh air 13 Lùnastal 2012. Faodaidh clann a bhios còig air no ro an 28 Gearran 2013 a bhith air an clàrachadhairson P1. Bidh an t-seachdain clàrachaidh a' tòiseachadh air 30 Faoilleach 2012.

Ma thasibhairson 's gun tèid an leanabhagaibhsgoileileseach a' bhun-sgoil ionadail, feumaidh sibh an clàrachadhaig a' bhun-sgoil ionadail an tseach, agus iartras a chur a-steach dèidh sin gu Oifis Foghlaim, Cultair agus Spòrs na Sgìre.

Sgaoil eifum air iarrtasairson aite-sgoile airson Foghlaim tro Mheadhanna Gàidhlig no dhaibhsan a thairidh air roghainn airsonsgoileibhidhne.

Cuin a chlàrassibh an leanabhagaibh?	Càite	Dèibheirsibhleidh?
3.00f 30 Faoilleach - 3 Gearran 2012	A' Bhun-sgoil ionadail	Tèisteanasbreith an leanabh

whats on LOCHABER

<p>Sat 21st Jan > Skipinnish Ceilidh House</p> <p>Fri 27th Jan > Skipinnish Ceilidh House</p> <p>Sat 28th Jan > Skipinnish Ceilidh House</p>	<p>Clubnight with DJ Al 10pm till 2am £5 entry</p> <p>Wonderland Live Band 10pm till 2am £5 entry</p> <p>Skint Clubnight with Symondo only £3 entry, 10pm till 2am.</p>
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Saints march on after cup replay win

Place in last 32 beckons if Oban side can beat Echt

Scottish Amateur Cup
4th round replay
Dynamo EK 2
Oban Saints 3

SAINTS travelled to East Kilbride last Saturday to take on Dynamo in the 4th round Scottish Amateur Cup replay and this time the Oban side got things right after a lacklustre performance the previous Saturday and travelled back up the A85 with a hard-fought 3-2 win under their belts.

The narrow and muddy pitch at Kirtonholme was not conducive to playing attractive football, but it was the visitors who were trying to get the ball down and pass it about with Dynamo quite content to play the long ball forward to strikers Stuart Kyle and Stephen Russell.

The visitors started well and Ryan Campbell was unlucky with a good effort in the first minute.

The next chance also fell to the visitors when Donald Campbell headed a Ross Maitland free kick over the bar.

Saints took the lead in the 18th minute after a fine move between Craig MacEwan and Donald Campbell resulted in the ball being flicked into the path of Chris Graham who buried a well placed shot high into the net past Dynamo keeper Kevin Cassidy.

If any criticism could be levelled at the Saints players it was that they were standing off their opponents, giving them too much time on the ball and not closing them down quickly enough.

With half time approaching, the home side drew level after Stuart Kyle fired over a dangerous cross which wasn't cleared properly. The ball fell kindly for his strike partner Stephen Russell who wasted no time in slotting it past Graham Douglas to make the half time score 1-1.

The superior fitness of the Oban side was beginning to tell as the half wore on and they could have taken the lead in the 65th minute under their belts.



Alex Craik.

When Craig MacEwan set up Donald Campbell, but Kevin Cassidy made a good save with his legs.

However, the much-needed second goal came one minute later when skipper Keith Miller fed Donald Campbell wide on the left. Donald jinked past his marker before sending over a great cross which was met at the far post by central defender Alex Craik who fired the ball into the net.

The narrow lead lasted only four minutes though as the home

FOOTBALL

side drew level when Mark Elliott hit a tremendous low drive from fully 30 yards that Saints keeper Graham Douglas managed to get a hand to but only succeeded in pushing the ball onto the post and then into the net.

This goal stunned the visitors, but they came storming back and re-took the lead in the 74th minute when Craig MacEwan dispossessed central defender Chris Martin and raced through on goal. Craig drew the keeper before unselfishly squaring the ball to Ross Maitland who slotted the ball into an empty net.

The home side battled away and put the Saints rearguard under pressure as the clock ran down and were unlucky when a Derek Bell header hit the post.

