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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Storms bring unrelenting misery to West Highlands

STEVEN RAE
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STORM-force winds, torrential rain and heavy snowfalls have wreaked havoc across the West Highlands and islands over the past week.

Winter threw everything it had at the west coast, with thousands suffering from power cuts, including around 4,000 homes in the Oban area.

The entire population of the Hebrides was hit by a power cut on Friday morning, with some householders going without electricity for 72 hours, while 153 schools across the Highlands were closed for the day.

Many of Oban's outlying area were left without any electricity for most of Friday and Mallig was without power on Friday and Saturday.

Other villages including Glenfinnan, Onich and Strontian were also left in the dark for long periods, with some telephone lines also knocked out.

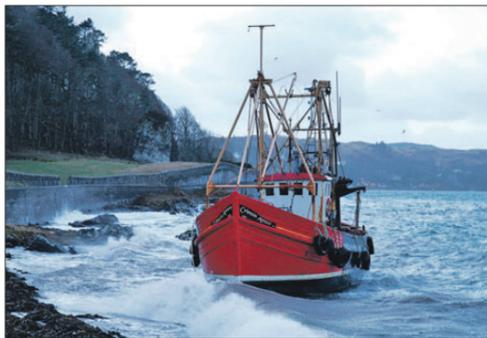
At the time of going to press, all but 30 properties left without power had been reconnected in the SSE distribution area.

Alan Broadbent, SSE's director of engineering, said: 'I would like to apologise again and reassure customers that we are doing all we possibly can during extremely treacherous, challenging and severe weather conditions.'

Wind speeds of up to 113mph were recorded on Lewis, the highest there since records began, while Appin resident David Colthart recorded a 112.97mph gust at his wind turbine which is a mile outside of Oban.

The high winds brought the volunteer crew of Oban RNLI Lifeboat Mora Edith MacDonald into action for the first time this year after a man fell off the pier on Thursday, January 8.

The crew braved wind speeds in excess of 55mph at around 11:40pm, after Stornoway Coast-



STORM TOSSED: The fishing boat the Crimson Arrow blew aground near Dunollie Castle. Photo courtesy of Stephen Lawson

guard received information that the man had been blown into Oban Bay at the North Pier.

The coastguard was on the scene in minutes and the man was rescued from the water.

The Waterfront Restaurant's roof in Oban was damaged as winds blew off slates and other material on January 9.

Police cordoned off the area while the debris was cleared up; nobody was injured.

The fishing boat Crimson Arrow was also blown from its mooring at Kerrera on Saturday

morning and ended up being driven ashore onto the rocks near to Dunollie Castle.

The boat was eventually pulled clear by a local scallop boat with minimal damage.

The Skye Bridge was also closed to all high-sided vehicles for most of the weekend.

Having seen its way through the worst of the wind and rain, the West Highlands were then hit by snow on Tuesday and through into Wednesday morning, causing major problems for motorists.

In Argyll and Bute, nine

primary schools were closed on Tuesday morning because of weather conditions and four on Wednesday.

In the Highland council area, 40 schools and nurseries were closed on Tuesday, with that figure increasing to around 90 for Wednesday as the snowfall worsened.

Further inland, the snow gate at Tyndrum on the A82 was closed on Tuesday afternoon because the road was impassable.

Caledonian MacBrayne's West Highland ferry timetable was thrown into disarray with cancellations on most routes at the height of the winds on Saturday.

The ferry operator advised passengers to check weather forecasts and be prepared to be flexible with their travel arrangements because of the disruption to the service.

Doug Young, who is a member of Coll Community council, praised the extra scheduled flights from Oban by Hebridean Air Services, which had proven to be a lifeline for the island after there were no sailings from Oban for seven days.

The snow was expected to have cleared in the west highlands today (Thursday) but there is a possibility of further snow showers for Friday and Saturday.



PRECARIOUS: Drivers on Corran Brae in Oban struggled with the road conditions.

Safety first as thousands left without a signal

ANGRY Vodafone customers have been without mobile phone service in Argyll since January 8 as the company struggles with repairs to masts.

The adverse weather conditions across the West Highlands have meant maintenance work has been put on hold for 'health and safety' reasons.

Oban resident Robert Woods, who has been with Vodafone

for 10 years, hit out at the length of time the network had been down: 'Customers pay for a service so Vodafone should be ensuring that service is continuous, especially in weather like this when people really need their phones in case of emergency.'

'Scottish Hydro Electric were out in all weathers doing repairs. If their engineers can manage, why can't Vodafone's.'

MP for Argyll and Bute, Alan Reid, has said stricter targets should be in place for network operators to improve service.

He said: 'A mobile phone network is no good to anyone if it's not working and the companies involved must drastically improve the time it takes to repair network faults.'

'The extra investment extending mobile phone coverage is

great news, but repairs are just as important. Ofcom and the Government should impose target times for repairs to be carried out and fine companies if they fail to meet these targets.'

However, a spokeswoman for Vodafone said: 'We're sorry our customers in Oban are experiencing problems with their signal. Due to the weather conditions recently across the

Highlands and Islands, coverage has been limited.

'Our engineers are working hard to get affected sites back up and running but in many cases this means they have to climb the masts to carry out repairs. For reasons of safety, they can only do this when the weather allows.'

'We are treating this as a priority and we'll get the service back to normal as soon as possible.'

TIMESLINE

People to have a say on the future

ARGYLL people are being encouraged to take part in a consultation beginning on Monday to find out why they live here and what council services they use.

The council will launch the Planning Our Future consultation to help address a declining population. A survey is available until February 20 on the council website, or at libraries and customer service points.

Community wants to fly the Saltire

A PETITION will be launched to fly a Saltire on the front green in Lochgilphead.

Lochgilphead community council wants Argyll and Bute council to rethink its decision on only having the Union Jack flown on council flagpoles.

The community council will write to the council and launch an online and paper petition.

Police alert over bank card frauds

OBAN police have received reports of a series of telephone calls from fraudsters claiming to be from banks. Sergeant Allan Moore said a series of frauds had been sweeping the area and reminded people to be vigilant. He said: 'Never give out bank or credit card details over the phone.'

New Skye festival confirms first acts

THE FIRST acts have been confirmed for a new music festival being launched in Portree this year.

The Skye Live festival, held over the Easter weekend of April 3 and 4, will include performances by Skye-based contemporary folk acts Peatbog Faeries and Niteworks.



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Mart co-operative admits debts could amount to £4-5million

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AN EMERGENCY meeting was held at Oban Livestock Centre on Tuesday evening to discuss the future of operator Caledonian Marts, which is currently in financial difficulty. Shareholders of the Stirling-based farmers co-operative, which has leased the livestock centre for the past 17 years, met last week to discuss the deepening financial crisis. Managing director of Cale-

donian Marts, James Cullens, said the firm needed investment of around £2 million to cover its debt, with the company's finances for May 2013 showing assets of £4.1 million and debts of £5.9 million.

However, when asked if the figures indicated that more than £2 million was needed to ensure financial stability, Mr Cullens admitted that the figure could be as much as £5 million, but that it was 'actively pursuing that debt'.

Mr Cullens said: 'The compa-

ny has three options: we ask for support financially; we secure a buyer for the mart under new ownership; or, worst case scenario, we do nothing and the company becomes insolvent.'

'We are in the process of trying to secure funding from the shareholders as well as trying to find buyers for the company, which we would call our 'plan B' until funding is secured.'

Chairman of the meeting, Duncan Buchanan, who is one of the 2,500 shareholders of the co-operative, said that oth-

er operators had declared an interest in leasing the livestock centre, and that it 'wouldn't be difficult' to get another interested party if Caledonian Marts did not continue at the site.

Caledonian Marts plan to release a business plan by the end of next week. Other avenues of funding may be explored, including applying for a grant from the National Lottery, or asking the Scottish government for assistance.

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Scotland's place in northern Europe on the agenda for grassroots debate

TWO OF Scotland's foremost thinkers on the nation's place within northern Europe will be speaking in Oban today (Thursday).

The Grassroots project, a community cafe set up in the town to encourage political discussion, will welcome renowned broadcaster and journalist Lesley Riddoch and Graham Hogg of architecture and design collective Lateral North.

Grassroots committee member Gordon Wood said: 'We have a real opportunity to bring key figures to Oban, giving ourselves the chance to be part of the bigger national conversation about the future of our country.'

'This is the first of many engaging events we have planned and we hope the people of Oban will come out and support this.'

Ms Riddoch is co-founder of the think tank, Nordic Horizons, which has brought Scandinavian experts and specialists to Scotland to share social policy insights and experiences since 2010.

Mr Hogg's organisation Lateral North is based in Glasgow and looks to examine Scotland's new place and identity within an economically emerging northern region.

The talk will be held in the McCaig suite of the Corran halls at 7.30pm, followed by an informal gathering in the Grassroots Cafe in the former Room 9 restaurant on Craig-Road, Oban.

Brain-teaser set to raise band's funds

OBAN pipe band is hoping to bag some funds for its 2015 season with its latest fundraiser.

The band's annual quiz will take place in the Masonic Lodge, Oban, tomorrow (Friday) and a busy night is expected.

The band needs to raise money for trips to five major competitions, including the new UK championships in Belfast.

The quiz starts at 7.30pm and all teams, with a minimum of two people and a maximum of six, are welcome.

Pest control heads garden club talk

PESTS and diseases and how to combat them was the topic for discussion at the latest Lorn Garden club talk at St John's Cathedral hall in Oban.

The session was led by speaker Patsy Dyer who gave an insight into the life cycles of the 10 most common pests and diseases.

She outlined actions individuals could take to help reduce their impact without resorting to sprays and poisons.

The next meeting is on February 3 when guest speaker Martin Gardner of Edinburgh Botanic will talk about the garden plants of Chile.



HIGH NOTE: Dave proudly holds the runners-up certificate he received for 'A song for Nicola', a piece inspired by Nicola McFadyen, above



Dave's 'nice wee tune' hits the high notes with judges

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A WELL-known Oban musician received news that was music to his ears recently, after he was named a runner-up in a prestigious national song competition.

Dave Mason, 66, a former music teacher at Oban high school, entered two songs into the UK Songwriting Contest 2014, managing to reach the final in two categories.

The tunes hit the right note with the judges after piano piece 'Right on the Edge' was voted runner-up in the open category and 'A Song for Nicola' was runner-up in the instrumental category.

Dave, who lives in Dungallan Terrace, explained: 'There are loads of song contests but this is

one of the better ones. It's such a big competition with people entering worldwide. I was really in with the big boys.

'I've listened to a few of the other songs and the standard was very high with a lot of quality pieces, especially the winners.'

The contest aims to discover and encourage new songwriting talent.

Dave also discussed how 'A Song for Nicola' was inspired by the daughter of a close family friend and playing partner.

He said: 'Hector MacFadyen, who I play with regularly at the Royal Hotel, asked me to write a song for his daughter Nicola.'

'Then one day it just came to me. I wrote in about 15 minutes. I thought, 'that's her to a tee'.

'She's a dainty girl and it's a nice, dainty wee tune.'

Accordian player Hector said: 'I asked Dave about writing a song for Nicola about a year ago, but it was just an off-the-cuff remark.'

'It took him a while because a tune doesn't just come into your head. He played it for us and it was a really beautiful piece of music. It's a great song.'

Nicola, 20, who often dances to music played by the two men, also praised Dave's talents, saying: 'It's a lovely tune. I'm delighted he wrote it for me.'

'I'm also really pleased for Dave to do so well in the competition with the song.'

Multi-instrumentalist Dave, who lives with wife Mary, said that songwriting has always come naturally to him, having been involved in music since leaving school and joining the Royal

Signals Band, playing clarinet and string bass.

After a stint of teaching in Durham between 1970 and 1974, he took up a position at Oban high until retiring from teaching in 2009, during which time he taught hundreds of students, including a group of youngsters who went on to form the band Capercaille.

As for plans for the future, Dave said he will continue playing at local venues, writing background music for film and television in the USA and is also contemplating entering the UK Songwriting Contest again.

'I know nothing else than this - music is my passion,' he added. Samples of his work, including his fourth album 'The Star of Jura' are available on his website: www.davemasonmusic.co.uk

LABOUR CANDIDATE URGES HOLYROOD TO SLASH TICKET COSTS FOR ISLAND FERRIES
Call for fares cut as oil price plunges

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A RATES 'relief' should be applied on CalMac fares while the cost of crude oil is hitting rock bottom, says an island-based Westminster candidate.

Alasdair Morrison, Labour candidate for the Western Isles, last week called on the Scottish government to take advantage of the lowest crude oil price in five years and reduce ferry fares for a period of time, rather than attempt to align them with the price of crude oil.

Criticising a lack of response from Western Isles SNP politicians, he said their silence demonstrated that the Scottish government was 'impotent' and found wanting 'when it came to island policy.'

Mr Morrison said: 'I would urge our politicians to put island interests before their blind loyalty to their party.'

'This government is the most centralising government Scotland has ever seen. They obsess about powers for Edinburgh but when it comes to acting on behalf of our islands, they are impotent and found wanting.'



FAIRER DEAL: Labour hopeful Alasdair Morrison is calling for a price reduction for travel on island ferries

'They must also join me in the campaign to reduce the cost of inter-island ferry travel. Previous governments funded millions of pounds worth of transport infrastructure that transformed our islands.'

'Surely we can now get the SNP to reduce inter-island fares and build on the success of previous investment.'

But Mr Morrison has been accused of hypocrisy by one SNP councillor, who said that his party campaigned against

Scotland having its own say over oil revenue.

Barra-based councillor Donald Manford told *The Oban Times* Mr Morrison's recognition that there was 'a problem to do with the cost of ferries' was 'very worthy'.

But he added: 'He is asking the Scottish government to reduce prices when the cost of oil falls but he is standing for a party that sought to deny Scotland the actual powers to reduce the price of oil.'

'Further, he is not asking that Westminster reflect the changes in the price of oil when it goes up, in their settlement to Scotland. His attempt to find a solution is enormously hypocritical.'

In response, Mr Morrison said: 'Donald Manford is talking with forked tongue; this is a straightforward situation. The Scottish government is sole shareholder in CalMac. The price in oil has collapsed to below \$50 a barrel and I think a state-owned company could reflect that. The discussion about 'Yes' and 'No' votes in the referendum and of Westminster is a red herring.'

A spokesman for Transport Minister Derek Mackay said: 'It is this SNP government which introduced Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) fares on island ferry routes, bringing cheaper fares for passengers - something Alasdair Morrison and his Labour colleagues failed to do in their eight years in office.'

'The Scottish government has also absorbed substantial fuel price rises of 30 per cent since 2007 and not passed them on to the travelling public, despite the pressure on public spending during this period.'

SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Will your child be five years of age before 29 February 2016?
Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

The next school session starts on 18 August 2015. Children who will be five on or before 29 February 2016 are eligible to be enrolled for Primary 1. Enrolment will take place week commencing 26 January 2015.

All enrolment information can be found online at www.highland.gov.uk/schoolenrolment

When to enrol your child?	Where	What to bring
3.00pm 26 January - 30 January 2015	Local Primary School	Child's birth certificate Proof of Address

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 Office.

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

Am bi an leanabh agaibh còig bliadhna a dh'aois ro 29 Gearran 2016?
Bidh? Ma-thà, tha an t-àm ann an clàrachadh airson na sgoile.

Bidh an ath sheisean sgoile a' tòiseachadh air 18 Lùnastal 2015. Faodaidh clann a bhios còig air no ro an 29 Gearran 2016 a bhith air an clàrachadh airson P1. Bidh an t-seachdain chlàrachaidh a' tòiseachadh air 26 Faoilleach 2015.

Faodaidh sibh clàradh air-loidhne aig www.highland.gov.uk/schoolenrolment

No faodaidh sibh na foirmichean lionnte agaibh a thoirt chun na sgoile ionadail agaibh.

Ma tha sibh airson 's gun tèid an leanabh agaibh gu sgoile eile seach a' bhun-sgoile ionadail, feumaidh sibh an clàrachadh aig a' bhun-sgoile ionadail an toiseach, agus iarrtas a chur a-steach às dèidh sin gu Oifis Foghlaim, Cultair agus Spòrs na Sgìre.

Chan eil feum air iarrtas airson àite-sgoile airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig no dhaibhsan a tha a'airidh air roghainn airson sgoile buidhne.

Cuin a chlàras sibh an leanabh agaibh?	Càite	Dè bheir sibh leibh?
3.00f 26 Faoilleach - 30 Faoilleach 2015	A' Bhun-sgoile Ionadail	Teisteanas breith an leanabh Dearbhadh air seòladh.

Deer culls are killing jobs, say gamekeepers

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DEER are being treated like vermin by organisations such as the Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish National Heritage (SNH), the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) claimed this week.

The SGA said the loss of deer to the Scottish landscape will devastate the rural economy and lead to rural job losses.

A spokesman for the SGA said: 'In certain areas, red deer are being culled to such an extent that communities which depend on the income from shooting are now suffering, with stalker and ghillie jobs being lost.'

The SGA spokesman said some of its members in the west Highlands are unable to welcome annual parties of overseas shooters as there are no longer enough stags to provide sustainable sport.

He continued: 'This also affects accommodation providers, outfitters, garages, restaurants, shops, game dealers and vehicle suppliers.'



UNDER FIRE: the stag

However, a FCS spokesman rejected the gamekeepers' criticism: 'Our cull represents less than five per cent of the Scottish deer population which in 2005 was estimated at around 667,000 and in 2011 was estimated at around 777,000. 'We value wild deer as a key component of the environment and our work in this area aims to achieve healthy deer populations.'

'We use a combination of culling and fencing to manage deer across the national forest estate, making appropriate use of night shooting and out-of-season authorisations, which are always agreed with SNH.'

MULL lines



SHORE LEAVE: Jane Griffiths, who has announced her retirement, with musician Fish at Tobermory's lifeboat day

Coxswain Jane bows out

TOBERMORY lifeboat station has bid farewell to one of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) first female coxswains who has stepped down after nearly 20 years' service.

Jane Griffiths joined Tobermory RNLI as a volunteer crew member in September 1996 and was appointed deputy second coxswain in August 2004, one of the first women in the RNLI to be appointed to the position.

During more than 18 years' service, she took part in 67 rescues, helping to save four lives and assisting numerous others in difficulty at sea.

She also spent 400 hours, or the equivalent of two and a half weeks, on exercises. Jane resigned from the volunteer crew shortly before last Christmas as she has had to spend increasing amounts of time overseas through her work as a marine scientist.

Tobermory RNLI full time coxswain Andrew McHaffie said: 'As well as being one of the first female coxswains, Jane has given nearly two decades of service to saving lives at sea and she has been generous in passing on her knowledge to new members of the crew. She will be much missed and everyone at the station wishes her all the very best for the future.'



SAFE TRACK: the success of safety measures implemented at last year's Mull Rally are to be introduced all over Scotland

Island rally leads the way

SAFETY measures for car rallies trialled at the 2014 Mull Rally will now become mandatory for similar events throughout the country.