Saints weathered the pressure and created a couple of half chances themselves, but in the end they were delighted to go through with a narrow 3-2 win.

Manager Iain Jackson was happy with the result and performance. He said: "We knew we would be in for a tough game and that's exactly the way it panned out, but the boys battled hard and we ran out deserved winners in the end."

This Saturday, Saints face a tough test in the 5th round of the Scottish Cup when they take on Aberdeenshire Premier League outfit Echt. The match will be played at Glencruitten 2 with a 2pm kick-off with referee David Dorison from Ayr in charge.



Ewan Shearer is looking forward to leading out Scotland at Murrayfield against the Auld Enemy. 16_03Ewan01

Ewan to lead Scotland out against the 'Auld Enemy'

A TAYNUILT 10-year-old says he is the envy of all his friends after being chosen to lead out Scotland in the Six Nations clash with England at Murrayfield.

Ewan Shearer plays rugby for Etive Vikings, a club twinned with Oban Lorne RFC, and when the Oban-based club was allocated one of the 15 mascot positions, Ewan's number - lucky 13 - was drawn out of the hat.

"I was just jumping up and down when my dad told me I was going to be a mascot," said Ewan. "I didn't know I was even entered for the draw."

RUGBY

"My friends keep telling me they are very jealous but they are excited for me too."

Scotland line up against the Auld Enemy on February 4 and Ewan hopes to walk out of the tunnel at Murrayfield alongside his favourite player, Allan Jacobson.

The Taynuilt Primary School pupil will be given Scotland training kit ahead of the match, as well as tickets for his parents, Gordon and Lucy, his twin sister, Eilidh, and younger sister, Rona, aged 8.

Primary footballers back in action

THE OBAN Express Primary Football roared back into action on Sunday after the festive break at the Community Pitch.

The day started with a cracker of a game between Pumas and Scorpions with the Pumas showing some fine team work and passing moves which deservedly got them the opener through Connor Moore. However, the Lochgilhead side eventually over turned the score with goals from Craig Millar and Cammy Williamson.

Despite their good overall passing game the Pumas went down two nil to Jags who had Mark McKnight and Alister Trafford on target but this was to be the Jags only win of the day as they crashed to defeats against both Red Star and the All Stars who had goalkeeper Ross MacAskill in good form. But in

their next match the All Stars were powerless to prevent Saints 02's Lewis Campbell score a hat trick in a fine win despite Andy Ritchie netting in reply. The wee Saints recorded a good win over Scorpions and had Lennon Campbell score one of their four goals without reply.

The wee Saints had opened their day with a match against their older stable mates Saints Boys with the Boys coming out on top when they eventually managed to get the ball past impressive goal keeper Jude Bain. The Boys also recorded a win over Lochnell and were then involved in the game of the day against Thistle who went in front through Roan Martin. Thistle doubled their lead with a Scott Mossman counter before half time. The Boys undefeated record looked in danger but in

the end Danny MacCuish and Craig Easton scored to keep their record intact and the Boys would have won the match had it not been for a last minute incredible save from Jamie Forgive.

Thistle proved to be the team of the day and were in good form against Tralee with both Cameron Hill and Keir MacLean scoring twice. In their next match, Scott Mossman went one better with a hat trick in their win over Red Star. Red Star had earlier defeated Thistles stable mates Jags so this was an important result for Thistle.

The Galaxy opened their day with a double from Ellis Hunter against Waps but it was to be their only win on the day despite some good football in both their next matches against Tralee who had Stuart Black score the only goal of the game after some good

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

saves from the Galaxy 'keeper Fergie Carmichael and also against Scorpions who recorded a win although Galaxy had been impressive in the first half.

Tralee also recorded a win over Waps thanks to a great double from Ryan Henriksen but when Waps pulled a goal back, Tralee had to rely on some good defending by Rowan Howe and Angus Scott to keep their noses in front. The seniors go head to head again next week at the High School pitch.

The youngest teams of the junior league returned to Atlantis leisure after the break and this week all eight teams were well represented with all the players improving and fooling the coaches that they actually listen to them occasionally!

Taynuilt and Whiteinch share the points

Central Scottish Welfare League
Taynuilt 3
Whiteinch 3

TAYNUILT Amateurs welcomed league leaders Whiteinch, who have only lost one game all season, to Glencruitten last Saturday.

Whiteinch were the last team to beat Taynuilt back in September.

The game started off at a ferocious pace with both midfields battling away. Whiteinch edged the first 20 minutes with quick breaks down the left and some excellent movement from their lone striker.

Stephen Kelly was linking up well with Kris Gillies down the right for Taynuilt but were only able to create half chances.

Ben Pollock in goals for Taynuilt made some fine saves and was coming to collect the

ball confidentially. The game was evenly contested and the first goal came from a Whiteinch corner kick when one of their midfielders met the cross with an unstoppable header which made the half time score 1-0.

Taynuilt came out after the break and found another gear with Scott Maitland making excellent tackles and using the ball well.

In 53 minutes, Taynuilt nearly equalised; a smart pass from Maitland found Craig Campbell who sent a thunderbolt of a shot from 25 yards crashing off the post which hit the keeper in the face and went out for a corner.

Taynuilt hadn't long to wait before they equalised. A cross came in from the left which Craig Campbell met with a powerful downward header which bounced in front of the keeper and went through his legs. Did it

cross the line? The ref thought so and the goal was awarded 1-1.

Taynuilt started taking the game to the league leaders with Stephen Kelly showing great skill and power to beat several players. At the other end Ben Pollock kept the scoreline at 1-1 with a breathtaking save that was top corner bound.

Momentum
Whiteinch went back in front in the 64th minute from another corner with their No 9 heading home from close range. This goal affected the Taynuilt momentum as in 67 minutes it was 3-1. There was a great run from the visiting right midfielder who slipped the ball through to the striker who beat the outgoing Pollock.

The heads started to go down, so manager Stuart Reid brought on Mark Ferguson for Chris McGrath with Josh Rippon moving up top to partner Kris Gillies.

FOOTBALL

The home side showed what they were all about with a stunning comeback. It started off from a corner and a scramble in the box with Scott Maitland finding time to send the ball into the net.

A great ball from Mark Ferguson put Kris Gillies through and with a bit more composure would have levelled the game.

Taynuilt equalised in the 82nd minute when Kris Gillies sent a great free-kick round the Whiteinch wall with the ball nestling in the bottom corner of the net.

The game ended in a deserved draw and a hard game for both teams.

This Saturday Taynuilt are at home to Yoker in the league at Glencruitten 3 with a 2pm kick-off.

14-man Lorne lose to Cumbernauld

RBS West Division 2
Cumbernauld 25
Oban Lorne 8

A DEPLETED Oban Lorne squad of only 14 players made the trip to play Cumbernauld last weekend looking to widen the gap on bottom place Uddingston in the table.

Oban were missing several players through work commitments meaning the home side were handed a one man advantage from the start of the match. One positive was the return of Ryan Jackson from a long term shoulder injury.

Despite the man advantage the hosts found themselves under pressure from a determined and hardworking Oban team who dominated the first 10 minutes of play. The home side conceded regular penalties allowing Oban to retain the ball in the 22 but failed to find the tryline.

Cumbernauld used their extra man to good advantage on their first visit to the Lorne half creating a try with an overlap to take the lead. Oban however didn't let this dampen their spirits and produced some more fantastic rugby near the home tryline. Some good work upfront, in particular by Corrie Louw and 2nd row Kieran Connolly.

Penalty
Oban were rewarded with a penalty attempt that was converted by Angus MacCallum to narrow the gap to 5-3 at half time.

With the Oban team tiring the hosts made their man advantage count in the second half and ran in four further unconverted tries to put the game out of sight.

Despite this Oban held strong and gained a try of their own from Calum MacLauchlan. Oban created a few other

RUGBY

chances in the second half and were unlucky not to add to their points for the afternoon.