In light of the deaths of three spectators at the Jim Clark Rally in the Scottish Borders, the event on the island was used to test a number of precautions for motor racing gatherings.

The final report from a safety review group, advised by former Formula One champion Sir Jackie Stewart, will see major changes in event management.

- Best practice in events will include:
- Tighter control over volunteer marshals, including the introduction of a mandatory licensing scheme;
 - Input from Police Scotland including, where appropriate, support for the implementation of the safety plan;
 - Improving safety of the media through better management of press attendance at rallies, including a press accreditation scheme;
 - Ground rules drawn up for spectators, marshals and competitors on assisting cars back onto the road;
 - Improved communication with spectators and the recommended adoption of international standards for identifying low, medium and high-risk spectator areas;
 - Stricter control of marshalling numbers - a requirement for marshal numbers to be published in the safety plan and adhered to for each rally stage.

The group's conclusions were announced in the Scottish parliament by minister for sport Jamie Hepburn.

He said: 'There will always be an element of risk connected to motor sport, but Scotland must take the lead in ensuring we live up to our history of world class input to the sport and have the best spectator safety controls in place.'

'I believe the review group has brought us a package of measures that will bring about a considerable improvement in spectator safety.'

Defibrillator for Dervaig

A DEFIBRILLATOR for the public is now located in Dervaig. The machine is in a secure cabinet outside the reception entrance of the Bellachroy hotel.

People who make use of the machine in emergencies are reminded they must call 999.

Notices will be put up around the village offering training in basic life support skills and use of the automated defibrillator.

Curtain call for dramafest

MULL Drama Festival is calling all thespians to get set for a three-night extravaganza in March.

The 2015 festival will run over three nights from March 18. For more details, call Ryan Lowe on 01688 302992.

Tenants say their dream homes are turning into a nightmare

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ANGRY residents of a new housing scheme in Dunbeg say their new dream homes are turning into a nightmare.

The 50 houses at Marine Court, owned by the West Highland Housing Association, range from one-to-three bedrooms properties, with the first occupants taking up residence last year.

Some of the tenants have now said that the problems they have encountered since moving in have put them off the idea of purchasing the houses under the 'rent to buy' scheme.

They have also claimed that their complaints about the houses are not being dealt with by the housing association, or in some cases being ignored completely.

Kevin Tidser moved into his two-bedroom property in May with his wife Josephine and their eight-year-old son.

He claimed that the association was not dealing with issues he raised. He said: 'We have a leak in the bathroom, coming through



HOME TRUTHS: Emma Aitkenhead (left), Ashleigh Munro and Neil Khan (centre) and Kevin Tidser (right) 16_t03marine

the ceiling and they can't find it. 'When we moved in, the gap at the bottom of the front door was so big I could fit a book underneath it. They've been out to fix it but it's still not right. I think these problems have put me off buying it.'

Kevin's neighbour Emma Aitkenhead moved into her house last year with her husband Mark and their three pre-school children. She said she had complained to

the association about condensation gathering on her windows, and was told it was because she had curtains.

'I couldn't believe it when they told me that was the cause and advised me to leave the curtains open. I told them I couldn't do that with three young kids in the house.'

'I have also phoned them three times about dampness. They said they would send someone out but they never did.

'The problems really are a talking point among residents.'

Neil Khan and Ashleigh Munro claim when they complained about a leaking boiler, the landlord sent someone who wasn't qualified to fix it.

Neil said: 'Our boiler went and the guy who came round told us he worked in the office and wasn't a plumber.'

'The front door has been a big issue for us as well. We had to replace flooring at the front

door because water was leaking in. The heating is turned up to 33C but the house is still freezing because of the draughts.'

Ashleigh added: 'The housing association sent out a letter saying the reason there were draughts was because residents weren't closing their doors properly. It's ridiculous. It's nothing to do with that - it's farcical.'

A Facebook group set up by one of the residents on January 10 to discuss the issues has now

gathered 46 members. However, a number of posts on the Facebook page said they were delighted with their properties and the estate in general.

Lesley McInnes, West Highland Housing Association's chief executive, apologised to residents and said the association would be addressing the issues raised.

'These issues need to be addressed and we will be arranging meetings to look at the problems individual residents have raised,' she said. 'We are conscious of issues residents have been having with doors in the properties, and letters were sent out on Tuesday morning to every one in Marine Court to arrange a visit to the properties to look at them.'

'Clearly people are aware that high winds and adverse weather have been an issue for everyone over the past week which may have held up some repair work.'

'However, if people are saying that they have raised issues over a long period of time and they haven't been dealt with properly then that's something we need to address and deal with.'

Squadron targets more volunteers

THE 2521 Oban High School squadron of the air cadets is looking for local adult volunteers for its civilian committee.

The squadron wants to build on the foundations of its 40th anniversary celebrations last year and move on to the 2020 vision the Royal Air Force has for the cadets.

Adult volunteers over the age of 21 can commit to either one night week as a civilian instructor or, on average, one night and a quarter a week and a few weekends each year, as a member of the civilian committee.

Any training need will be provided, with both positions requiring a Protecting Vulnerable Groups check through Disclosure Scotland.

Anyone who is interested should go into the cadet centre on Tweeddale Street on a Wednesday night from 7pm, or email oc.2521@aircadets.org for more information.

Jack and Isla most popular names

THE top names for boys and girls born in Argyll and Bute last year have been revealed.

Isla tops the names for girls, with Jack for boys.

Other top names for girls are Sophie, Ava, Charlotte, Jessica and Lucy with Amber, Amelia, Grace, Lola, Olivia and Sophia.

Popular boys names include Alexander, James, Jamie, Andrew, Charlie, Ethan, Hamish, Harris and Kyle.

Inveraray prepares for Burns night

INVERARAY Burns Club will host its annual Burns supper on Saturday, January 24 at the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray from 7pm.

Guest speakers this year are Ayrshire Burnsian Ian Farrell, Bruce Robertson and Jane McLeod from Lochgilphead.

Inveraray's own Brian Spalding will be addressing the Haggis, while music and song will be performed by Cumnock's Bletherskyte.

Police's countryside alert

OBAN police are increasing patrols in the district areas around Lorn in response to a spate of thefts from rural areas.

Quad bikes, power tools, copper wire and fuel have been taken from properties over the New Year period.

Between January 2 and 5 police recorded thefts of: a quad bike and a generator from Barochreal Farm, Kilninver; a quad bike from Kintraw Farm, Barbreck, near Lochgilphead; and two chainsaws and fuel from Corachie Clemais, near Taynuilt.

PC Paul MacMillan, of Oban Community Investigation Unit (CIU), said: 'The issue of rural thefts is something we are taking very seriously, with road policing

and CID involved in crimebreaker initiatives in the district areas.

'I would be keen to speak to anyone who may have CCTV overlooking the A85 and A816 in particular. We are looking for any suspicious activity observed between January 2 and 5, or any large vehicles which have seemed out of place.'

PC MacMillan can be contacted on 01631 510515 or by email at paul.macmillan@scotland.pnn.police.uk.'

Sergeant Allan Moore of Oban police said the trend of thefts from rural properties was becoming prevalent because such homes and businesses are seen as 'soft targets'.

He said: 'We are increasing

patrols at night and carrying out static road checks in all hours of the day to tackle this issue.'

Explaining that police officers can review security at any property in the area if requested, he said members of the public could also help police with their investigations.

Sergeant Moore said: 'If you see something that looks suspicious, perhaps a vehicle driver taking too much interest in a property, then let us know. If it turns out to be legitimate, then that's fair and well.'

'We are open 24 hours a day and have patrols out 24 hours a day, so we welcome any information. The more information we get, the better.'

Threat to music festival

THE UK'S top small musical festival may be forced to cancel after 2015 if rising costs for policing cannot be reduced.

Award winning Tthree Music Festival (TMF) has seen costs rocket after Police Scotland introduced a Scotland-wide charging policy.

An £18k bill for policing for this year's festival has the potential to cripple the event in future years. The cost includes officers' off-duty and sundries such as accommodation, travel and food.

A TMF spokeswoman said: 'There have been some changes to the TMF policing costs for 2014 and we have a meeting with Police Scotland coming

up to discuss this - we won't be making any public comments before then.'

'We want to ensure fans that TMF 2015 will be going ahead and we're looking forward to another incredible weekend.'

Police Scotland charge between £49 and £83 per hour for every officer and it is understood that an extra dozen officers per shift are being called to the island to police the event.

A Police Scotland spokeswoman said: 'Commercial events, where the organiser, company or organisation may intend to make a profit, can be expected to be charged full cost recovery when police services are provided. Police Scotland

will work with event organisers to identify opportunities to minimise costs through consideration of alternative solutions, such as private security firms, without compromising the safe and successful running of an event.'

The loss of the event would see a £600k loss to the Tthree economy.

Oban South and the Isles councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'We need to ask whether or not we need as many police as are being proposed or not. There might be other ways for the event to be managed.'

TMF has won awards every year since its inception in 2010 and sold 1,600 tickets in 2014.

Convicted Oban hotelier placed on probation for sexual assaults

COURT REPORTER
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AN OBAN hotelier who faced sentencing for two sexual assaults on staff members has lost his 'hard won reputation', according to his defence advocate.

Raymond Hyams, of North Connel, was last December found guilty of three charges of sexual assault and one of making sexual remarks at the Queen's Hotel between September 2010 and April 2012.

On Wednesday last week at Oban sheriff court Sheriff Douglas Small sentenced the 59-year-old businessman to nine months on probation and 200 hours of unpaid work.

Speaking in mitigation at the sentencing last Wednesday,



LOST REPUTATION: Raymond Hyams was placed on probation for nine months and given 200 hours unpaid work

Hyams' defence advocate Stewart Ronnie told Sheriff Douglas Small: 'He (Hyams) has lost a hard won reputation and has already lost business. He has already started to feel punishment for the conviction.'

Mr Ronnie also referred to a social enquiry report published for the sentence hearing that stated although Hyams maintained his innocence, he was at low risk of re-offending.

The first of the two victims told the court previously that Hyams' behaviour towards her had begun within weeks of her

starting work at the Corran Esplanade hotel in September 2010 until she left in March 2012.

This included touching various part of her body and looking down her top.

The second victim had told the court that Hyams had made inappropriate comments to her, including frequently touching her hair and body.

Hyams had accused the victims of meeting in an Oban pub in what was described in court as a 'witches coven of disgruntled ex-employees' to plot against him.

Sheriff Small said Hyams had shown a complete lack of respect for the victims.

He will remain on the Sex Offenders' Register for the duration of the probation order.

Thieves steal brass screws from castle wall security rail

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DUNSTAFFNAGE Castle remains open to the public, despite thieves making off with brass screws supporting the safety rail round the castle's wall walk.

The popular walkway around the historic site in Dunbeg has been closed off amid safety concerns following the theft, which occurred between December 29 and January 9.

Oban police are investigating the incident and have called on the public to help them with their enquiries.

Sergeant Allan Moore said: 'The danger to the public is a major concern to us in this instance. Had this incident gone unnoticed, it could have caused a serious incident.'

'I would ask anyone who saw any suspicious vehicle activity near the castle, either during the dates given or before, to get in touch with us on 101.'

Historic Scotland has sought to reassure the public that the castle remains open, bar the wall walk.

As *The Oban Times* went to press, the agency was carrying out an assessment to establish the extent and cost of the damage.

A spokesman for Historic Scotland said: 'We are aware of an incident having taken place at Dunstaffnage Castle, and the police have been notified and we will continue to work with them on this matter, which is currently an on-going investigation.'

Miller Stewart

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Domestic abuse a matter of record

A SCHEME to be introduced in the west Highlands allowing people to check if their partner has a history of violence has been welcomed by one MSP.

The Police Scotland domestic abuse disclosure scheme will be rolled out across the country following a trial period in Aberdeen and Ayrshire in November.

Rhoda Grant, MSP for the Highlands and Islands, said there should be 'no hiding place' for people with a record of violence.

She added: 'I would like to see people able to access this information no matter where they live. That's why I back a Scotland-wide rollout of this scheme to help protect more people in the future.'

Details of how to check if someone has a record of domestic abuse will be on the Police Scotland website

Highly convenient Highland awards

SCHOOL and public toilets in the west Highlands have made a clean sweep of top country-wide 'Loo of the Year' awards.

Facilities were judged for their cleanliness, accessibility and décor, with Carbst primary nursery on Skye winning the Scottish national early years category and the Green Welly Stop in Tyndrum coming top of the transport section.

Highland Council-run toilets in Lochaline, Acharacle and Roy Bridge primary schools were given platinum gradings, while Inverloch nursery, St Bride's, Ballachulish and Eigg primaries and the facilities at Tigh na Sgìre on Portree received gold status.

The council itself won a Scottish national award in the local authority category.

House prices rise by three per cent

HOUSE prices in the Highlands and islands rose by four per cent last year, bringing the average price up to £168,012.

Highland Solicitors Property Centre, which published the figures, sold properties worth a total of nearly £194 million in 2014, three per cent up on the previous year.

ARGYLL VOTES IN FAVOUR WHILE LOCHABER, ROSS AND SKYE REJECTS MOVE BY CHURCH PRESBYTERIES

Church splits over civil partnership

STEVEN RAE
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OPINION is split in the West Highlands and Islands over the Church of Scotland's proposal to allow gay ministers to live with their partners.

In total, 32 of the 45 presbyteries in Scotland have backed proposals to allow a minister who is in a civil partnership to be ordained - a contentious issue for the church.

Argyll voted in favour of the proposals by 43 votes to 20, but the Lochaber (six to 18), Ross (five to 38) and Locharron-Skye (two to 12) presbyteries all voted against.

While Orkney and Shetland both voted in favour - 15 to 11 and 10 to nine respectively - both Uist and Lewis were emphatically against the proposals.

Lewis was the only presbytery in Scotland to unanimously reject the proposal, with all 19 votes cast opposing the ordination of homosexuals, while only one of Uist's 10 votes was in support.

A total of 1,391 presbytery members, made up of church ministers, elders and deacons, voted in favour and 1,153 against, a 54.6 to 45.4 per cent split.

The church released the figures on January 8 after voting was completed on December 30, with the final decision on the issue to be made at the church's General



POSITIVE VOTE: the Rev Dugald Cameron 16_03dugald01

Assembly in May. Dugald Cameron, minister of Kilmore and Oban parish, endorsed the move to apply equal status to ministers in civil partnerships.

'I think we are edging towards a more-inclusive ministry that is also trying to keep on board with

those that have that difference in opinion. Expressions of sexuality in a healthy, non-exploitive way find their home in the church and are to be celebrated.

'I think this change of opinion is a good thing and will be done from the perspective of the gos-

“ I think we are edging towards a more inclusive ministry ”

The Rev. Dugald Cameron
Minister of Kilmore and Oban

pel of love and awareness of the diversity of our creation in God.'

However, John Cunningham, presbytery clerk for Uist, said that the proposal could lead to division within the church.

Lewis was the first presbytery in Scotland to return its decision to the Church of Scotland when it gave its unanimous verdict against the proposals in October last year.

Mr Cunningham said: 'Lewis Presbytery of the Church of Scotland has voted unanimously against a proposal from the General Assembly of the Church that would have permitted people in same sex partnerships to become ministers in the church.'

'The presbytery has also advised the General Assembly that the proposal, or overture,

would mean that members who base their beliefs on the Bible may feel that their views were being excluded from the Church of Scotland.'

The Rev Kenneth Ross is parish minister of Netherlorn, which includes Craignish, Kilbrandon, Kilchattan, Kilmelford and Kilniver churches.

He said: 'The Church of Scotland has wrestled long and hard with questions of human sexuality in relation to the ministry.'

'The proposal now approved by a majority of presbyteries represents an historic change in terms of opening the possibility of gay people in civil partnerships serving as ministers and deacons, but at the same time it affirms the historic doctrine and practice of the church.'

'This is not an easy balancing act but it is an important one for the peace and unity of the church.'

A Church of Scotland spokesman said: 'Presbyteries have made their decision clear. That decision goes to the General Assembly for the final stage of approval.'

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the church and has the power to make laws and set the agenda for the coming months or even years for the administrative councils, committees and departments of the organisation.

Group unveils its business case as it plans to open Rockfield in 2017

LOUISE LEE
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THE COMMUNITY group behind a bid to buy the former Rockfield primary school hopes to re-open the building by spring 2017.

Oban Communities Trust (OCT), the preferred bidder for the landmark school building, has lodged its business case with Argyll and Bute council ahead of council meetings in February and April to determine the building's future.

The trust has outlined a three-phase approach to transforming the disused building into a cultural and heritage hub for the town with a 'grand re-opening' scheduled for May 2017.

This will begin with a management company taking on responsibility for the car park at the school by May of this year and the sheds behind the building being let to local charities for £7,000 each.

The second phase will see access to the ground floor of the main building, bringing the canteen back into use, opening up workshops and exhibition areas.

Stage three will see a '21st century hub' promoting heritage and culture.

Two of the ways the group hopes to fund the project is by offering memberships in the trust and by launching a public appeal to raise money for the ambitious scheme.

A statement in the trust's business plan states: 'Oban Community Trust is confident this plan demonstrates a viable and deliverable method for bringing Rockfield school into community ownership and developing a cultural and heritage hub in partnership with a range of local and national partners.'

'Significant support has been garnered over the last three months and there is a growing momentum locally to see the redevelopment vision realised.'

A decision is due to be made on the business plan at a meeting of councillors in February and then a final decision will be made by the full council in April.

Oban Bay contractor ready to meet public face-to-face

THE CONSTRUCTION company behind the first stage of planned public realm works around Oban Bay is tonight (Thursday) hosting an open event for residents and businesses in the town.

The meeting, between 6pm and 8pm in the Caledonian Hotel will introduce key members of Raynesway Construction, who will discuss the proposed phasing of works and how best to minimise disruption during the construction stage.

With agreement from McQueen Bros Charitable Trust, Raynesway will set up its Oban site office in the furniture section of the White Building next Monday.

“ I would encourage people to come along to this event ”

Councillor Roddy McCuish

Chairman of Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee, Oban-based councillor Roddy McCuish, said: 'I am delighted the work in Stafford Street will

be starting soon and be completed in time for the busy tourist season.'

'I would encourage people to come along to this event and meet the project manager and key members of the delivery team.'

'You'll have the opportunity to see the outline of the proposed phasing plan for the works and to make practical suggestions to the team.'

In December Argyll and Bute council appointed Raynesway Construction to deliver around £600,000 of public realm improvements along Stafford Street from January to May 2015.

Build a 'green' oasis of calm, argues pensioner

AN OBAN pensioner has issued a heartfelt plea to Argyll and Bute council to build a public park near the town centre.

Moira Campbell, who lives in Port Beag, argued people who lived in one of the many flats in Oban need somewhere to enjoy natural 'breathing space' away from buildings and the hurly-burly of the town centre.

Mrs Campbell, 75, who also lived in Appin, explained: 'Oban is an overcrowded town without a park.'

'The valuable health amenity of flat grassland away from traffic, noise, car parks and sirens is non-existent in the town. A park would also be

ideal for exercise or to simply sit and enjoy nature in peace.'

While plans for a playpark are progressing well on a site near Oban's Atlantis Leisure centre, Mrs Campbell said there was a need for a recreational park.

She continued: 'Now with perpetual development, complete with car parks and subsequent increase of traffic, the roads are no longer as pleasant for walking or cycling and certainly not safe for pushchairs or wheelchairs.'

'Tranquil corners are vanishing along with wildlife corridors. In short, the town has turned its back on nature and the well-being of its citizens and visitors.'

Ballet West's Natasha follows in Darcey's footsteps for top prize

EUAN PATERSON
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A TAYNUILT ballet dancer is the only girl from the UK to be selected to take part in the prestigious Prix de Lausanne competition in Switzerland in February.

Natasha Watson, an 18-year-old BA student at Ballet West, is one of only 39 girls from across the globe to be selected to compete in the Prix de Lausanne, a competition that counts Darcey Bussell among its former winners.

Immediately on her return to Scotland, Natasha will be dancing in Ballet West's Valentine's Night performance of Romeo and Juliet at the Clyde Auditorium at the SECC (The Armadillo). This is the first ballet performance to be held in the auditorium.

Natasha said: 'It is a tremendous honour to be selected for the Prix de Lausanne. I am so grateful to my outstanding teachers at Ballet West for their enormous help and encouragement. They have been an inspiration for me.'

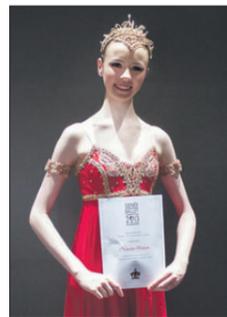
Natasha, originally from Falkirk, was a bronze medalist in the 2013 Genée International Ballet competition in Glasgow, following in the footsteps of her teachers at Ballet West, Sara Maria and Jonathan Barton.

As a result she was invited by Scottish Ballet to appear in its production of Hansel and Gretel.

She is not only a rising star in ballet, but also an award-winning actress. As an actress, Natasha played Zoe in the CBBC series M.I.High, starred alongside David Tennant in the BBC series Single Father and was named best new Scottish actress at the Scottish Variety Awards.

She has now decided to concentrate on her ballet training and is in her final year of a BA Honours degree course at Ballet West.

Natasha's training is supported by the Dewar Arts award.



“ It's been a tremendous honour to be selected for the Prix de Lausanne ”

Natasha Watson
pictured left

And Ballet West's Outreach dancers performed two dances to great acclaim at the Oban Hogmanay party in the Corran Halls car park.

The Ballet West dancers had to win the right to take the stage at the Hogmanay event and wowed the crowds with their imaginative routines, 'Nobody to Love' and 'Footloose'.

The Taynuilt-based ballet school runs outreach programmes for children in the local area, as well as courses for aspiring professionals in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth.



ATMOSPHERIC: Ballet West's outreach students perform their routine 'Nobody to love'



HOEDOWN: Ballet West students bring the Wild West to the stage with their 'Footloose' routine

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FOR 28 YEARS SHARON BAXTER WAITED FOR THE MOMENT THE COURT WOULD BELIEVE HER TERRIBLE TRUTH

Woman's quest for justice ends in jail for paedophile

EUAN PATERSON
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THE VICTIM of a paedophile sentenced to six years in jail has waived her right to anonymity to encourage others to report sexual abuse.

Sharon Baxter, 42, was abused by 63-year-old Leslie Kinvig between the ages of eight and 13, when she lived in the Oban area.

In 1986, at the age of 14, she reported Kinvig, who was in a relationship with her mother - the couple later married - and Sharon was taken into care at Lochgilphead's An Calla children's home after she was 'disowned' by her family.

But it took 28 years before she got 'justice', when her abuser was convicted last week at the High Court in Glasgow for sexually assaulting her between June 1981 and November 1986.

Kinvig, who lives in Dalcross, Ross-shire, was also found guilty of sexually abusing another girl between October 1991 and September 2000.

Sharon, who now lives in Saltcoats, said she first reported Kinvig to a teacher 28 years ago but no conviction was brought against him at the time. The case was re-examined five years ago, resulting in Kinvig's conviction last October.



COURAGEOUS: Sharon Baxter says she is not motivated by revenge, but by a sense of justice

Sharon, who is now married with two children, told *The Oban Times* Kinvig became a part of her life soon after she and her mother moved to the Oban area from Paisley.

She said: 'The abuse started off very playfully and he used to play games with me like 'under the cushion' and tickles that went over the boundaries. Things

progressed as I got older. It came to the point I couldn't take it anymore and I decided to report it to a teacher. That day, November 7, 1986 was the most horrendous day of my life.

'I knew I was going to cause trouble within my family.'

Saying she had hoped for a longer sentence for her abuser, Sharon said: 'As someone who

had to go through what I did, I find six years difficult to accept.

'But this was never about how long he would get in jail; it was about protecting other people's children and him being made accountable for what he has done.'

'It was never about revenge, although I did want justice, so I had a mixture of emotions when the verdicts were read out



PERVERT: Leslie Kinvig

in court. I remember hearing the first "guilty" and feeling the sense of relief that finally someone believed me, someone is saying "That is what happened to you".

Explaining that the protection of children is everyone's responsibility, Sharon said: 'If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. If someone has a suspicion, I can't emphasize enough how important it is to stand up.'

'This is not a sad story about me. I want it to be a positive one that helps people stand up and be counted.'



JUST PERFECT: David Millward, MBE

New Year Honour tops off a year to remember for fire fighter David

LOUISE LEE
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'THE perfect end to a big year,' was the way a Mid Argyll firefighter described his reaction to the news that he was to be honoured by The Queen.

David Millward was informed by officials in early December last year that he was to be made a MBE in the New Year Honours List.

But he was told he had to remain tight-lipped throughout the festive period until the official announcement was made in early January.

For David, who has also served at Oban community fire station, a Member of the British Empire medal was the icing on the cake at the end of a hugely important year for the popular volunteer fire fighter.

David, who lives in Kilmelford, was nominated for an Our Hero award with the Daily Record, short listed for fire fighter of the year in the Spirit of Fire Awards in London and was given a Brave@Heart award alongside Gareth Strang by the then first minister Alex Salmond.

David was given the MBE for serving as a volunteer with the Scottish fire service for more than 24 years and charity work with bone marrow register the Anthony Nolan Trust and the Fire Fighters Charity.

The volunteer crew commander of Kilmelford fire station will be presented with his medal at Buckingham Palace later this year.

He said: 'I'm very pleased and delighted. It was a perfect end to a big year.'

'I found out at the start of December so it was really hard not telling my family over Christmas, I was so relieved when I could tell them.'

He added: 'I want to say a huge thank you to the person who filled in the application form and for all of the support I have received from the fire service and others over the years.'

Charity wants to feed those in need

AN OBAN charity which fed more than 150 people in two weeks over Christmas is asking the public for support.

Hope Kitchen, based in Argyll Street, is looking for more volunteers as it expands to meet the needs of users.

The Christian-led 'soup kitchen' and drop-in centre, which opened in 2009, provides meals and a meeting place for people in the community four days a week.

Sue Vest, service manager, explained: 'We see an average of 35 different people each week, and usually around 20 people on average every day we're open.'



PLEA: Elliot Morrison, Sue Vest, Stuart Chalmers and Jess McDonald

'It's good that people are using the facilities, but it's obviously a bad thing that many need the support in the first place.'

Charity secretary Elliot Morrison said: 'We give food to people we believe need it - it's more of an informed judgement call. We only turn people away if their behaviour is unacceptable.'

The charity is holding a meeting this weekend, where it hopes to lay out a five-year plan.

Stuart Chalmers who is the charity's chairman said: 'We had 1,200 volunteer hours between May 1 and December 31 last year. At the moment we have 10 volunteers on the books but we always need more. We really are desperate for volunteers.'

The kitchen is holding a coffee morning, next Wednesday, January 21, for staff, volunteers and service users. Hope Kitchen is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 1pm and 4pm, and Saturday, 2pm to 6pm.

Oban gamblers lose more than £6m on 'puggies'

FIGURES recently released by anti-gambling machine group, Campaign for Fairer Gambling, revealed that 44 gambling machines in Oban take an estimated £9.2 million per year - more than two thirds of which is lost to failed bets.

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) or 'puggy' machines can be found in most betting shops and in pubs and hotels - but Argyll councillors now want a change in legislation after hearing the harm the gambling machines can bring to families.

At present it is relatively simple for a machine to be placed in a premises after paying a £50 licence fee to the local author-

ity. Stakes can be as made as high as £100 in the machines, currently categorised as low risk in government legislation.

Councillors want to be able to limit the stakes to as low as £2 - to protect those people using them.

Speaking to *The Oban Times*, one woman who is keen for a change in the law to take place, says that improved laws that care about the wellbeing of the gambler and their families can not come quickly enough.

The woman, from the Oban area, said the money her grandson had spent on the machine was frightening. She believes he has spent more than £800 a month on the machines - run-

ning up huge debts.

She said: 'I think there must be more than 40 machines in Oban. They all swallow up hundred of pounds worth of money every single day. To my grandson it was like a drug.'

'The more he used them, the more he wanted to use them. It was a full time job trying to make him see sense. He has stopped using them for now, but with so much temptation out there who knows when he will start up again.'

Argyll and Bute's licensing committee agreed to consider lowering the stakes on machines when dealing with applications for further FOBT machines in premises.



Morgaine Sinclair, Cameron Taylor, Daisy Williams, Carys Christine and David Lamont, who study in Aisling Clark's religious and moral education class, were at Tesco before Christmas to post the Write for Rights cards 16_103amnesty01

Pupils pen global message

PUPILS at Oban High school are to receive a visit from the secretary of state for Scotland, Alistair Carmichael, after supporting a charity he is involved in.

Children from throughout the school sent some Christmas cheer across the globe this year to people who are political or religious prisoners as part of the Amnesty International Write for Rights campaign.

This global letter-writing marathon involved people

writing messages to activists persecuted for their actions.

Mr Carmichael, who is the Liberal Democrat MP for Orkney and Shetland, has agreed to visit the school some time in February, having been involved with Amnesty for a number of years himself for various human rights campaigns, including the abolition of the death penalty.

Aisling Clark who teaches religious and moral education at the school, and whose class led the campaign, said: 'We're

delighted that Mr Carmichael has agreed to come and visit.

'As well as the cards, the children signed 22 petitions for separate Amnesty cases.'

'The children in the class did a presentation to each of the classes to tell them about the persecution people across the world are suffering from and invited them to write in support.'

The pupils from the class posted the cards and letters from the Post Office at Tesco in Oban on December 18.

Man denies police officer assault outside town pub

AN AMATEUR mixed martial arts athlete has denied assaulting a police officer by kicking him as he was being arrested.

David Loukil, 26, pled not guilty to assaulting the policeman on August 3 last year in Oban's Stevenson Street.

He also denies failing to leave a licensed premises there when asked to do so by police, resisting arrest and acting in a threatening or abusive manner by shouting and swearing.

The court heard that shortly after midnight Mr Loukil left the pub but was refused re-entry because the door steward deemed him too drunk and had noticed an aggressive exchange of words with another man as he had left.

Mr Loukil remonstrated with the doorman but left with his girlfriend, who exited the pub soon after, following police intervention.

However, the couple returned to the pub and attempted to enter the premises. When he was refused entry again the doorman told the court Mr Loukil tried to 'pick a fight' with him.

PC Kevin Summers and his colleague were observing the incident from a nearby police car and left the vehicle to go to the doorman's aid after PC Summers saw the doorman place a hand on Mr Loukil's chest to prevent him entering and the accused responding

with a 'lunge' and 'lifting a hand towards the doorman's neck area'.

PC Summers said: 'I looked at the bouncer and I could tell he was looking for assistance from us this time.'

'Due to his [Mr Loukil] size I was taking no chances and he was handcuffed and arrested for failing to quit a licensed premises. He was compliant at that point.'

PC Summers then said Mr Loukil's girlfriend began shouting and swearing at the officers and she was also arrested by PC Summers' colleague.

'At this point the accused became agitated and volatile towards my colleague and kicked out twice to the knee area of my colleague. He connected both times.'

Describing the alleged kick the doorman witness, who also studied martial arts, said it was not a martial arts style kick.

Defence solicitor Kevin McGinness asked PC Summers why he arrested his client for failing to leave a licensed premises when he was not inside the pub. The officer replied that he considered him to be within the curtilage of the premises.

PC Summers also refuted a claim by Mr McGinness that Mr Loukil was dragged on the ground after being handcuffed.

The case will continue on January 19.

'Cereal' offender tried to avoid bed and board bill

A MAN with more than 100 previous convictions for crimes of dishonesty was arrested on Christmas Eve in Oban after failing to pay his hotel bill.

John Ferbrache, 56, of no fixed abode, told police on his arrest that he was 'quite glad because I have run out of money'.

Ferbrache appeared from custody at Oban sheriff court last week for sentencing after pleading guilty to a previous hearing to failing to pay £432.40 for board and lodgings at an Oban establishment between December 19-23.

The court heard he had made excuse after excuse not to pay his bill.

He even accused hotel management of keeping his credit card after it was rejected.

But examination of CCTV footage proved it had been returned to him.

Defence solicitor Jane Thomson told Sheriff Douglas Small that her client had an 'exceptionally severe gambling problem'.

He had been working as a chef at a hotel on the isle of Tiree over the summer season but was not able to save any money because of his gambling addiction.

'He has 50p in his pocket and that is all he has,' said Miss Thomson. 'He was happy when he was arrested because he didn't know what he was going to do.'

Ferbrache was jailed for 80 days, backdated to December 24.



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HM Revenue & Customs

Tiree

TIREE primary school has returned to its former school times, having trialled a different school day which ran as close to the secondary school as possible. Break and lunch times had been changed to fall in line with the high school, but catering staff encountered problems completing their duties within their working hours. In addition, some primary children who didn't eat breakfast were hungry before the start of morning interval. The primary children will now have morning interval from 10.30am to 10.50am, lunch from 12.10 to 13.05 and afternoon interval between 14.35 and 14.50.

PARENTS are being reminded by the primary school that children who will be aged five between March 1 2015 and 29 February 2016 should be registered for education this week.

COLUMBA were victorious in the Tiree high school inter-house basketball competition this term. The pupils selected the sport as they had been developing and improving their basketball skills with Mr Rossiter during PE lessons. There was a lot of enthusiasm particularly in the tournament decider between Columba and Claymore, which Columba won. Runners-up were Clansman with Claymore in third.

Islay

A BOOK of Islay's favourite Gaelic songs will be produced after islanders bring suggestions to two afternoon ceilidhs on the island. The Big Islay Gaelic Song Weekend will be held over this Saturday and Sunday when well-known Gaelic choir conductor and adopted Ilea Kenny Thomson will preside over performances by island singers, including those from Coisrig Òg Ghàidhlig Ìle, and Clare Jordan. Two ceilidhs will start the sharing and gathering of local songs, with singers and song-lovers getting together at the Rhinns Hall, Portnahaven, on Saturday and at Ardbeg Distillery on Sunday. Both ceilidhs start at 2pm. Organisers have laid on an afternoon tea and hope people will bring their favourite stories and song choices, including any unpublished songs along to share on the day. The Islay Gaelic Song Book is a collaborative project led by Iomairt Ghàidhlig Ìle 's Dhiùra, supported by Comunn na Gàidhlig with funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The book will be produced and illustrated locally with design by Raymond Lafferty and will include ideas, pictures and input from people around the island participating in Gaelic.

Plockton

PLOCKTON'S oldest resident, Alastair Bremner, celebrated his 97th birthday by attending a concert in Glasgow on December 21. Both Hogmanay and Christmas celebrations in the village were well attended, with a large bonfire on the island opposite the village on December 31 and a carol service in Plockton Free Church on Christmas eve. The new year's eve event raised more than £1,000 for charity Computers 4 Africa. During December, seven inches of rain fell at Plockton, with only two dry days in the month, bringing the total for the year to 69 inches, compared to 58 inches in 2013. The warmest day was 11.5°C and the coldest was -2°C.

Broadford

TWO WILDLIFE experts from Skye have returned from a mammoth trip to Bangladesh where they trained locals about otter conservation. Dr Paul and Grace Yoxon, from Broadford, visited the country with fellow members of the International Otter Survival Fund between December 7 and 12, where they ran a workshop educating students about ways they could help the endangered animals. As well as the Eurasian otter found in this country, Bangladesh is also home to the smooth-coated and Asian small-clawed species, all of which are in decline in that side of the world. Dr Yoxon said: 'The workshop was extremely positive and everyone was so inspired to do more for otters. A priority is to investigate the status of the Eurasian otter as they have not been seen in Bangladesh since 1995.'

Broadford

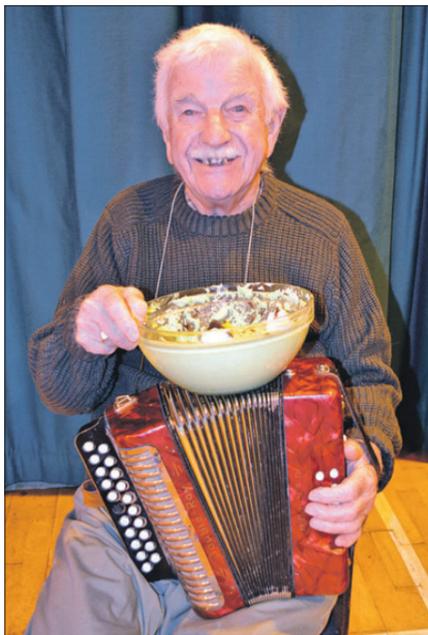
IT WAS a wet December for Arisaig residents, with amateur meteorologist Ranald Coyne reporting higher than average rainfall. Almost nine inches of rain fell on the village in the last month of the year, bringing the total for 2014 to almost 65 inches, slightly above average according to Mr Coyne. The hottest day in December was 11°C, the highest this century and only equalled in 2011. Coldest night was 0°C, normal for this time of year.



BRAVE: swimmers take to Loch Shiel for the annual new year's day dip

Brave swimmers take icy plunge in Loch Shiel

THE TRADITIONAL new year's day swim at Glenfinnan saw 26 brave souls take a dip in the ice cold waters of Loch Shiel. People from Denmark and Germany joined the locals who got involved, including organisers Duncan Gibson from the Glenfinnan House Hotel and Corpach endurance swimmer Morag Hughes. A skinny-dipper took part in the event for the first time. The temperatures of six degrees celsius in the water and nine degrees in the air were milder than usual for the time of year, but was still enough to test the mettle of the hardest of swimmers. Mr Gibson said: 'Some people had a quick splash up their head but the hardcore people swam out to the mooring buoys; Morag went back into the water three times. There are only two people who haven't missed it since it started and that is Morag and myself.' The event, which was being held for the eleventh consecutive year, finished with a campfire on the loch side and champagne and cocktails in the Glenfinnan House Hotel.