The score line finished 25-8 to the hosts but did not reflect well on the excellent performance and hard work put in by the Oban players.

The Oban team were left proud of their efforts but knew that there would have been a different outcome if they had fielded a full strength team.

A bigger effort is required from the players for the rest of the season in order for the team to move away from the relegation zone.

Oban Lorne face league leaders Strathendrick on Saturday - kick off 2pm at Glencruitten. Oban Minis continue to train every Sunday 1-2pm at the club. All welcome.

Saints' youth team fixtures and results

YOUTH FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s 7, Clydebank BC 3. Saints scorers were Lomond MacPherson (3), Ben Coates (2), Jay Cooper and Evan MacLellan. This was a great win for the Under 13s as they were 3-0 down at one stage.

Morton BC 6, Under 14s 3. Netting for Saints were Jamie MacPherson (2) and Kieran Hendry.

Under 15s 3, Kilpatrick 1. Saints marksmen were DJ Orr, Paul McFatridge and Mattie Kelly. Strathleven 1, Under 16s 3. Hitting the net for Saints were Ryan MacDougall, Coll McKenzie and Shaun McIvor. This win moves Saints into second place in the league.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Antonine; Under 14s no game; Baljaffray v Under 15s (friendly); Under 16s v Argyll Athletic.

Top jobs for Oban Lorne ladies

RUGBY

TWO MEMBERS of Oban Lorne Rugby Football Club have taken up roles with the management committee of Scottish Women's Rugby.

Dee Bradbury, from Oban, has become National League Representative, while Appin's Karen MacCorquodale takes on Dee's previous role of youth representative.

The regional positions both involve direct liaison between teams, coaches and Scottish Rugby and are influential in the decision making processes of the women's and girls' games.

Karen is also the Girls Regional Development Cluster (GRDC) representative for the Argyll area.

Oban area indoor athletics

INDOOR ATHLETICS

BOYS and girls in the Oban area are reminded that the local area competition for Sports Hall Athletics takes place this Saturday, 21 January, at Atlantis Leisure.

Events will start at 12.30pm with entries on the day from 12noon. Saturday's contest provides competition for five age groups starting at under 9 up to under 17 with age taken as on 1st September 2011.

Trophies and medals will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th overall in each age category and successful athletes will qualify to compete in the Argyll Final at Atlantis Leisure on Saturday, 25 February when they will be joined by athletes from Mull, Mid Argyll and Kintyre.

The entry fee for Saturday's competition is £2.

Islay Golf Club

GOLF

JANUARY Medal: 1 Graeme Hamilton, 86 less 13 net 73; 2 Angus McAllister, 94 less 21 net 73; 3 Neil Johnston, 86 less 11 net 75, css 71.

Winter League Week 8: 1 Robert Shaw 42pts; 2 Samuel Graham 40pts; 3 Iain MacCuaig 37pts. Overall winter league after week 8: Alister Blair 186pts; 2 Graeme Hamilton 162pts; 3 Neil Johnston 162pts.

THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH FIELD...

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Our insiders' guides to the best of Scotland's cities

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A year on:
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IN THE JANUARY ISSUE: UNBEATABLE CITY BREAKS OUR INSIDERS' GUIDES TO THE BEST OF SCOTLAND'S CITIES ■ TEN MIRACLE HANGOVER CURES ■ THE RAIL TUNNEL FROM STRANRAER TO BELFAST ■ A YEAR ON: LINDA NORGROVE'S PARENTS ■ A NEW ERA FOR ROSSLYN CHAPEL ■ MEET THE REAL CATRIONA SHEARER ■ WIN £3,000 OF LUXURY BREAKS

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We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

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

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

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. 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.

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

I enclose £1 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. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

Name

Address

..... Tel No.

Please tape your £1 coin here

Controversial ending to Fort William game

The disputed goal overshadowed a decent Fort performance

REPORT BY RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

AFTER last weekend's controversial loss at home to Brora Rangers, Fort William face a tough trip to take on Deveronvale this Saturday.