TREATS: accordion player Jack Scorgie, who turns 90 this year, tucks into a tasty pudding

Appin church gets its just desserts

APPIN folk were treated to the delights of the village's annual pudding night, which raised money for the Appin parish church and Sunday school. Puddings were made by members of the community and those in attendance at the village hall were treated to an evening of delicious desserts and marvellous musical entertainment. Mary Catherine MacNeill and Moira Thomson led the singing, with 89-year-old accordion player Jack Scorgie accompanied by Winnie McNicol on keyboard. There were also performances by Trish MacKay's Highland dancers and piper for the evening Allan Colthart. Organisers said they had raised around £350 from the night.

Portree

THE FIRST acts have been confirmed for a new music festival being launched in Portree this year. The Skye Live festival, held over the Easter weekend of April 3 and 4, will include performances by popular DJs Andrew Weatherall and Sean Johnston. Also playing are Skye-based contemporary folk acts Peatbog Faeries and Niteworks, with more announcements to the line-up coming soon. The event, which will be held at the picturesque Lump headland in Portree, is open to over 16s only and will have a licensed bar and food available on site.

Trotternish

A DEMANDING 17-mile race in north Skye is to return this summer - if enough athletes enter. The Trotternish Ridge Race had to be cancelled due to insufficient numbers last year but Skye and Lochalsh Running Club is seeking competitors to bring the event back to Staffin in 2015. Limited to no more than 75 experienced runners, the route starts at Flodigarry and travels round Staffin, covering both rough and steep terrain. All enquiries and entries should be sent to event organiser Neil Turner via neilturner@btinternet.com.

Stornoway

AN AIRCRAFT that crashed landed on January 2 as it tried to take off at Stornoway Airport was finally removed from the site on Tuesday. Accident investigators will now look into the circumstances surrounding the LoganAir flight. It is thought that it may have been caught in strong crosswinds as it tried to take off for Glasgow last Friday. Four people were injured in the incident with two taken to the hospital with minor injuries.

Duror and Kentallen

A VILLAGE lunch will be held for residents of Duror and Kentallen next week. Soup and sandwiches will be available in the community centre next Thursday (January 22) between 12 and 2pm. Organisers have asked for a small donation, with all proceeds going to the Duror Parish Church bequest fund.



MORVERN lines

Sellar's Stone

THE LONG road into Morvern follows the shoulder of Glen Liddesdale, skirting the head of the Black Glen as it dips and rises again before sweeping down through the wide and desolate White Glen and then onto the sea at Lochaline. Two miles along the White Glen from the junction of the Kingairloch road, at Tor na Cabar, the site of a famous and decisive Viking battle said to have been largely fought with oak staks, hence its name, there is a large boulder by the left hand side of the old main road below and running parallel with the present one. Here, according to local tradition, Patrick Sellar, whose name will forever be associated with the infamous Highland Clearances, is said to have sheltered for a night. There can be few people interested in all things Highland who have not heard of Patrick Sellar. In acting as factor for the Countess of Sutherland, he initiated and directed the removal of people from large tracts of the country and the burning of houses to make way for sheep grazing. Many people who were cleared died as a result of shock, deprivation, heartbreak and exposure. Several years after Sellar was acquitted of culpable homicide before a court of judiciary in Inverness, he bought an estate in Morvern extending to well over 20,000 acres. His first move was to evict 44 families - about 230 people from the White Glen - more than had been evicted in Strathnaver in Sutherland in 1814. To stock his new property Sellar, in the early months of 1839, accompanied by a John Mackay, a descendant of whom lived in Lochaline until comparatively recently, set out from Sutherlandshire with a large flock of sheep. Their journey took 14 days and on the final night darkness fell as they entered the White Glen. No shelter was to be had. The charred ashes of the numerous ruined settlements were now cold on the earth stones and through his own actions Sellar was compelled to find what little warmth he could find in the lee of a stone on the open hillside. His thoughts, as he sat watching the emptying purple land mass against what light remained in the western sky, will never be known, but it is doubtful if they were disturbing convinced as he was of the rightness of improvement by ruthless clearances. Sellar's daughter-in-law, Eleanor Dennistoun, who wrote Recollections and Impressions (1908), recorded that he died peacefully at his home in Elgen in 1851. According to local tradition, however, his body is said to have been covered in lice as a result of the many curses that had been put on him.

Hungry deer

I READ a report in a wildlife magazine that many deer have been driven from the hills in the recent winter conditions to look for food and shelter. In Morvern, which has largely escaped the heavy snow falls of the Grampians, some deer have been taking advantage of heavy frosts to forage for unaccustomed titbits. In the Black Glen, between Achagavel and Corrospine, there is a large area of bog, too shallow to be a loch and too slow-moving to be called a river. Growing in the centre there are many patches of the common, but locally rare reed Phragmites communis. During the past few weeks I have watched hinds and calves stepping out gingerly across the ice to feed on the remains of these dead reeds, which are scarcely showing above the frozen surface. As there is little grass and other herbage available on the adjacent hillsides, I assume they are simply taking the opportunity to feed on a plant they would not usually have access to at this time of the year. Whether the deer discovered this food supply by chance when crossing from one side of the glen to the other or they were attracted to it by smell, I cannot say. I have not found any printed references to deer venturing on to ice on their own accord. Is this incident in Morvern something unusual?



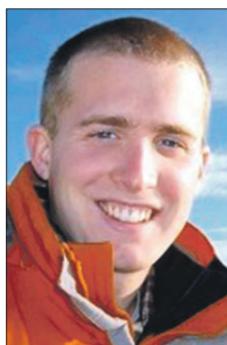
Deer on ice searching for food

Goats under fire

THERE is a story told in the neighbourhood of Loch Ailort that in 1746 when a French and a British frigate hunting for Prince Charles Edward Stewart who was waiting in the vicinity for a ship to take him back to France, where engaging one another at Roshven, an old man was seen to kneel down at the side of the loch praying. After a time a bystander asked him if his prayers were for those aboard the French or the British ship. At the astonishment of the ignorance of the enquirer he replied, 'My thoughts were not with either crew - it was my goats on Eilan nan Gobhar I was thinking of, for I see that the island now lies in the line of fire'. Iain Thornber iain.thornber@btinternet.com



'A Lad in Easdale' was this year's panto extravaganza for residents of the small island. It proved a huge success with people commenting on fantastic costumes and scenery.



AVALANCHE VICTIM: Chris Bell

Friends get on their bikes in memory of student killed in Glencoe avalanche

GLENCOE mountain rescue team is to benefit from a fundraising mountain bike challenge, in memory of an Oban-based PhD student who died in an avalanche in the region. The tragic accident took the lives of Christopher Bell and three other people when they took to the Glencoe hills in January 2013. But friends of the 24-year-old turned their grief into determination and travelled to the Highlands just a week later to take on the 24-hour Strathpuffer biking event, raising £20,000 for the mountain rescue volunteers who tried to save the group. Next weekend, the six bikers, known as the Chris Bell racing team, are preparing to head back to Strathpeffer from their home town of Blackburn to fundraise again. Luke Bradley, a biker and friend of Mr Bell's, said: 'We had only planned to do this once but since it's the tenth anniversary of the event it seemed like a nice way to remember Chris. His friend group still meet up regularly but there's something missing now. People were very generous last time. I think the outdoor community was in shock about what happened and that's where a lot of donations came from. We've raised about £250 this time but we were never expecting to raise anywhere near the same as last time, that was unbelievable.' To sponsor the Chris Bell racing team go to https://www.justgiving.com/Luke-Bradley

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Sports cash lost as Tesco shelves new store plans

EMMA CRICHTON
erichton@obantimes.co.uk

LOCHABER has lost £500,000 earmarked for an indoor sports centre because Tesco has shelved plans for a new store in the area.

But the group behind the proposed facility has been told 'not to worry'.

The supermarket giant announced last week the development at Blar Mor, on the outskirts of Fort William, was to be scrapped after having permission to build since 2010.

This means Highland Council will not receive the planned £400,000 when the supermarket doors open, or a further £100,000 to be received when a second development opened on the site, both promised through Tesco's community benefit fund.

But the local authority has already pledged £600,000 in principle to Lochaber Sports

Association (LSA) for the £1.47million training centre, which is currently under planning review.

Jane Blanchard of LSA said she was concerned about how the facility, set to include a 3G pitch, would be paid but is still confident. She added: 'When I heard about Tesco I knew I had to ask the question but I've been told our case for a new facility is still very positive.'

'None of us will know for definite until it is discussed at a Highland Council meeting in March but I've been working on a business plan with High Life Highland, which will be running the centre, and Ian Murray, [chief executive], thinks we have a strong case.'

'It's all still very vague but we remain very positive that it's going to go ahead and we've been told not to worry about the Tesco situation.'

Bill Clark, Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig said the pledge 'should be honoured' and the local authority 'will need to find the money from somewhere'.

A Highland Council spokeswoman declined to comment on how the £500,000 would be replaced but said a business case for the facility will be considered in the next two to three months.

She added: 'The council continues to be engaged in positive discussions with Lochaber Sports Association about potential support for, and development of, the Fort William indoor training facility.'

Including the £600,000 in principle from Highland Council, LSA has currently raised £1,118,305 of the £1.47 million target. The fate of the sports centre is expected to be decided at the next full Highland Council meeting on March 12.

Disappointment at decision to pull out of Fort William

'DEEPLY disappointing' and a 'waste of time' were the words used by Lochaber public figures to describe the decision to scrap plans for a new Tesco in Fort William.

Dave Lewis, chief executive officer for the supermarket giant, announced last Thursday that the planned store, along with a further 55 in Scotland, will no longer be going ahead.

He said: 'It is with a heavy heart that I am announcing today that we are unable to proceed with 56 new planned store developments across the country, including our planned store in Fort William. I know this news will be a real disappointment to many people in your community and we are extremely grateful for the support we have received for our plans.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, said the loss of potential jobs and

supermarket competition will be 'a hard pill to swallow'. He added: 'This is deeply disappointing news for residents in Fort William and right across Lochaber. As someone who lives in Fort William, I know how much this new store was sought after.'

Bill Clark, Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig, said in light of the news he is glad the local authority's planning committee granted permission for a new Aldi supermarket in the town last month.

He added: 'All of this has been a waste of time. If we had granted the Morbaine development [Aldi] at the same time as Tesco when they were both up for planning in 2010 we would at least have had something. We're now in the position more than four years later where we have neither and it'll take a long time before Aldi is ready so it'll stay that way for the foreseeable future.'



School bus takes flight in hurricane force winds

A SCHOOL bus was left hanging precariously off a cliff last Friday after being blown through the air by hurricane-force winds on the isle of Scalpay.

Thankfully the South Harris Coaches vehicle, left, was empty when it was whisked into the air the previous night, with driver Callum Macleod waking up in the morning to find it lying over the edge.

He said: 'It was resting on a rock, which stopped it from falling down and was a total write-off.'

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Welcome news as crime figures drop

POLICE have reported a big reduction in overall crime figures in the south Highland area from April to December 2014 compared with the same period the previous year.

In the region, which stretches from Fort William to Portree, Nairn and Aviemore, there has been a 40 per cent drop in crimes of violence with 19 incidents reported last year, down from 32 between April and December 2013.

Damage, fire-raising and malicious mischief has dropped by 25 per cent, while miscellaneous crime, including breach of the peace and antisocial behaviour, is down by 23 per cent.

Crimes of dishonesty have fallen by 16 per cent.

Thomas MacLennan, leader of the Lochaber area committee, welcomed the statistics.

He said: 'This is excellent news, the police should be commended for achieving these figures.'

'It shows what a great area Lochaber is to live.'

Skye parents in last ditch attempt to save school

PARENTS in north-west Skye have made a last ditch attempt to save their village school from closure, as Highland councillors were deciding its fate yesterday (Wednesday).

As The Oban Times went to press, members of the local authority's education, children and adult services committee were voting on whether to approve the recommendation to close Edinbane, Knockbreck and Struan schools and move pupils into a new and larger Dunvegan primary school, leaving some pupils with a 24-mile round trip.

The move would see a new amalgamated facility with four classrooms built to house up to 66 pupils and the council believes modern surroundings, plus increased interaction with other children, will contribute to a better learning environment.

But the Edinbane community is determined to keep a school in the village, saying they will even take responsibility for the building's maintenance.

Speaking before the meeting, Fances MacLean, chairwoman of Edinbane parent council, said: 'We had a meeting on Thursday night and there's still massive support for saving the school.'

'Ideally we want the building with the school in it, even if that means we buy the building and look after the building and grounds.'

'If there's no way of that happening we don't want the council to dispose of it. We'd like to keep it and use it as a community facility.'

'We've written to the council about it but now it's just a case of waiting on the result of the decision.'

Food shop closed for two week revamp

KINLOCHLEVEN'S co-operative food store is to close for almost two weeks from Saturday, January 17.

The Stevenson Terrace store will undergo refurbishment during the fortnight before re-opening on Friday January 30.

During the closure, a 'pop-up shop' will be available adjacent to the main store, selling necessities such as bread and milk.

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OWNING an animal, whether you are buying one for the first time or have had them for years, can be a big task with lots of work involved.

There are lots of pet stores on the west coast of Scotland providing high quality items, which will ensure the comfort and safety of your pet.

Pets need lots of time devoted to them and if you find this a problem you could take advantage of professional pet-sitting services for when you're away from home for short periods. For longer holidays, booking them into a kennel is usually the best idea.

If your pet gets injured you will need to take them to the vet.

Depending on what has happened, the bill for bringing them back to full health can be expensive so to avoid being out of pocket taking out a pet insurance policy is advised.

Just like humans, your pet needs plenty of exercise. If you are unable to provide your pet with the exercise they need, employing a dog walker could be a good idea.

Training your animal is also important whether they are young or old. If you are struggling to train your pet there are classes available.

Whether you have a cat, dog or horse, grooming is an essen-

tial part of their routine to avoid discomfort.

If you are unable to carry this out yourself there are grooming services, which are happy to take care of this aspect of your animal's well-being for you. Many also operate on a mobile basis and will visit your home if required.

Lastly your new pet should never be bored, get them lots of toys and play with them regularly. Remember, the more time you spend with your pet the more rewarding the experience will be.



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Caravanning alone is worth almost £3 billion a year to the economy, is linked to 90,000 jobs and contributes around £1 billion to local economies in VAT and taxes.

Members of the UK Caravan Club will typically spend a total £380 million every year.

To find out more about this popular pastime, visit The Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show at Glasgow's SECC next month.

Visitors are invited indoors to get more from the great outdoors from Thursday, February 5 to Sunday, February 8 and is open from 10am until 6pm each day.

The show is set to be the biggest yet with more exhibitors than ever, free parking for the first time (subject to availability) and lots of exciting features.

Visitors to the show will be the first to see the latest models and specifications from the leading manufacturers, all under one roof.

On display will be an impressive range of motorhomes, caravans, holiday homes and luxury lodges, allowing visitors to explore ranges and contrast and compare products.

This year the organisers have also created a dedicated Park Village area where visitors can wander around and discover the best options for their next holiday adventure.

For those people looking for the latest accessory, there will be everything from caravan movers to awnings to the newest gadgets and gizmos.

Advance tickets are available until February 3 and cost £9 per adult or £8 for seniors, plus booking fees. On-the-door tickets are £12 per adult or £10 for seniors.

Children aged 16 and under have free entry.



WIN tickets to The Scottish Caravan, Motorhome & Holiday Home Show 2015



5 pairs of tickets to be won

The Scottish Caravan, Motorhome & Holiday Home Show returns to Scotland in February and The Oban Times has teamed up with the organisers to give five lucky readers a chance to win a pair of tickets to Scotland's largest exhibition.

Open from 10am - 6pm from Thursday, February 5 until Sunday, February 8 at the SECC, Glasgow, visitors can explore the impressive range of caravans, motorhomes, holiday homes and luxury lodges on show, whilst stocking up on all the latest accessories for their next adventure. This year the organisers have also created a dedicated Park Village area where visitors can wander around and discover the best options for their next holiday adventure.

Advance tickets cost £9 per adult or £8 for seniors and are available until 3 February 2015 and subject to a booking fee.

Call 08444 999 990 or visit caravanshowscotland.com. On the door tickets are £12 per adult or £10 for seniors. Children aged 16 and under are free. Free Parking (subject to availability)

For your chance to win a pair of tickets simply answer this easy question, complete the coupon and post it to Wyvex Media, SCMHH Competition, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Entries must be submitted by 12noon, Thursday January 22, 2015.

Q: What day does the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome & Holiday Home Show open?

A. Wednesday B. Thursday C. Friday

Answer.....
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Terms and conditions: The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries 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. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash equivalent. Tickets will be posted to the winners nearer the date of the event.



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Pensioner admits poaching a deer

A PENSIONER from Fort William has admitted poaching a deer from Glenfinnan Estate. James Kennedy, of Tigh na Feidh, Achintore Road, pled guilty to wilfully killing and disembowling the animal, as well as removing it from the land whilst acting with another on February 2 last year. The 69-year-old did not appear in court, but fiscal depute Fraser Matheson said a letter had been received detailing his plea. Sheriff Richard Davidson deferred sentencing until February 3 for background reports and Kennedy's personal appearance.

Ardgour's energy savers go on show

ENERGY-SAVING households in Ardgour will be open to the public next Saturday, January 24, to show how biomass heaters work. The two houses use different systems, a log boiler in a semi-detached property and a woodchip boiler in a large detached house, so anyone interested in having one fitted in their homes can see them first-hand.

This is part of a project by Sustainable Ardgour to reduce the area's carbon footprint. For more information or to book a visit contact Helen MacGillivray on 07771 821975 or helen@sustainableardgour.co.uk.

Burns Supper to raise trip funds

A TRADITIONAL Burns supper is to be held in Lochaber high school to raise money for the sixth year pupils' upcoming trip to London. The over-18s only event will include a four-course meal, including haggis, neeps and tatties, and speeches, songs and poetry. The school's ceilidh band will also take to the stage. Tickets are available from the school office. Those attending should take their own refreshments as no bar will be available at the event.

Charity back from brink but more helpers needed



HARDY SOULS: Glenfinnan residents didn't let hail dampen their spirits 20_103shinty01

Shinty fun marks old Scots new year

RESIDENTS of Glenfinnan braved wind, hail and a power cut in the village to celebrate the old Scots new year with their annual shinty match on Saturday. Though the weather scared some off, a hardy group of both adults and children braved the conditions for a light-hearted game at the viaduct field. The Glenfinnan community traditionally celebrates the old new year (January 13) on the Saturday closest to the date. January 13 was replaced when the Gregorian calendar replaced the Julian calendar in 1752.

Shopmobility plugs funding gap but desperately needs new volunteers

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A FORT William charity has been pulled back from the brink of closure thanks to grants and fundraising but now needs more volunteers to keep the service afloat.

Shopmobility Lochaber was given a boost of £8,000 from Bank of Scotland's community fund and the Moffat Charitable Trust late last year, after an £18,000 funding gap caused concern for the future of the vital charity, which provides wheelchairs and scooters to more than 800 people.

A Christmas raffle run from Shopmobility's office, behind Fort William train station, also raised more than £500. But now charity co-ordinator Billy Ward is appealing for more trustees as some volunteers have reduced their hours because of other commitments.

He said: 'We're getting there money wise but it's a slow process. We're supposed to have enough in the bank to cover a year's running costs at all times, in case any funding is unexpectedly cut. We don't have it right now but I'm keeping at it. 'The main thing now is getting

some fresh blood to help us out. Some of our trustees have other commitments or can't give up as much time between one thing or another. We don't need much from you, only to attend meetings to help make decisions about the charity and occasionally work in the office to cover sickness and holidays.'

Shopmobility helps locals and visitors get around and recently loaned a wheelchair to a pensioner on her 90th birthday, allowing her to celebrate by exploring Lochaber, including riding the gondola at Nevis Range and visiting Glenfinnan viaduct.

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, pledged his support to the service, saying it 'really makes lives better'.

He added: 'The positive impact of Shopmobility Lochaber on our town is immeasurable. Not only do local people benefit from the service but it provides a shining example to visitors of the good natured hospitality of Lochaber people. If you've got the time, I'd encourage you to volunteer with this service.'

For more information about volunteering call 01397 700051 or visit the office between 9.30am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday.

New move in fuel poverty battle

AN ENERGY company developed specifically for the Western Isles could be formed in an attempt to reduce fuel poverty for islanders.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has appointed consultants to assess the possibility of establishing what they have branded the Outer Hebrides Energy Supply Company to provide cheaper electricity in the area.

It is hoped this will reduce the number of Western Isles residents living in fuel poverty, currently 71 per cent of the population, according to a report by the Energy Advisory Service.

Angus Campbell, leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'Initial market testing indicates that there is interest from certain suppliers in working with us to develop a product that can be offered specifically to Hebridean consumers and we are looking forward to working in more detail on this over coming months to see if a package can be put together.'

Popular names in Lochaber revealed

A TOTAL of 181 babies were born in Lochaber last year, 93 boys and 88 girls.

The Fort William registry office for births, deaths and marriages released the 2014 statistics for the region which show the most popular boys' name to be a toss-up between Archie, Daniel and Dylan.

There was also no clear favourite girls' name, with Emily, Hannah and Isla each chosen by three different families.

Marriages for the year stood at 196, with 90 religious ceremonies and 106 civil, while there were two civil partnerships - one male and one female.

There were 197 deaths during 2014.



Health trust cash helps rural villagers get online

THE COMMUNITY of a rural village in north-west Skye is to benefit from IT and internet classes, thanks to a grant of more than £32,000.

The Glendale Trust has secured the money as part of a project to increase computer knowledge for people of all ages. The £32,258 from the People's

Health Trust will be used to buy equipment, run classes and employ a project leader.

Elgar Finlay, Glendale Trust development officer, said: 'We're delighted. The project launches this week and it means we can teach our elderly how to use the internet as well as allowing our primary school pupils the use

of equipment they don't have at school. Living in a rural area can be quite isolated for older people so we're hoping to help with that, both from the company during the classes to helping them fill out forms and communicate online.'

The grant will also provide wireless internet to Glendale's

community hall, which will be free for locals and visitors.

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, welcomed the news. He said: 'The Glendale Trust has played a blinder throughout the application process and thanks should go to local volunteers and the People's Health Trust

for awarding this grant. It is particularly good news as the idea for the project originated from the local community, a great demonstration of the strength of local communities here in the Highlands and Islands. I am confident these IT and broadband classes are just the thing that is needed.'

Fort cadet Oskar on the march to lift gold award

A FORT William military cadet who went through rigorous training in Bavaria has become the first person in his battalion to gain a gold Duke of Edinburgh's award.

Cadet colour sergeant Oskar Wineberg, from 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force, travelled to Germany with four colleagues from his unit last August for physical training and volunteer work.

He became the first soldier to achieve the grading since the battalion was formed in 1942.

CSgt Wineberg, 17, attends Lochaber high school and serves in the force's Fort William Detachment (Inverness Company).

He said: 'I have really enjoyed completing my Duke of Edinburgh's award with the Army Cadet Force. It has been a great experience working my way up through the bronze, silver and

gold awards and it has given me a huge sense of achievement.

'It has been hard work but I have met lots of interesting and fun people. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme has enabled me to visit new places and learn new skills. I can't recommend the scheme highly enough and would encourage cadets to get involved. 'I am very much looking forward to visiting Holyrood next year to receive my gold award.'

CSgt Wineberg received a gold badge from his battalion last month but will be officially handed his full gold certificate at the Palace of Holyrood House in Edinburgh later this year.

SUCCESS: Oskar receives a badge in anticipation of his gold Duke of Edinburgh's award from Highland councillor Caroline Caddick



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Energy scheme sparks things up for Sunart

A LOCHABER community is to benefit from improved health, transport, housing and leisure services thanks to a new energy scheme getting the green light.

Sunart Community Renewables has met the target of £290,000 for a hydro-electric project in a previously untapped power source in Strontian, securing its future for the first time since the fundraising launch last year.

The hydro scheme will cost around £850,000 but now that one third has been raised through local stakeholders, commercial lenders can step in and fund the remainder.

But project manager Dale Meegan said the group hopes to raise as much as possible without loans, to allow profits to be spent in the community.

She added: 'When we went to consultation the main areas people said they would like improved were support for the community, mainly older people, and leisure facilities so that's what we want to spend the money on when we start making a profit.'

'The more money we raise from shareholders the less we have to spend on paying back loans from corporate groups so profits can go straight back into the community.'

Plans are now underway to appoint a contractor and it is hoped work will start in the spring. The community share offer is open until the end of February and anyone wishing to invest can go to www.SunartCommunityRenewables.org.uk or contact Ms Meegan on 07718 132680.

There are some things you can't do with

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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Imperfect performance

It has all the makings of a what nowadays is referred to as a 'perfect storm'. First came the storm-force winds that roared and howled and whipped up the seas, severely disrupting the power supply and bringing chaos to island ferry services.

And if that wasn't bad enough, Mother Nature pitched another curve ball with heavy falls of snow on Tuesday and Wednesday which proved the tipping point for many residents trying to go about their daily business.

Houses throughout the West Highlands and islands were plunged into a bone-chilling darkness reminiscent of the Stone Age. People had to endure the dismal, eerie silence for days without heat or light until the valiant efforts of the SSE engineers restored the power supply.

However, contrast the heroics of the SSE engineers with the timid performance of Vodafone, which left thousands of customer without coverage for six days. The reason it gave for its failure to restore the mobile signal - health and safety. A mobile phone is a vital lifeline for many people - especially in these treacherous conditions. What about their customers' health and safety?

Musician Robert to pen Glasgow Letter

ROBERT Robertson: Skipin-nish frontman, songwriter, Royal National Mod gold medallist and a double Scots Trad award winner - and he's only 21 years old.

Now the musician and English literature student has been confirmed as The Oban Times' latest columnist as he succeeds Neil Murray in penning the weekly Glasgow Letter.

Originally from Fort William, Robert has spent the past four years in Glasgow, fitting in his studies around a hectic schedule of gigs, tours and festivals with the band Skipinnish.

He also manages to find time for a few sessions and refreshments in Glasgow's west end establishments.

But as Robert, who lives in Partick, turns his artistry to a pen and notepad he hopes to reflect the culture change among west Highland and island students in Glasgow and profile some of the most talented and creative young Highlanders in the city.

He said: 'When I moved down to Glasgow I felt like I was in just as much a Highland environment as I did at home in Fort William. Glasgow, for me, still has that feel to it.

'I am socialising with people from places like Mull, Tiree, Oban, Fort William and Skye.

'People from the Highlands and islands are all proud to be from that area. When you are 'home' there is never a need to express that but, in Glasgow, there is.

'I've walked down the street in Glasgow singing a Gaelic song; you would never do that at home.'

In 2014, highlights for Robert included a successful Skipinnish summer tour, a best live act award with the band, a performance at Team Scotland's Commonwealth Games party and headlining

the BBC Alba Hogmanay ceilidh.

The experience of being a busy Glasgow-based musician has given Robert a unique insight into the emerging abundance of musical talent that has promoted Gaelic and Highland cultures to a younger audience.

Robert sums up the changing culture with a story about a teenage, fellow accordion player who, at the recent Fort William accordion and fiddle club night, told Robert he was hoping to go to university in Glasgow.

'I told him which university would be best suited to his chosen degree,' said Robert.

'He replied, 'I'm not bothered about that'. He just wanted to go to Glasgow as an accordion player and join in the music scene there.

'The Highlands is such a large geographical area. In Fort William you are not meeting up with people from Barra for tunes, but in Glasgow you meet up with like-minded musicians from all over the Highlands.

'Bands from Skerryvore and Manran to Gunna Sound and Trail West are part of the popular culture among my age group.

'Friends of mine have come to Glasgow from Skye for just a year and by the time they go back home in the summer they are listening to Runrig for the first time, much to the surprise of their parents. They have almost become 'teuchterised' in the city!

'Celtic Connections, which starts this month, is great for that.

It takes traditional music to a wider audience and I am looking forward to getting back to Glasgow after the new year break.

The city is so vibrant during the festival.'



THE WRITE MAN: Robert Robertson will take on The Oban Times' Glasgow Letter. 16_103robert03

Press Policy

WEATTheObanTimesdoourutmosttomakesurethatallour 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 daytime 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.



Cruive Pool and the Pass of Brander

Sir,
Recently my attention was drawn to your 'flashback' photograph on page 10 of your issue of December 18 2014 which was captioned 'Cruive pool, River Awe'.

This was, in fact, a photograph taken at the head of the river, in the Pass of Brander, whereas Cruive pool is situated well down stream of the railway bridge, between the Errachdt and Clay pools.

I am enclosing two photographs taken from W L Calderwood's book 'Salmon Rivers and Lochs of Scotland', published in 1909.

One shows the river at the Pass of Brander and is remarkably similar to the photograph you published. The other is of the Cruive pool, taken from the left or Bonawe bank and includes the top of the Clay pool with the site of the Cruive trap in between.

H S W Blakeney, Grantown on Spey, Moray.

Letters to the editor

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Oban crying out for a park and open spaces

Sir,
Oban is an overcrowded town without a park.

The valuable healthy amenity of flat grassland away from hard landscaping, traffic, noise, car parks and sirens is non-existent for a good long stretch, for other exercise or to simply sit and enjoy nature in peace.

Once the two dead end coastal roads, Gallanach and Ganavan, sufficed. Now with perpetual honey pot development complete with new car parks and subsequent increase of traffic, the roads are no longer as pleasant for walking or cycling and certainly not safe for pushchairs or wheelchairs.

Furthermore, tranquil corners in and around Oban are vanishing along with wildlife corridors and wildflower rich habitats, thickets and copses.

In short, the town has turned its back on nature and the well-being of its citizens and visitors.

This dismal and accurate outlook for residents forced to walk amidst vehicles, mostly speeding, gives an obvious and sound reason for Oban to declare itself a 20mph speed limit town and for it to keenly look to the inadequacies of conservation laws.

Moira Campbell, Gallanach Road, Oban.

Backward planning has plunged us back into the dark ages

Sir,
A huge cheer for our other emergency service, the electricity engineers.

It is only when we are plunged back into the dark ages - no pun intended - that we can begin to appreciate our dependency on this magical substance invoked from the rotation of magnetism and wires.

However, for those of us who have lost that child-like ability to appreciate such wonders when this convenience vanishes along with lights, hot water, food, Eastenders and of course, 't'internet' someone out there is most definitely to blame.

There were hundreds of outages across Scotland after the storm during which engineers were on call around the clock to fix the damage on what I am sure is a very complex network of distribution.

They are still, as I write, out there, in what is now a blizzard of snow, repairing the breaks that are left

and will no doubt keep happening as January reminds us who she is. The fault is clearly with our infrastructure of supply. Rather than spend more initially and bury cables, we have continuously stuck with our 'no thought for the future' process of erecting pylons which are an affront to our landscape but apparently initially cheaper.

Considering the planning process prior to installation which has to accommodate barrages of objections and the cost of repair every time the wind coughs, not to mention increased loss of energy through heat from pylon to pylon, how cheap are they really?

If we are really so backward when it comes to planning then perhaps the dark ages are where we should remain.

David Catto, Sutherland.

Covered emergency route the answer

Sir,
Congratulations to councillors Duggie Philand and Donald Kelly for their campaign to deliver an e-petition to the Scottish Parliament in February seeking a permanent solution to this long ongoing disruption to Argyll's M8.

It is vital the A83 is fully protected, open around the clock to give confidence to the travelling public.

I have been dismayed Transport Scotland is unwilling or unable to consider and evaluate a simply designed, single carriageway covered emergency route (SCCER) of 400m. It refuses to consider this on cost grounds of £102m-£120m for a length of 1.2kms and of an overly complicated design.

I have strenuously argued that the only sizeable landslides (+75 tonnes) have occurred on a 400m stretch near the top corner of The Rest, the slope with the steepest, longest, most dangerous slope of Glen Croe and directly above and at the closest point to their much vaunted Old Military Road diversion route.

The large slide of October 14 closed both routes.

Be quite clear what I and others have been campaigning for is a simple cut into the hillside rock, form a 5m wide covered road, 5m high, covered and closed at the outer edge at the four or five problem gullies and the remainder have an open face on the outer wall avoiding the need for ventilation and fire suppression measures. Environmental issues will

be minimised by the use of random rubble facings and reinstating the hillside outwith these gullies and will have considerably less visual impact than the acres of netting installed. This SCCER with fixed traffic lights and gates could be activated within 30 minutes and allow an unhindered cleanup operation to start immediately. It will avoid the mobilisation of at least eight vehicles, 15 personnel and avoid paying the farmer the as yet undisclosed daily fee for the use of his road.

Last winter the main Devon and Cornwall line was destroyed at Dawlish and was rebuilt in eight weeks at a cost of £30m-£35m.

This involved the removal of 25,000 tonnes of collapsed cliff, 600ms of sea wall, 6000 tonnes of concrete and 200 tonnes of steel. The sea wall design would have to be of a much higher spec than my proposal on The Rest. The cost makes a total mockery of figures quoted by Transport Scotland which escalated the price of this option to make it unaffordable and to enhance what is now proving to be a flawed choice.

Is this a case of Argyll's 60,000 population and only one Westminster MP compared to the Devon and Cornwall population of 1.67m and 18 MPs having a far greater priority and significance.

And this for an area without the prediction of a 13 per cent population decline over the next 20 years. This was for a railway line and where the road network was totally unaffected.

I hope Transport Scotland has the desire and ability to design such an affordable structure on the A83 and then we can all Rest and be Thankful.

Donald Clark, The George Hotel, Inveraray.

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Donald Clark, The George Hotel, Inveraray.

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 on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime 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, PA344HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.



Beachd Ailein Ailean Caimbeul

THA E doirbh faclan a lorg a chuireas an cèill a' bhor-bachd oillteil a ghabh àite san Fhraing air an t-seachdain seo chaidh.

Dh'atharraich gu tur an saoghal aig na teaghlachan a chaill càirdean, agus thèid innleachdan tèarainteachd a sgrùdadh às ùr ann an dùthchannan na cruinne. Bidh e coltach gur e inbhe martarach a bha na ceannairich iad fhèin ag iarraidh ged a rinn iad uimhir de dh'oidhirp gus teicheadh, ach bha na gnìomhan a rinn iad air a dhol thar crìochan iomchaidh sìobhaltachd sam bith. Agus cha robh crìoch eile gu bhith air a' chùis ach gun d' rachadh na murtairean a mharbhadh seach an cur an grèim. Mar a bhiodh dùil, rinn ceannardan dhùthchannan an t-saoghail dìteadh làidir air na thachair, agus chan fhacas bho chionn iomadach bliadhna uimhir de chòmhradh mun luach a th' ann an saorsa dheamocrataigeach agus cho cudromach 's a tha e gum bheil cothrom aig na meadhanan naidheachd aithris is a dheasbad air cuspairean de gach seòrsa.

Chuala mi cuid a' moladh a' bheachd aig Seòras Orwell airson saorsa gus a bhith ag aithris rudan nach bi daoine ag iarraidh fhaicinn neo a chluinntinn. Ach tha cuid eile a' comharrachadh gum bheil cunnart an lùib saorsa air nach eil rian, agus tha iad a' cur nar cuimhne gum bheil an t-saorsa air am bheil sinne a' cur uimhir de luach ann am Breatann daonnan ceadaichte taobh a-staigh crìochan lagh na dùthcha. Gun teagamh bha an ionnsaigh a rinneadh air deamocrasaidh ann am Paris borb da-riribh, ach tha cunnart gum faod 'saorsa labhairt' nam meadhanan gamhlas do choigrich a dhùsgadh. Tha fhios gum faodar a bhith beò le leithid seo de shaorsa gun a bhith ga dhearbhadh fad an t-siubhail.

Ach saoil nach fheum crìoch a bhith eadar cothrom labhairt agus burraidheachd mhi-mhòdhail. Aig amannan tha e doirbh a bhith cinnteach càite am bu chòir leithid sin de chrìoch a bhith ach 's e mo bheachd-sa nach fhuiling coimhearsnachd sam bith magadh is fanaid gun sgur gun chuideigin a' gabhail cuthach fo bhuaidh leithid de gheur-leamhainn. Nach eòlach sinn fhin mar Ghàidheil air magadh anns na meadhanan agus dh'arramaid dìon bho leithid sin, ach saoilidh mi gum bheil creideamh na chuspair fiù 's nas frìonasaiche na cultar. Tha gràin-cinnidh aithnichte mar eucòir agus tha fhios gum bheil creideamhan dhaoine fa leth airidh air spèis a thoirt dhaibh cuideachd. Mar a thuir Volttaire, 's e dìth fulangais an aon rud nach còir fhulang!

THE BARBARIC events in Paris have been rightly condemned by world leaders as an attack on democracy, but some commentators point out that unregulated freedom of speech can generate xenophobia.

Politicians have been reminding us that the freedom of expression which we value so greatly in this country, exists within the law. If we accept that racism is wrong then surely people should also be entitled to respect for their religious beliefs. Uncontrollable outrage is probably an inevitable outcome of continuing satirical mockery.

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

SCOTS

Heritage Magazine

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THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

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LAST week's SOLUTION





WINTER EDITION OUT NOW

www.scotsheritagemagazine.com

Taking the first steps to a happy childhood



Happy House Christian Nursery Oban

Happy House is a community based nursery in the heart of the town. We have a homely setting and a large garden. Our Christian ethos involves a commitment to supporting families which we also do through our Parent/Carer and Toddler groups and Parenting groups. As well as the funded Early Learning and Childcare sessions our nursery provision also includes reasonably priced childcare sessions from two and a half and wraparound care for children aged from three to five years. Please contact us so that we can discuss your individual needs and arrange a visit.