Manager Danny Conlon has a number of players who are doubtful for the tie, including Mark and Michael Gillespie, Iain Foggo and Darren Duncan. He told The Oban Times: 'It's going to be a really hard game for us. They're going reasonably well. They've been a bit hot and cold so far but they are still there or thereabouts in the league and it's always a tough place to go.'

'We're not scoring many goals at the moment. We don't have someone here who's going to

score the goals, and the problem is with the resources we've got, where are we going to get one?'

Last Saturday's controversy came at the end of a game dominated by the Lochaber men, when the referee stopped play following an injury to Fort midfielder Mark Gillespie. Brora striker Liam Baxter indicated he would pass an uncontested drop-ball back to the home side, but instead lobbed Stewart Gray from 30 yards out, much to the anger of the Fort William players and bench.

Conlon, who was sent off for his protests, said he didn't blame the Brora player for the goal. 'Baxter is only a young lad. The referee stopped the game because one of our players is injured, so he should have taken charge of the situation.'

FOOTBALL

'We feel because we're a small club struggling down at the bottom of the league we're looked on differently to the others. It's always been a sore point for us.'

The disputed goal overshadowed a decent Fort performance, with the Claggan side creating plenty of opportunities despite seeing Michael Ellis sent off for a second bookable offence after 60 minutes.

Sean Ellis' left foot curler from the edge of the box had given Fort the lead in the 48th minute, but the home side were unable to increase the gap and slack defending allowed Brora to nick two goals in the 60th and 79th minute before their contentious late score.



Fort defender Darren Quigg fights off a Brora player during his side's loss on Saturday.

Drew re-appointed Scotland manager

SHINTY

FORMER Fort William boss and player Drew MacNeil has been kept on as Scotland manager for another two years.

MacNeil, who was appointed Glenurquhart manager in October, took up the job in 2010 and recorded a memorable victory at Croke Park, Dublin that year before a narrow loss in last year's series. He will be assisted by George Hay and Kenny Ross.

Kingussie star Ronald Ross takes on the role of Under 21 coach for the national side, with James Perlich and Jason Lato as his assistants. The trio take over from Donnie Martin, Ted McDonald and David Stafford, who held the positions for six years before stepping down.

Alleycats are still the top dogs

TEN PIN BOWLING

ALLEYCATS remain top of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling league scratch division after eight weeks of play.

Council are still three points back in second place on 35 points while Ardtoe/Nevis Radio moved into third on 27.

Underdogs lead the handicap division with 27 points with Alleycats now second on 25 points and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio in third, also on 25 points.

The highest team games of the week came from Alleycats with 536 scratch, and Phoenix with 762 handicap. Alleycats also had the highest two game scratch total with 1,039.

Leisure open up an eight point gap

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LOCHABER Leisure took a giant step towards the Ali Young Premier League sixes title with a 5-3 victory over rivals Goon Squad at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

The gap between the two is now eight points, and Goon Squad now have Tnf United for company in joint second after the latter overcame AA Young 7-3.

Stroke City pulled off the shock of the night with a 6-2 defeat of Ballachulish, who remain in fourth alongside Steaua Sookabreast, easy winners against bottom club Bayern Bru 7-1. Elsewhere, Achintore FC dumped The Granite House 5-2 to move up to sixth, while Livercaol edged out HWEnergy No Stars 2-1.

Get fit for 2012

SPORTS ASSOCIATION

LOCHABER Sports Association has published its 'Get Fit For 2012' listing to encourage more people to start the New Year by getting fitter and more active.

And to back up the initiative, LSA is launching two competitions, one for community centres and schools, the other for sports clubs, to recognise groups doing the most to support healthy activity in the community. Winners will be announced at the LSA AGM in October.

Fort lose out to Inverness

FORT WILLIAM Squash Club's top men lost out narrowly to Inverness Sign Centre in their Highlands and Islands premier division at Lochaber Leisure centre on Thursday night.

Inverness' best two players, Ally MacCorquhdale and Kyle, have featured in the Scottish junior squad and were up against Fort captain Andrew MacMaster and Alan Love, respectively.