Nevis Bank Nursery & Day Care

Located within easy walking distance of the centre of Fort William and with private car parking we provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for the following age groups:

Babies: 6 months to 2 years
Toddlers: 2 to 3 years
Pre-school education: 3 to 5 year olds
Plus wrap around care from 8.30am - 5.30pm

Belford Road, Fort William, PH33 6ES
 01397 701040
 nevisbanksnursery@btconnect.com

Nevis Bank Nursery and Daycare Centre Fort William

We are an established nursery, providing high quality funded places for 3 and 4 year olds to suit the working parent. 2 nursery sessions each day 8.45-12.45, 1-5pm. Also providing wrap around care from 8.30am-5.30pm for children aged 6 months to 5 years.

Did you know?

- We take our 4 year old children swimming once a month to the hydro therapy pool
- Music sessions provided monthly with a professional music teacher for the nursery children
- Regular outdoor sessions (come rain, hail, or even sunshine!) to experience the different elements.
- Visits to the Trim Trail, swing parks, picnics to the Scotland Flag and many more!!!

Nursery enrolments week beginning 9th February 2015.
 Book early, limited spaces.



Soroba Young Family Group Oban

Soroba Young Family Group is a vibrant organisation supporting children from birth to 5 years and their families. We are a nursery centre, based in the heart of the Soroba Community in Oban, housed in a converted ground floor flat. The Nursery has been

in operation for over 30 years now. At Soroba Young Family Centre we aim to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children can feel happy and secure. We encourage the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual

development of children. We open daily from 08:15am-4:00pm offering Nursery; Respite Creche; 2.5 year old club; Stay and Play; Grand Parents' Group; Messy Play; Healthy Cooking. Come along and enjoy the fun!

SOROBA YOUNG FAMILY GROUP

Offers weekly Respite Creche, Parent & Toddlers and Reception Group for families with children aged birth to 3 years. We have space for children aged 3-4 years in the nursery. Wrap around care for 3-5 year olds.

Tel: 01631 565263
 E: sorobayoungfamilygroup@gmail.com

Happy House Christian Nursery

Interested parties, please call Sue on 01631 562494 or 07818 284849
 alternatively email: happyhousepreschool@fsmail.net



Oban's 1st Steps Day Nursery A place to learn, play and imagine

1st Steps nursery is a safe, happy, caring and stimulating environment, where all the staff want the best for the children and parents. It has been described as a 'little paradise' where every detail has been thought about to make sure every child has the best possible start in life. In our loving, caring environment, our children are listened to, respected and valued.

At 1st Steps we believe that the chance to learn is all around us and every child should grow in their own unique way exploring their own abilities without limitations and that is why our indoor and outdoor learning environments are specially designed to inspire.

In the established mature garden children can play, be active and grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables. Children are then able to prepare some of their own produce and taste it.

1st Steps Nursery is committed to providing nutritious healthy meals for children in a setting that allows them to share meal times together, including breakfast, lunch and tea daily.

Stramash Outdoor Nurseries - Oban and Fort William

STRAMASH OUTDOOR NURSERIES

Quality Early Learning & Childcare in the Outdoors

FORT WILLIAM
 Inverlochry Mains; 2-5 year olds

OBAN
 Ganavan; 3-5 year olds

For more information on our open days and registration:
 Visit www.stramash.org.uk
 Email info@stramash.org.uk
 Call 01631 566080

Stramash, the award winning community based organisation, has two fantastic outdoor learning campuses on the west coast- one in Fort William and one in Oban. Both campuses offer inspiring outdoor based early learning and childcare through the Stramash Outdoor Nurseries. Fort William caters for 2 to 5 year olds and Oban for 3 to 5 year olds. Stramash is recognised as one of the leading organisations for outdoor learning in Scotland. Open days are being held in Fort William on 23rd and 28th January, and in Oban on 19th and 27th January. Stramash has made some inspiring short films about their work which can be viewed at www.vimeo.com/stramashoutdoor.



Oban's 1st Steps Day Nursery

EST 1999

Open 8am till 6pm, Monday - Friday
 All bank & public holidays excluding xmas and new year
 Children are cared for in their own age groups from 3 months to 5 years

If your child is born between the 1/3/11 and 29/02/12 they are eligible for free childcare sessions.

We offer AM and PM sessions for ELCC including wrap around. Please feel free to drop in and discuss your child's needs

OPEN DAYS:
 Tuesday 20th January 10 - 11am
 Monday 26th January from 2 - 3pm

Registration Week for ELCC 2015/16 will take place the first week in Feb w/c 02/02/15



Croft Road, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5JL
 Tel: 01631 567491
www.firststepsoban.co.uk



Home Start Majik - Support and friendship for families

11 MILLION PEOPLE SAY THEY WOULD VOLUNTEER IF ASKED. WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU

Home Start helps families with children under five. Parents may be finding it hard to cope due to bereavement, multiple births, disability or illness of themselves or a child, being new parents, or perhaps being separated from their own family support. You do not have to be a SUPER PARENT to

volunteer. We ask that you have parenting experience and can give a few hours a week to families who need friendship and support, helping them to cope with the various stresses involved in raising young children in today's busy society.

We are also looking for locals to become volunteer

TRUSTEES who help guide and oversee our work. Trustees can use existing skills and learn new ones. There is no personal financial liability and we provide induction, training and support. Getting in touch has never been easier - Contact Eleanor by email or telephone, visit us at Kintyre Place, Tarbert, find us online at www.home-start.org.uk, on facebook Home-Start MAJIK and on twitter @homestartmajik



Home Start Volunteers required for Home visiting & for Trustees

Support and friendship for Families

Do you have a few hours a week to spare? Have parenting experience and would like to support a family going through a difficult time?

Then, contact Eleanor on 01880 821400 or 07917 285154
 eleanor@homestartmajik.eclipse.co.uk.
 Charity No SCO 23780 www.home-start.org.uk



RE-OPENING PARTY
after our mini refurb

Friday 16th January
Nibbles and drinks 6pm - 9pm
Music from Ceol An Aire
from 9.30pm
Also open on Thursday 15th

Burns Club of Oban
Admission to this year's

BURNS SUPPER

On Friday 23rd January

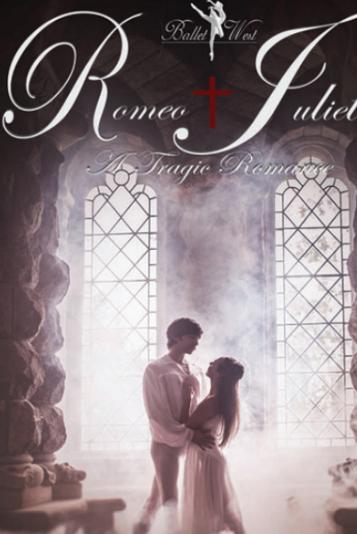
Will be by ticket only. Priced £25
Tickets may be purchased at the Regent Hotel on 12th & 19th January between 6.30 and 8pm.

Alternatively ring
John MacLean 01631 565519
or Ken Oxland 01631 566010

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New chairman of John Muir Trust

IN THE century since John Muir's death, some of the most iconic scenery in the West Highlands has benefited from the conservation charity set up in the Scottish explorer's honour.

The John Muir Trust was particularly prominent in 2014 as volunteers and members prepared for the centenary of December 24 1914, when the 76-year-old died in a Los Angeles hospital after contracting pneumonia while visiting his daughter.

Just last month the trust restored a crumbling footpath which travels 928 metres to the peak of Blà Bheinn on the edge of Skye's Cuillin.

The £60,000 project saw the route repaired following years of major erosion from poor weather. It was only possible thanks to public votes on a poll by the European Outdoor Conservation Association, which saw the Blà Bheinn fight off competition from mountains in Asia, south America and Europe.

Campaigners from the charity have also been part of a protest against a wind farm at Rannoch and played a part in the developer's decision to delay the application for 24 turbines at the moor.

The UK-wide charity's triumphs are in no small part down to Lochaber's John Hutchison, who stepped down as chairman in December, just six months after receiving an MBE for services to the environment and community.

Mr Hutchison will be 'a hard act to follow', according to his successor Peter Pearson.

When taking the position last month, he said: 'I have always had a passion for mountains and wild places so it's an honour to take on this role.'

'The trust is respected across the UK for its work in protecting and restoring wild land.'

'My predecessor John Hutchison has been a superb ambassador for the charity and will be a hard act to follow, but I'm looking forward to the challenge.'

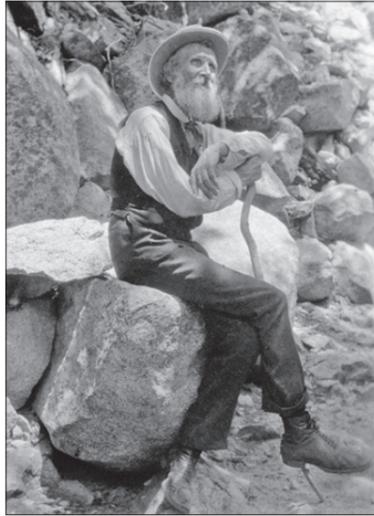
But it's not always the major projects which have the biggest impact, as every summer John Muir volunteers carry out 'work parties' visiting sites owned by the trust for litter picks and path maintenance, proving particularly successful on and around Ben Nevis.

And the hard work shows no sign of slowing, as Stuart Brooks, chief executive of the John Muir

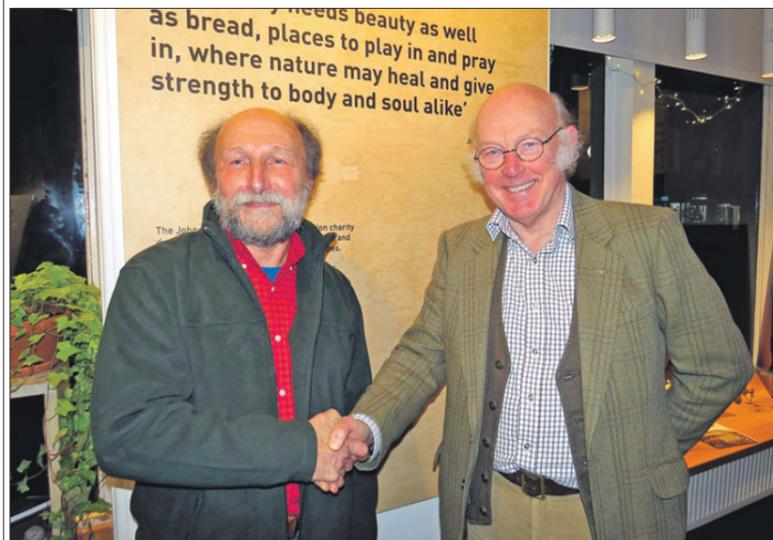
Trust, quoted Mr Muir himself saying 'the battle for conservation goes on endlessly'.

He added: 'Over the past century since his death, John Muir's relevance has been challenged time and time again but his ideas continue to resonate down through the generations. Here in Scotland, in the land of his birth, he is perhaps better known than at any time since his death.'

'The John Muir Trust has no unique claim on the legacy of John Muir. We do, however, try to carry on his work and deliver his vision in the 21st century. John Muir's body was buried 100 years ago but his spirit and ideas live on and are growing stronger, not least in his native land.'



MILESTONE: the centenary of John Muir's death was commemorated on Christmas eve



HANDOVER: Peter Pearson, left, takes over from John Hutchison as chairman of the John Muir Trust

Ancestor tracing soon to be available at Lochaber Archive Centre

LOCHABER residents will soon be able to find out more about tracing ancestors from the first world war.

Using online records and resources held at Lochaber Archive Centre, history enthusiasts can learn about the lives of soldiers and civilians during meetings starting from Wednesday January 28.

The topic will be split into four classes - the fallen heroes of the Highlands, those who survived, com-

munities left at home and a round up in the final week.

Participants can also bring their own material or memorabilia to assist with the search.

Meetings will be held between 11am and 1pm on Wednesdays at the archive centre, West Highland College.

To book a place or find out more call 01397 700946 or email lochaber.archives@highlifehighland.com

Scotland's hist now on Google

DUNSTAFFNAGE Castle is one of several sites available to view virtually on Google Street View thanks to a new partnership with Historic Scotland.

The castle, one of the oldest stone castles in Scotland, is a partial ruin three miles outside Oban, built around 1220.

Google Street View has launched the new collection of 16 historic Scottish sites, covering the length and breadth of Scotland, allowing people to explore a number of the nation's

picturesque castles, forts and abbeys from their phone, tablet or computer.

A spokesman at Dunstaffnage Castle said: 'It's great that Dunstaffnage is one of the sites to be included by Historic Scotland on Google Street View.'

'This will give more people the opportunity to see Dunstaffnage for themselves and will hopefully in turn bring more visitors to the castle every year.'

With 360-degree interactive imagery, people

all over the world can see and explore the iconic sites before they go, including some remote and hard-to-reach places they may never have discovered on their own.

The sites were captured in July this year using the Google Street View Trekker, which is a four-foot, 40lbs backpack, fitted with a 15-angle lens camera, taking 360 degree pictures every 2.5 seconds, and is designed to capture imagery in locations that the Street View car can't typically reach.



Na Seudan Ùr win place at Danny Kyle Open Stage

A YOUNG all-female band from Tarbert, Na Seudan Ùr, has been offered a place on the Danny Kyle Open Stage at Celtic Connections this Saturday.

The Danny Kyle Open Stage takes place at the Glasgow Royal Concert

Hall and the girls will be playing on Saturday 17 January for a 20-minute slot between 5 and 7pm.

Entrance is free so it's a great opportunity for people to see Na Seudan Ùr live.

For those who can't make it, each open stage

is also broadcast live on Celtic Music Radio 95 FM.

Na Seudan Ùr recently launched its first CD, Seunta. The CD is receiving rave reviews in this country and abroad and has already sold more than 500 copies.



ON STAGE: Na Seudan Ùr will be performing at Celtic Connections this Saturday

Enjoy your favourite food and choose to lose weight YOUR way!

FIND YOUR LOCAL CLASS

OBAN
Church of Scotland Centre, Glencruitten Road WED 10.45am
Weigh and Go WED 11.10am - 12.30pm
Corran Halls, 54 The Esplanade TUE 5.45pm

BALLACHULISH
Shinty Pavillion, Jubilee Park WED 12.30pm and 7.30pm

FORT WILLIAM
Alexandra Hotel, The Parade TUES 10.45am and 5.45pm
Weigh and Go TUES 12.15pm and SAT 10am

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All attendees will be featured in Scottish Field or online at scottishfield.co.uk and scottishruralawards.org

First ceilidh of 2015 in Lochaber



HIGH NOTES: Skipinnish kicked off a night of music and dancing in the Nevis Centre

Historic buildings Street View



CAPTURED: two of the images of Dunstaffnage Castle that are now available to view online thanks to a new partnership between Google Street View and Historic Scotland.



Left: The gatehouse at the castle, which was traditionally used as the dwelling of the Captain of Dunstaffnage, was opened to the public for the first time in June last year.

Above: The quality of the detailed stonework can still be seen in Dunstaffnage Chapel at the castle, even though it lies in ruin.

Sabhal Mòr celebrates work of famous artist

A FAMOUS artist who brought worldwide recognition to Mallaig and Skye is having his work celebrated at the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig institution in Sleat.

The art college has started its third scholarship residency dedicated to the late Jon Schueler, a war hero who spent his later life producing abstract paintings of Scotland's beautiful West Highland scenery.

Schueler's work has been exhibited at many distinguished American institutions including

the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum in New York.

The American artist worked and lived in Mallaig from 1970 until 1975, and was hugely inspired by the dramatic sunsets of the west coast that would influence him for the rest of his life until he died in 1992.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) is looking for international visual artists to base themselves in the centre between July and October next year, where they will have the opportunity to

research, develop and produce their own work in the arts studio before exhibiting it at the end of the term.

Kath MacLeod, SMO's arts development officer said: 'We are again looking forward with great interest to this year's Jon Schueler scholarship residency.'

'Last year we received 344 applications from visual artists in Scotland, the UK and across the globe.'

'The interest, quality and diversity of artists is very encouraging.'

Lochaber Music For All

LOCHABER is to welcome a diverse group of musicians as part of this season's Music For All session.

Kaleidoscope Saxo-

phone Quartet will perform in Kilmallie Hall, Corpach, tomorrow night (Friday), the third concert in a series of five.

The event, starting at

7.30pm, will include a mix of both classical and contemporary pieces, played by John Moore, Ian Dingle, Gus Passey and Sally McTaggart.

LOCHABER music fans wasted no time in blowing the New Year cobwebs away when they descended on the Nevis Centre for performances by Skipinnish and Skerryvore.

More than 600 people

piled into the Fort William venue on the evening of January 3, for the first event of 2015 and both bands wowed the crowd with original songs, covers and new material.

The show marked

celebrations for the two groups as 2015 marks the 10th anniversary of Skerryvore, who hinted at a special event planned for May and said more would be revealed later this month.

Meanwhile, the Skip-



WINNERS: Fort William brother and sister John and Katie Stewart-Stevenson won violin Scots solo classes at last year's Lochaber Music Festival 20_03fest01

Lochaber Music Festival 2015 syllabus released

THE 41st Lochaber Music Festival, taking place between March 13 and 19, will see youngsters in the area take part in seven days of singing, dancing, speaking and instrumental competitions.

Festival chairwoman Lilian MacDonald announced the syllabus for the event and wants any budding school musicians to get involved.

She said: 'The music festival seeks to encourage participation in the arts at all levels.'

'We welcome the participation of individuals, music-making groups and country dancing groups in Lochaber and beyond.'

'We would be grateful if everyone could submit their entries, preferably using our electronic entry form, as early as possible.'

There are 49 trophies

up for grabs at the event, with organisers keen to promote the final night festival concert in Caol primary school hall on March 19 at 7pm which will showcase the best performances from all categories.

During the first six days, there will be several Scottish instrumental contests, with school pupils playing the bagpipies, accordion and clàrsach, while there are also country dancing junior and senior categories.

Classical guitars, violins and fiddles will feature in the string sections and there will be woodwind and brass instrument performances.

Adults and children are to put on a good show in choirs and solo vocal performances, while the speaking competitions include Bible

readings and poems by Robert Burns.

The festival will also include a young musician of the year competition, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Lochaber.

A full programme for each day, including the list of venues, will be available from the organisers in due course, while the syllabus can be picked up from Lochaber high school, Fort William library or viewed on the festival web page www.lochabermusicfestival.co.uk.

Entries for the competition must be submitted by January 23, either electronically through the website or by post, with details available online.

Any queries should be sent by email to secretary@lochabermusicfestival.co.uk or by telephoning 01687 450289.



TOP PIPERS: Rona Nicolson and Ally Weir were both winners in the piping competitions at last year's Lochaber Music Festival 20_03fest02



Around 650 people turned out to see Skerryvore perform 20_02nevis06

LISTINGS FROM 16th JANUARY - 22nd JANUARY 2015		
Birdman	Daily	15:40, 20:40
NT Live: Treasure Island	Thu	19:00
Paddington	Sat, Sun	13:00
Taken 3	Daily Except Thu	18:20, 20:50
	Thu	18:20
The Theory of Everything	Daily Except Thu	15:20, 18:00
	Thu	15:20
Tinkerbell & the Legend of the NeverBeast	Sat, Sun	13:30

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

The Annual Quiz Night
in aid of Oban Pipe Band will be held on Friday 16th January at 7.30pm in the Masonic Lodge, Albany Street
Admission: £3.00 each (teams can vary from 2 to 6 in number)

HOME-START LORN BURNS SUPPER SUNDAY 18TH JANUARY
IN THE WATERFRONT RESTAURANT, OBAN 6.30P.M. FOR 7.00 P.M.
TICKETS £15.00 includes Supper and Entertainment
Contact: Aileen Binner on 01631 566749

Advertise in the Community Noticeboard for just £16.21 (plus VAT)
This section is available to charitable organisations with a charity number.
All AGM's will be placed on the Public Notice Page Please ask for details

An Comunn Gàidhealach MEUR CHRUAICHAIN (Cruachan Branch)
CEILIDH
John Joe MacNeil, Ewen Henderson, Gordon McKeeve and Sileas Sinclair, Soille featuring Emma Baird, Rachel Campbell, Breagha Charlton, Bronwen Davies & Alex Easton, The Adele Askev Dancers and Fear an Taighe Danny MacRae
TAYNUILT VILLAGE HALL
SATURDAY 17th January 2015 at 7.30 p.m.
Admission £4.00, Members £3.00, Children £2.00

APPIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The Stewarts of Achnacon: Henry Stewart Fotheringham
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THIS WEEK'S LISTINGS		
MONDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning with Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Jim Edge, 1700 Drivetime with Danni Hay, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen, 2200 American Jukebox with Michelle	TUESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show with Maggie May, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are	WEDNESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Sound Scottish (repeat), 1000 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Elaine Lamb, 1700 Drivetime with Campbell and Coll, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len
THURSDAY: 0800 Maggie May's Carousel, 1100, Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with DJ Taz, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight	FRIDAY: 0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Weekend Warmup with Ian Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 1845 Sports View, 1900 Country Meets Country with Jackie	SATURDAY: 0900 Maggie's Swingin' Sixties, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowsher, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis
SUNDAY: 0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Allan, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott		



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Business

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01631 568000

Scottish Island Jewellery opens Oban base

IT WAS a Christmas dash to remember for a couple who moved their jewellery business from Bute to Oban in December.

Richard Home and Shirley Lloyd of Scottish Island Jewellery had two homes, two shops and two children to organise during their move, finalised their flit when they closed the doors of their Rothesay shop on Christmas Eve and headed for Oban.

The couple set up Scottish Island Jewellery - named after their home island of Bute and handcrafted, island-shaped jewellery - in 2001 but opened their first shop in August 2013 as Richard became more involved in the business.

In fact, Richard's expert knowledge of the Hebrides, from his days as a fisherman, means Shirley's island templates for her jewellery come under strict scrutiny.

This year the couple decided to move to Oban, which they see as busier and better connected to their customers in the Hebrides, wider Argyll and Lochaber.

They are now based in Oban's Argyll Square, near the Albany Street junction.

'We had visited Oban, on and off, and really liked the place,' said Richard. 'We noticed people tended to stay here when they visited, rather than just coming for a day trip.'

'We spent a lot of time looking for the right property and we think this one is a great location because you can see it from Station Square.'

Scottish Island Jewellery's success is partly down to the range of services they provide, as they have a workshop within their retail outlet, as well as a strong online presence.

Shirley explained: 'In the workshop we can resize all the rings we are selling, at no extra charge, and we can repair jewellery that has sentimental value.'

'We have been commissioned to do repairs, ring sizing, remodelling and we will deal in scrap silver, gold and other metals.'



Richard Home and Shirley Lloyd of Scottish Island Jewellery have opened a new shop in Oban.

Argyll and Bute businesses get New Year boost

WITH the festive celebrations over, now is the perfect time to set some New Year business resolutions - and get help from Argyll and Bute Council's Business Gateway to keep them.

Whether you're a first time entrepreneur looking to start a business or an experienced business owner looking to expand an existing venture, the local Business Gateway team can help you get your business into shape.

Business Gateway locally has a team of experienced business advisers on hand to help, so whether you're planning to become self-employed but aren't sure where to start, or are looking to grow your business to the next stage and take on staff, they can help with practical advice and support.

If you have a growing business, you can also tap into some expert help from a range of specialist advisers covering marketing, eCommerce, HR and growth strategy development.

Business Gateway advisers can also signpost other sources of help with particular issues such as manufacturing, exporting, intellectual property or tendering.

A wide range of free business skills workshops is available. Business Gateway's workshop programme runs throughout the year offering topics for businesses at all stages of development.

Workshops aimed at those about to start or still in the early stages include business planning, marketing, basic practical book-keeping, introduction to social media for business and building a business website.

Existing businesses looking to grow can access workshops covering becoming an employer, managing staff, improving marketing, customer care, getting more from your website and social media.

Funding is a key issue and Business Gateway advisers can help business owners identify and apply to a range of loan and grant funding initiatives. Anyone looking for funding for their business should contact the local team to discuss the options available and to find out if they are eligible.

The Business Gateway Plus Growth Grant is available until March 2015 and offers funding of 50 per cent of costs up to a maximum of £3,000.

This fund is aimed at businesses trading above £70,000 with a specific growth project planned.

Anyone looking to access this funding should apply as soon as possible before the scheme closes.

The West of Scotland Loan Fund can provide loan funding assistance of up to £100,000 for small and medium sized growth businesses.

The eligibility has recently been widened to include businesses based anywhere within Argyll and Bute with interest rates currently set at five per cent for the period of the loan.

Start Up Finance Scotland offers unsecured personal loan funding of £1,000 to £25,000 for business purposes, to support new businesses which have been trading for less than 12 months, or in some circumstances up to 24 months. This scheme is a government backed initiative with interest rates currently at six per cent.

All the above funding schemes have different eligibility criteria and application processes.

To find out more contact the local Business Gateway team who can also provide support with developing an application.

Business Gateway can also signpost sources of discretionary funding such as the SJ Noble Trust or the Prince's Trust Youth Business Scotland.

Business Gateway's website is packed with information relevant to both new start and growth businesses. The guides, event section and other resources at www.bgateway.com will ensure that entrepreneurs across Argyll and Bute have all the information they need at their fingertips.

Angela Vernel, a local business adviser with Business Gateway said: 'At Business Gateway we are committed to offering a comprehensive support service as well as advice on sources of finance and funding.'

Traditionally, figures show that the first few months of the year is a busy one for us as people consider making changes to their lifestyle, including setting up their own business, and existing businesses prepare for the year ahead.

Our range of services ensures that new and existing entrepreneurs are given the advice and support they need to help run their venture successfully.

To find out more about how Business Gateway can help you set up and develop your own business call 01546 604 555 or visit www.bgateway.com.

Inveraray residents come out on top in Community Star Throwing Awards

TWO INVERARAY residents have been named winners of a new community award run by Loch Fyne Oysters.

The Argyll seafood producer has launched a new Community Star Throwing Awards scheme to celebrate the people of Argyll who have made an outstanding contribution to the community.

Inaugural winners Leanne Anderson and Ian Lindsey, both Inveraray-based, were recognised in the latter part of 2014 for their commendable fundraising efforts.

Martyn Paterson, divisional director at Loch Fyne Oysters said: 'The people of Argyll have helped make Loch Fyne Oysters the international success it is today and now we want to give back to the community which has given us so much.'

Award winners will be picked every eight weeks and will be presented with a Star Throwing Certificate and £50 of vouchers, which can be used in the Cairndow-based Loch Fyne Oyster Bar, Deli or the Home Delivery service.

Nominations must be submitted via email using the official form available on the Loch Fyne website.

Smokehouse reports busy Christmas trading

STAFF at a South Uist fish smokehouse were delighted to report a very busy Christmas trading period, with 5.2 tonnes of smoked salmon sent to destinations all over the world.

December sales from the Loch Duart Ltd plant in Loch Carnan are up by 17 per cent from the same period last year and have included steady business from Japan, while a potential new partnership with a business in China is in the pipeline.

It was a good month for the firm despite bad weather in the Minch disrupting sailings which affected distribution and an accident at their North Uist fish farm in November in which half of the salmon produced over the whole year were killed by jellyfish.

Nick Joy, managing director of Loch Duart Ltd, said: 'I am pleased to be a very small part in the sales, having taken a side of flaky [oak roasted salmon] to my friends in Moscow over the new year.'

'They were truly delighted as it is a wonderful reflection of the quality of produce the Hebrides can deliver.'

'A 17 per cent increase in year-on-year sales in a very competitive sector is a huge achievement.'

Loch Duart Ltd produces around 5,000 tonnes of salmon per year, employing around 100 people in the Hebrides and Sutherland.

Sales manager Fiona MacDonald said trading expanded to many far-flung places over the festive period.

She said: 'Smoked salmon parcels were sent all over the world to some quite exotic locations such as Barbados and Thailand.'

Visit Scotland pledges funding

A GRANT worth up to £25,000 could be given to Lochaber Chamber of Commerce to support the ongoing campaign to market the region as the outdoor capital of the UK.

Visit Scotland has pledged growth funding to the group to match whatever can be raised by member parties, up to the value of £25,000.

At a marketing meeting last week, Frazer Coupland, destination manager for Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, asked business owners in the area to contribute to fundraising.

He said: 'This is a campaign to encourage people to visit Lochaber and to come back and that benefits all businesses in the area.'

'It's a case of you get what you put in. If you tell me I'm on my own and we raise £8,000, we'll have £16,000 and that's not going to get us very far. If you all get behind this we can raise the £25,000, combine that with the growth fund and we've got £50,000 for some great marketing.'

Argyll still a top Location, Location, Location



LOCATION: Phil Spencer with estate agent Johnny McKillop.

HOUSE buying in Argyll is remaining buoyant and TV companies are even coming to film here.

When Channel Four hit programme Location, Location, Location contacted Johnny McKillop of Miller Stewart solicitors he was delighted to present to them a luxury house in Inveraray.

Out of more than 200 homes offered to property experts Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer the house, Solway on The Avenue in Inveraray, was one of the final four shown to house hunters John and Stella.

Johnny said: 'It was a great experience being able to show one of our houses to the property experts on Location, Location, Location. 'The housing market is buoyant at the moment and many people are starting to make the decision to sell, or buy.'



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Bringing together three world-leading aquaculture companies

THE HEAD of a pioneering Scottish fish breeding firm is to lead a major international company's aquaculture operations in four locations around the world.

Neil Manchester, general manager of Landcatch, based in Argyll and Stirling, has been appointed as managing director of the newly-formed aquaculture business unit of Hendrix Genetics, the multi-species breeding company. He took up his post on January 1.

He will be based at the Hendrix Genetics headquarters in Boxmeer, Netherlands, and will be in charge of Atlantic salmon, coho salmon and trout breeding operations, as well as cutting-edge genetics services, in Scotland, the US, Chile and the Isle of Man.

The move follows a landmark deal signed in October between Landcatch, which supplies Atlantic salmon eggs and smolts and genetics technology to the international aquaculture industry, and Seattle-based TroutlodgeInc, the world's largest rainbow trout egg producer.

The deal included Landcatch taking a 45 per cent shareholding in Troutlodge and the setting up of a new joint venture to establish



PIONEERING: Neil Manchester of Landcatch is to head up an international aquaculture project.

unit within Hendrix Genetics as we seek to develop existing operations and explore opportunities in new species and new market areas.

'The recent agreement brings together three world-leading companies with the goal of becoming one of the main global players in aquaculture breeding. Creating this unit is another step towards that goal. It represents an experienced and talented management team and we look forward to working together to ensure the success and ongoing development of the aquaculture business unit.'

Neil has nearly 30 years' experience in aquaculture, primarily in Scotland but also Chile, South Africa and the Mediterranean industries.

Coming from an agricultural background, he achieved a BSc degree in Agricultural Technology at Harper Adams University in Shropshire, and started his aquaculture career in 1985 on a trout farm in Argyll.

Landcatch operates four freshwater tank sites in Scotland, producing up to 4.5 million smolts annually, plus a land-based seawater site for brood fish, producing up to 40 million eggs.

an independent Atlantic salmon breeding programme, backed by genetics research, in Chile.

Other appointments within the aquaculture business unit include David Danson, head of freshwater production at Landcatch, taking over as general manager at Ormsary in Argyll.

Neil, who previously lived in Kilmelford, said: 'I am excited about taking up this important role in the newly-created aquaculture

Build your network and your skills at Business Gateway's workshops.

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Five in a row for Duchess



The Dowager Duchess of Argyll, Iona Campbell, made a return trip to S + S Motors last week to pick up a new Subaru Forester. With 17 years as a customer, the Duchess, who is His Grace the Duke of Argyll's mother, has purchased four Subaru Foresters in recent years from S + S Motors, voted Subaru UK's dealer of the year since 2007. Clearly, the Forester ticks all the boxes for the Duchess getting around the land at the family seat, Inveraray Castle.

GEM warns motorists as winter weather threatens

ROAD SAFETY AND breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist is urging motorists to take extra care as more winter weather arrives.

Road journeys are more difficult and treacherous when there is a fall of snow, and GEM is encouraging drivers to make good use of some simple safety tips in order to reduce the chance of risk, delay and difficulty:

Don't drive if you don't really need to. The easiest way to avoid trouble from winter conditions is not to venture out in the car. If bad weather threatens, or has already arrived, then postpone your journey and eliminate the risk of becoming stuck somewhere.

Listen for weather updates, and plan your travel accordingly.

If you have to make a road journey, then prepare a set of essential items, including shovel, fully charged mobile phone, torch, ice scraper, food, water, jump leads, first aid kit, warm clothes and a supply of sand or gravel to assist with grip if your wheels are spinning.

If you're out on the road in snow, then keep your speed down, leave plenty of space between yourself and the vehicle in front,

give room to snowploughs and gritter trucks, and be ready for sudden, rapid deteriorations in conditions.

Remember that driving in winter conditions can be hard work, so ensure you build in breaks on your journeys.

Take a look at the GEM e-Book on winter driving. It's available for download free of charge from motoringassist.com/winter-driving

GEM also has a video on staying safe during winter road conditions. You can view it at motoringassist.com/winter-driving

GEM chief executive David Williams MBE comments: "Winter weather seldom arrives without warning. So if you need to drive, have a plan ready that can help you delay a journey. Agree to postpone a meeting or a visit if it's not vital. In that way, you're avoiding a lot of potential trouble for yourself, and ensuring you won't be putting additional strain on emergency and recovery crews, who are sure to be at full stretch in the coming days.

"If you're out and about when snow hits, then the simple preparation measures suggested above really can make a big difference to help keep you safe."

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11 TOYOTA HILUX H.L.E. D/Cab P/Up, Manual, Espack, 4r Con, Met Green, 38K	£11,750
09 TOYOTA HILUX H.L.E. D/Cab P/Up, Manual, Espack, Direct National, 38K	£10,950
60 FORD TRANSIT 220 Connect Crew Van, SL 5 Seats, White	£6,450
59 FORD TRANSIT 260 SWB Van, SLD, Espack, Ply Lined, White	£6,450
09 FORD TRANSIT 350 LWB, Semi HiTop Panel Van, 6Speed, Espack, Roof Rack, White 60K	£8,250
58 FORD RANGER Super Cab P/Up, 4WD, C/W High Capacity Canopy Fitted Workshop, White	£7,750
08 FORD TRANSIT 350 D/Cab, Alloy, Dropside Tipper, Towbar, White 55K	£8,950
08 FORD TRANSIT 350 D/Cab, Alloy Dropside Tipper, Towbar, Direct Council, Yellow, 60K	£7,950
06 FORD TRANSIT 350 Double Cab Tipper, Alloy Drop Side Body, White	£6,950
57 FORD TRANSIT 350 Double Cab Tipper, High Cops Seats, Direct Council, Blue	£2,250
07 FORD TRANSIT 350, 115hp, 5sp, Sgl Cab, Alloy Dropside Tipper, C/W Maxi Lift Crane, Direct Council	£7,950
07 FORD TRANSIT 350, LWB, Alloy Dropside Tipper, 135 Body, Full Lin, White	£5,750
07 FORD TRANSIT 260 SWB, Panel Van, SLD, Ply Lined & Shelves, White	NO VAT £3,950
06 FORD TRANSIT 350, Crew Cab Pickup, 115HP Alloy Body, Removable Cage Seats, White 45K	£5,950
09 MERCEDES SPRINTER 319 CDI, M4V, 4dr Panel Van, Manual, Rear Fitted Workshop, White, 55K	£14,950
09 MERCEDES SPRINTER 311 CDI, M4V, 4dr Van, Manual, SLD, Rear Fitted Workshop, White	£8,950
01 MERCEDES C200, Kompressor, 3 door Coupé, Auto, Full leather, Alloy, Met Silver	NO VAT £2,950
09 VW TRANSPORTER, 11 Seat, Shuttle/Mobility, Auto, Wheel Chair Access, Blue, Direct Council	£12,950
58 VW CRAFTER CRIS MMB, HighTop van, 6 sp, SLD, Ply Lined, White, Direct Council	£7,950
58 VW CRAFTER CRIS, Crew Cab Dropside Tipper, 6000mm, Manual, Espack, Alloy Tool Boxes, Blue, 55K, Choice	£8,950
54 VW LT 30 MMB, High Top Van, SLD, Ply Lined, White, Very Clean	NO VAT £3,750
59 Vauxhall Astra van, 1.7 CDTI Manual, Espack, Ply Lined With Bulkhead, White	£4,950
59 Vauxhall Combo CDTI, Crew Van, Twin Side Doors, 5 Seats, White, 70K	£4,750
56 CITROEN BERLINGO, Multi Space, Wheel Chair Access, Manual, Espack, Met Silver	NO VAT £4,750
10 KAWASAKI 600 MULE, Drop Side Tipper Body, Master cab, Towbar, Red, 1200 HRS, Choice	£4,250
ROBACUP Alloy Gutterbody Roll Over, C/W Heat Diesel Engine, Very Clean, Direct Council	£2,950
BATESON Dropside Trailer, 12T, Heavy Duty, Ladder Rack, Ramps	NO VAT £1,250

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Subaru XV range fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.1 (8.8) to 41.5 (6.8). Extra Urban 47.9 (5.9) to 56.5 (5.1). Combined 40.9 (6.9) to 50.4 (5.6). CO2 146 to 160 (g/km). MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. 0-3 years free servicing covers manufacturer's recommended service schedules for 3 years / 36,000 miles (whichever occurs first) and includes labour, parts and lubricants. Offer applies to the 1st owner, new retail sales only (excludes fleet and mobility). OTE price includes VAT, delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee. Offers available 01.01.2015 until 31.03.2015. Offers subject to availability. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Prices and offers correct at time of going to press. Finance is available to UK residents aged 18 and over, subject to status. The final payment is payable one month after the final monthly payment. Subaru Finance is a trading style of International Motors Finance Limited, registered office at Charterhall House, Charterhall Drive, Chester, CH88 3AN. We may receive commission or other benefits for introducing you to Subaru Finance. 1.5 Year / 100,000 mile (whichever is sooner) Limited Warranty comprises of a standard 3 Year / 60,000 mile (whichever is sooner) Manufacturer's Warranty (bumper to bumper, excluding clutch drives plate) and an Extended Warranty (applies to powertrain only) provided by the importer, Subaru (UK) Ltd. www.subaru.co.uk

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ISUZU D-MAX

Scottish Farmer Special Edition with towbar, bedliner and rubber mats with 3.5 tonne towing limit and 5 years / 125000 mile warranty

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Visit John Spicer and team at the Tesco Oban on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th January.