The visitors eventually prevailed 3-0 and 3-1, but those scorelines failed to reflect the closeness of the games.

Fort fought back when Stuart Cameron's excellent shot placement gave him a 3-0 win and Rah

Douglas' gritty play earned him a 3-2 victory. However, it wasn't quite enough and Fort lost the exciting match 8-7.

Fort William is one of six teams in the top division. Over the season two home and two away matches are played against each.

Before Fort's players took the court, they took delivery of new strips as part of a £500 sponsorship deal with Plumline. The firm's showroom manager Jane Childs made the presentation.

SQUASH

Plaudits for boxers

BOXING

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club have earned plaudits from the sport's governing body in Scotland for its inclusive training programme for local youngsters.

The club's free of charge non-contact boxing lessons every Tuesday have proved very popular with around 40 children taking part in the opening week. The numbers were deemed so impressive by Amateur Boxing Scotland Ltd, that they sent their representative Craig MacAvoy to Fort William to see what the fuss was about.

Every week those present learn a new skill until they are deemed knowledgeable enough to earn an achievement award.

The club would like anybody interested to know that missing any of these lessons will not be a problem as the youngsters can easily be brought up to speed.

Meanwhile, preparations continue for what promises to be a busy second half of the season.

Boxers James Aitchison, Chris Bradley and Igor Sliwinski all travelled to Inverness recently to

take part in the North of Scotland trials for the Scotland squad.

All three were selected out of a total of only nine chosen from all the boxers in the whole of North of Scotland stretching from Kinlochleven to Aberdeen.

Last Sunday they ventured to Motherwell to take part in national Scotland squad training. During the course of the two-hour session involving bagwork, sparring, circuits and technical work the boys proved they truly belong at this level.

Coach Niall Clark said: 'The next few months should prove very eventful as over the last few years as the club has grown in stature they now have boxers able to compete at national level at most age groups and seniors.'

Anyone interested in joining the club in any capacity whether it be non-contact lessons, or the full club itself can contact Niall Clark (07554994744), Vince Lopez (07979321025) or Steve Docherty (07767069532).

Peter takes the tape in Riverbank race

ATHLETICS

SOME 56 runners from across Scotland flocked to Fort William to take part in Lochaber Athletic Club's annual Riverbank Splodge race on Sunday.

The athletes faced the usual wet and muddy conditions for the challenging five mile course, which started at Claggan Park and included negotiating tree roots, barbed wire fences and burn crossings.

Lochaber man Davie Rodgers led at the halfway point of the race but was overtaken by Peter Davenport of Bellahouston, who won in a time of 27 minutes and 29 seconds, while LAC's Allan Ross came in third.

Lochaber runner Amanda Blackhall finished second in the women's race in 35m 41s, just over a minute behind Jess Halliday of Shettleston.

Race organiser Graham Macnab said: 'Apart from the winners, there were other notable performances from Mike Bossard, who cycled from Oban straight to the start and then

cycled back; Jim Hamilton, who ran five miles to the start and Suzanne Duncan who accidentally felled a tree half way through the race. Many thanks to Christine Dougan and Shonda Macnab for their assistance with the finish and results.'



Peter Davenport overtook local man Davie Rodgers to win the Riverbank race.



New kit: Fort William Squash Club players, back left, Andrew MacMaster (captain), Rah Douglas, Alan Love and Stewart Cameron, and front, Archie MacGillivray and Neil Worsdall with Plumline showroom manager Jane Childs. Missing from the line-up is Allan Ross.

New sponsors of the Highland League Cup

THE SCOTTISH Highland Football League has announced Bredon Aggregates as new sponsors of the Highland League Cup.

The largest independent aggregates company in the UK, Bredon employs over 800 people in Scotland and England and

almost half their sites fall within the SHFL catchment area.

Bredon Aggregates Scotland chief executive Alan Mackenzie said: 'The Highlands of Scotland are our heartland. We look forward to working with the Highland League to make the coming season one of the most

successful ever.'

The draw for the first round of the Bredon Aggregates Highland League Cup will take place next Tuesday, January 24th at Inverurie Loco Works Social Club.

FOOTBALL

Lochaber no match for RAF Lossiemouth

DESPITE travelling to RAF Lossiemouth with a full squad of 22, Lochaber were unable to shake off the effects of their long lay-off and were beaten by a strong, fit and efficient team 83-0.

The visitors started well enough as 'Lossie' appeared to be happy to see what they were up against, and Lochaber had a couple of early opportunities to score that might have put a different complexion on the game.

Sadly though, Lochaber's general lack of fitness soon became apparent through missed tackles and a failure to control rucks, and Lossiemouth went on to score three tries in the first half.

Lochaber started the second half strongly, and with some tactical and injury changes made, appeared to be taking the game to their hosts with some good passages of play. But a failure to execute their chances cost them dear and with fitness

again found wanting the RAF side scored three more tries. Score lines such as this may suggest to some that Lochaber are not a good side - but they do not paint a true picture of how things are.

There is a good team spirit and the Banavie club has some very talented individuals - what is needed is even greater commitment to the club to personal fitness.

On a lighter note, veteran prop

RUGBY

Ian Smith had the pleasure of turning out with four of his five sons in the same squad - is this a record?

Team: L Peacock; R MacTaggart; M Harper; D Maclean; C Simpson; S Whitaker; J Seaman; C Taylor; J Paterson; K Turnbull (captain); D Smith; L Smith; N MacPhee; D Smith; D MacDonald; J Smith; K Garrick; N Craik; J Smith; G Hendrie; J McCook

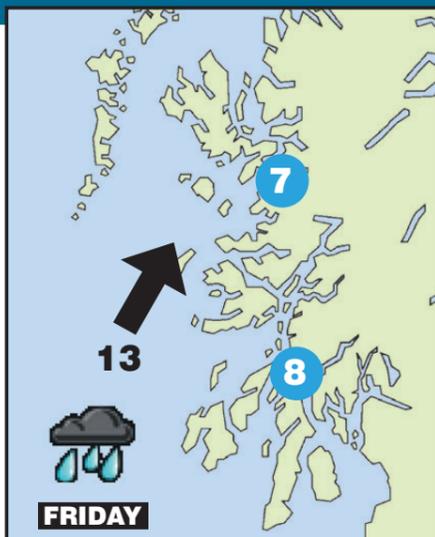
Weather

Thursday Cloudy.
Winds moderate, south westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C

Friday Heavy rain
Winds light, south, south westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.

Weekend Sunny intervals.
Outlook Winds moderate, west, north easterly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

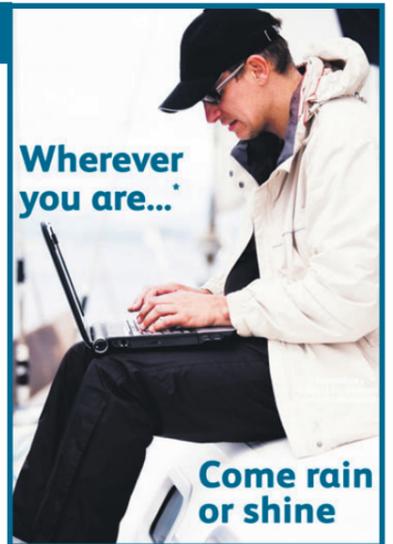
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 19, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	02.09 3.2 07.59 1.5 14.52 3.2 20.55 1.5	
Fri	03.25 3.4 09.18 1.4 16.00 3.4 21.59 1.3	
Sat	04.19 3.6 10.25 1.2 16.47 3.6 22.50 1.1	
Sun	05.01 3.9 11.17 1.0 17.25 3.7 23.35 0.9	
Mon	05.40 4.1 12.02 0.9 17.59 3.8 ** ** *	
Tues	00.17 0.8 06.17 4.2 12.44 0.9 18.32 3.9	
Wed	00.57 0.7 06.53 4.2 13.22 0.9 19.04 3.9	

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

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		



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