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Call John on 07831 808702 to discuss your requirements.

Let us know your attending the roadshow by contacting John Spicer on 07831 808702

West coast recruitment

The Scottish Salmon Company



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.

Pool Staff and Processing/Plant Maintenance Vacancies – Salmon Processing Plant Cairndow, Argyll
 Ref: 01/PS/15 Pool Staff
 Ref: 01/PRO/15 Processing Supervisor
 Ref: 01/ES/15 Engineering Supervisor

As a result of an exciting growth and investments in new equipment and processes, we are delighted to be holding our recruitment drive for numerous additional staff across several departments at our Cairndow Processing Plant.

The Scottish Salmon Company delivers a consistently high quality product in the global market to high-end customers with rigorous requirements. The journey our product makes from hatchery to farm to customer relies on strong teamwork and good communication throughout. This means that all our staff must be prepared to be flexible in their roles and, on occasions, work beyond their normal working hours to fulfil production/processing requirements.

Applicants should be aware that due to the nature of the business, we work with a fresh product, flexibility is essential: some extended shifts and weekend work may be required to meet production/processing targets. Successful applicants should be reasonable fit and be able to meet the physical demands of the role, hardworking, flexible and co-operative in their attitude.

As well as having a sound understanding of the prime importance of food hygiene, applicants must be committed to meeting our quality standards, be good timekeepers and be able to work effectively as part of the team.

We now require to recruit the following posts:

- Numerous Pool Staff positions: staff to be deployed in several departments and therefore will be trained to multi-skilled staff (processing – maintenance- hygiene (day/night shift) – technical). Ideal candidates will have: a high sense of flexibility and responsibility, be self-motivated and enthusiastic, experience to work independently or as part of a team, has a 'can do' approach.
- Several Processing/Engineering Supervisor roles: to assist with and/or to deputise for Management with the day to day operations within the plant, to achieve plant/factory objectives and to assist with the supervision and to provide leadership to staff. Successful candidates will have excellent organisational leadership, communication and interpersonal skill.

A full clean driving licence and own transport is essential for all positions. Contract, T&C and salary depending on role and experience but all jobs minimum guaranteed 30 hours. Basic hourly rate £7.996 (after 12 week training period)

For an application form and job description for the above posts, please contact:
 Veronica Anderson, HR Coordinator,
 The Scottish Salmon Company,
 Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, PA26 8BH
 Tel. No. 01499 600 415
 Email: veronica.anderson@scottishsalmon.com
 Closing date for applications: 4pm Friday, the 30th January 2015
 Visit our website: www.scottishsalmon.com

Temporary Technical Systems Coordinator – Salmon Processing Plant Cairndow, Argyll

40 hours per week for a minimum of 4 months – Salary £20,000 pro rata
 Ref: TSSC/Jan 15

As Technical Systems Coordinator you will analyse the site Quality Management System.

- Pull together all paper based processes from the Quality Management System for centre filing and logging, including for example SEPA reporting etc.
- Update the internal QMS document management system (QPulse)
- Analyse the interfaces between the Technical Department and Engineering/Processing functions.
- Make recommendations to improve communication processes and information flows.

The successful candidates must be Graduates interested in a career in Technical/Food Safety/Quality Management/Food Science/Microbiology degrees

Temporary Business Systems Coordinator – Salmon Processing Plant Cairndow, Argyll

40 hours per week for a minimum of 4 months – Salary £20,000 pro rata
 Ref: BSSC/Jan 15

As Business Systems Coordinator you will analyse the site Business Management System.

- Pull together all paper based non-food safety/quality management information for central filing and logging.
- Update the internal QMS document management system (QPulse) with all training records (across whole company).
- Audit all Maintenance, Hygiene, Purchasing, Supply Chain and Processing files and records.
- Make recommendations to improve communication processes and information flows.

The ideal candidates must be Graduates in Business/Operations Management Studies.

For an application form and job description for the above posts, please contact:
 Angela Gibson, HR Officer,
 The Scottish Salmon Company,
 Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, PA26 8BH
 Tel. No. 01499 600 430
 Email: angela.gibson@scottishsalmon.com
 Closing date for applications: 4pm Friday 30th January 2015
 Visit our website: www.scottishsalmon.com

Fish Farmer Magazine

EDITOR

Based Edinburgh or Oban

Industry Leading Magazine and Web sites

As Editor you will be responsible for managing the day to day production of the monthly print title "Fish Farmer" as well as sourcing and contributing daily news and analysis to the websites (fishfarmer-magazine.com and fishupdate.com) and associated social media.

You will continue to develop the printed publications and fully evolve all aspects of the business to include a comprehensive digital strategy.

The position requires a proactive approach from concept and strategy through to fulfilment. This includes the need for full liaison with the commercial team in order to maximise revenue from all platforms including online and offline company profiles and commercially led features.

In addition you will need to work closely with the senior management team to develop all products to their full commercial value.

You will enjoy a competitive salary, contributory pension scheme, healthcare and a generous holiday allowance.

Closing date for applications is Friday 23 January 2015

Apply by sending your CV, covering letter and present salary by post or e-mail to: Alison Arden Wyvex Media Ltd, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB. ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk



Farm Technician Craobh Haven

Salary £17,978 - £22,808 plus overtime



We currently have a vacancy for a Farm Technician at our seawater site working out of Craobh Haven. The position is offered on a full time, permanent basis.

The successful applicant will be required to carry out a variety of duties including feeding, net changing and other general farm tasks, and be willing to work flexibly to meet the demands of the job. The positions will require working a 40 hour week on any five out of seven days.

Applications are invited from individuals who have a positive approach to this type of work and who are competent swimmers. Experience is certainly an advantage although training will be provided. A current driving licence is essential.

If you are interested in applying for this vacancy please submit an application in writing, by the closing date of Friday 30th January 2015 to: Gillian Dempster, Human Resources Assistant, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT.

Industrial Electrical Services (UK) Ltd

ELECTRICIANS REQUIRED FOR FUTURE CONTRACTS

CONTACT BELOW.

Unit 4B5, Blar Mhor Ind Est, Fort William, PH33 7PT
 Tel : 01397 703732. Fax : 01397 701737
 e-mail : alex@iesuk2.fsnet.co.uk



Abacus Services Payroll Bureau Services

Payroll Assistant

Abacus Services are looking for a payroll assistant to join our very busy office in Oban. Candidates with payroll processing experience preferred but training can be given. The job is full or part time and salary is commensurate with experience. Excellent working environment available in modern office building for the successful candidate.

Please apply in writing, enclosing your C.V. to Helen Clark at R A Clement Associates, 5 Argyll Square, Oban, PA34 4AZ, or by email to hc@raclement.co.uk



Full time Accounts Assistant/ Bookkeeper for Crinan Boatyard Ltd, Crinan, PA31 8SW

We are looking for someone to start as soon as possible who is fully experienced in the use of Sage Line 50 Accounting and preferably Sage Job Costing.

For further details please submit your current CV and a cover email to john@crinanboatyard.co.uk

Oban Times RECRUITMENT

Communications & Media Officer

Salary £23,386 - £27,868 per annum Full Time Open ended position

Are you an excellent communicator with enthusiasm for the marine environment and/or science? Would you like to live in Oban on the Scottish west coast and work full-time as part of a small but busy communications team in an institute that delivers marine research, higher education and public engagement?

The Communications and Media Officer will take a lead on copy-writing and editing for digital and printed publications and plays an important role in brand enforcement.

We are looking for an enthusiastic, prolific, science-literate communicator with media experience. The position would suit an experienced journalist. The candidate must be a team player and be able to accommodate flexible working hours when required.

Further information is available on line at www.sams.ac.uk. Alternatively, please write to: Human Resources, Communications & Media Officer, Job Ref D11/14.AM, The Scottish Association for Marine Science, Scottish Marine Institute, Oban, Argyll PA37 1QA or e-mail recruitment@sams.ac.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications is **Thursday 12th February 2015**
 Interviews will be held at SAMS on **Tuesday 3rd March 2015**

SAMS is a registered Scottish charity (SC 009206), has an equal opportunities policy and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Oban Times RECRUITMENT

Oban Times RECRUITMENT



the National Trust for Scotland
 a place for everyone

Property Manager & Head Gardener

Craræ Garden, Argyll
 Salary: £25,920 rising to £27,284 after a successful years' service
 40 Hours per week

Craræ Garden is set in a dramatic glen beside Loch Fyne and is reminiscent of a Himalayan Gorge. The garden extends to around 50 ha and is one of the best collections of the genus Rhododendron in Scotland, unusually rich in cultivars, as well as hosting a national collection of Nothofagus and superb examples of Acer, Eucalyptus, Eucryphia and Sorbus. The glen-side layout of mature woody plants and informal paths radiating from a burn creates a wonderfully natural effect.

We have an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic individual to join our team as Property Manager & Head Gardener at an important time in the future development of one of our best known gardens. The post holder will provide management and leadership of the garden team ensuring that the landscape is both presented and maintained in line with the Trust's high standards and conservation principles, while raising the profile of the Garden to increase visitors.

To be successful in this post, you will have an HND/HNC level qualification in amenity horticulture or related subjects (equivalent to NVQ/SVQ level 3), combined with comprehensive experience in general amenity horticulture. Your specific skills will include sound plant knowledge, propagation and pest & disease management. You will also possess skills in arboricultural techniques. In addition, you will have excellent interpersonal skills, team management experience and demonstrable experience of budget management.

For full job details and information about how to apply, go to www.nts.org.uk/charity and click on the "workforus" tab. Closing date for all applications is 30 January 2015. Interviews are likely to take place at Craræ in mid February 2015. Visit us at www.nts.org.uk



Deckhand/Farm Technician

Salary £17,978 - £22,808 plus overtime

We are currently looking to employ a Deckhand/Farm Technician to predominately work on our work vessel the Sarah Ann. The vessel is based in Craobh Haven and provides a net cleaning/changing service for the Company's sites working out of Craobh Haven and other sites in the south region.

Applicants should possess relevant experience in operating vessels between 12 and 24 metres in length and hold relevant certificates for sea survival, radio, first aid and firefighting. A valid certificate, commercially endorsed by the MCA, to cover up to 20 miles from a safe haven day or night is desirable.

In addition the successful applicant will also be required to carry out duties including feeding, net changing and other general farm tasks, and be willing to work flexibly to meet the demands of the job. The position will require working a 40 hour week on any five out of seven days.

Applications are invited from individuals who have a positive approach to this type of work and who are competent swimmers. Experience is certainly an advantage although training will be provided. A current driving licence is essential.

If you feel you have the necessary skills for this post, please apply in writing enclosing copies of relevant certificates, no later than Friday 30th January 2015 to: Gillian Dempster, Human Resources Assistant, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 7PT.



D.A. MACDONALD Contractors Ltd.

Have vacancies for

360° Plant Operators Skilled Labourers

Please apply in writing or by email stating previous experience to

Donald MacDonald
 Site 13a
 Kilmory Industrial Estate
 Lochgilphead
 Argyll
 PA31 8RR

Email: donald@damacdonald.co.uk

Derek Wilson Carrier Services

OBAN

Requires

FULL TIME DRIVER

Permanent position, min age 25, clean licence. Apply in writing to 2/3 Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, PA34 4HB

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for forestry mounding

(experience essential)

Must have current tickets in date. Full time position. Accommodation supplied. Work in dunoon and surrounding areas. Tel: 00353 876444758

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West coast recruitment

YOUR LOCAL PAPER

51% of people turn to their local newspaper first when looking for a new job.

The regional press is the best medium to use when looking for local people for local jobs.

Source: Recruitment Channel, The Newspaper Society 2014

Carers Direct Limited
are an independent provider specialising in care at home.

We are looking for Carers to work in the Oban Area.
Rate of pay from £8.50/hour - variable hours.
Alternate weekends essential. Car driver essential SVQ 2 preferred, training provided.
Application forms from 01631 569 550.
Registered with Scottish Care Commission.
Applications subject to PVG Scheme vetting.

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Stevenson Kennedy Limited require a full time Legal Secretary

Please apply with CV to
Gordon McNab, Stevenson Kennedy Limited,
Linnthu House,
19 Stevenson Street, Oban PA34 5NA

Oban Times RECRUITMENT **Oban Times RECRUITMENT**
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HGV DRIVERS & 360° EXCAVATOR OPERATORS
RELEVANT CERTIFICATES & LICENCES ESSENTIAL FOR BOTH POSITIONS
APPLY:- **HARRY ROSS,**
TEL: 07919 214995
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e-mail - lil@mkmacleod.co.uk

ARE YOU AN AWESOME ADMINISTRATOR?

Uncommon Knowledge is a specialist psychology training company based in Oban, with thousands of customers all over the world. We've had a growth spurt and need a new administrator to deal with our customer emails and order fulfilment.

£16,000 plus holidays, pension and performance based profit share ote over £3000.

Find out more
www.unk.com/company/awesome-administrator/

ACHA **Argyllhomes**
FOR ALL

Gas Engineer / Plumber **Kintyre**
Salary £24,353 - £28,729 per annum, plus O/T and Standby

An exciting opportunity within our Company has arisen for a Gas Engineer / Plumber. The successful person must hold a recognised gas industry qualification. Duties will include fault finding and repairs as well as servicing on domestic gas appliances. The successful candidate will be provided with a company vehicle and can expect to carry out a wide variety of other maintenance tasks on our customer's houses throughout Argyll & Bute.

Multi-trade Operative / Handyman **Islay**
Salary £18,107 - £23,816 per annum, plus O/T & Standby

A new opportunity has arisen for a Multi-Skilled Operative who can carry out a variety of jobs to repair and maintain our customer's houses on the Island. We are looking for a responsible person from a trade background who can do minor roof repairs, basic joinery, basic plumbing, minor wet trades etc.

Closing Date for both posts: 12 noon on Friday 23rd January 2015
Interviews for both posts will be held in Ardrihsaig & Bowmore respectively in early February 2015.

For further information about these posts or for an informal chat please contact Phil Burn, Operations Manager on 01546 605 824 or email philip.burn@acha.co.uk

For full details and to apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk/recruitment
If you are unable to access the website contact the Recruitment Team: Tel 01546 605917 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk



public notices

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
Bruichladdich Septic Tank and Outfall Repair, Isle of Islay

Notice is hereby given that Scottish Water has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of Bruichladdich Septic Tank and Outfall Repair, Isle of Islay:

Cost	£330,000	
Location	Latitude	Longitude
Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay	55° 45.941' N 55° 45.921' N	06° 21.706' W 06° 21.675' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Post Office, Mini Market, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay, PA49 7UN.

Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made in writing to:
Licensing Operations Team, Marine Scotland, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or by email:
MS.MarineLicensing@scotland.gsi.gov.uk, quoting reference: 05404
Scottish Water

Proposed Assignment of a Grazings Share(s)

Ian Kennedy is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to assign the grazings share(s) pertaining to the croft at 90-94 Lochyside, Fort William, to Charles Peter Kennedy, of Caberfeidh, Lochyside, Fort William.

If you have an interest in this application, you may submit comments on the proposal in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW (e-mail info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert.

Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

www.highland.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

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
14/03975/FUL	Camus Glas Fish Farm, Loch Sunart	Marine Fish Farm, Atlantic Salmon. Retrospective application for raft and two transfer pens currently in use on site and to extend site area to enclose existing moorings. Application required to discharge condition 3 of Planning Permission FFA/HLD/011 granted by Scottish Ministers 22 July 2014
14/04263/FUL	Arkaig, Wilson Way, Banavie, Fort William	Erection of one & a half storey annexe in garden ground
14/04455/FUL	500 square metres area of foreshore between the islands of Canna, Sanday, Eilean Ghille Mhartin and Iolann An Eilein	Marine Shellfish Farm. Development of a new site consisting of 80 trestles each 4m x 0.75m x 0.3 for the on-growing of Pacific Oyster
14/04550/FUL	Land 1825m SE of Achagavel, Ardgor	Construction of a new forest access
14/04693/FUL	South Channel of Loch Moidart, Eilean Shona, Acharacle	Major Application - Marine Shellfish Farm (Pacific Oysters). Extension of existing site to create 4 plots of oyster trestles (zones 1, 1a, 2 and 3) consisting of a total of 9,522 trestles each 3m x 1m x 0.6m high in a site of 10.58 Ha. Access by tractor and trailer from Newton of Ardtou
14/04694/PIP	Land South of 2 Canon Gillies Place, Arisaig	Erection of house (renewal of permission 11/03686/PIP)
14/04745/FUL	Land 15m NE of 1 Marine Place, Mallaig	Erection of one house
14/04758/FUL	Land 700m SW of Corrie Vullin, Blarmachfoldach, Fort William	Construction of hydroelectric scheme on River Kichnish (amendment to planning permission 14/02912/FUL to cover revised powerhouse position, pipeline route and road approach)

Time period for comments is 14 days
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. 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 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02557/PP	Erection of extension and outbuilding (part retrospective)	MacKay's Guest House Corran Esplanade Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5AQ	Oban Area Office
14/02657/PP	Change of use from public house (sui generis) to form 3 residential flats (class 9)	Former Tight Line Bar Lochawe Dalnally Argyll And Bute PA33 1AQ	Sub Post Office Dalnally
14/02830/PP	Renovation of outbuilding to form self catering unit, offices (class 4), stables, formation of deck area and installation of septic tank	Abernethys Corneil Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1RN	Sub Post Office Corneil
14/02870/PP	Erection of 24 dwellings	Land East Of Lynn Of Lorn Nursing Home Bendersloch Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Ledaig
14/02887/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land North East Of Arle Farmhouse (Plot 3) Aris Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Aris Isle of Mull
14/02889/PP	Partial demolition, alterations, extension and change of use of barn to form dwellinghouse and plant room	Bremmor House Ardun Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA67 6DH	Sub Post Office Bunnass Isle of Mull
14/02920/PP	Erection of shed for timber operations and formation of vehicular access	Beinn Deas Croft Glencruitten Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
14/02929/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle 11/02240/PPP (Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse, formation of access and installation of sewage treatment plant and infiltration area)	Garden Ground And Woodland To East Of Little Cuirn Dervaig Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6QL	Sub Post Office Dervaig
14/02938/PP	Erection of agricultural building	Croft 2 Dervuev Taynult Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Taynult
14/02996/PP	Erection of shed and fencing and change of windows in two bedrooms to form patio doors (retrospective)	Creagan Inn Appin Argyll And Bute PA38 4BQ	Sub Post Office Ledaig
14/03014/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land North Of Seabank Park Bendersloch Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1SB	Sub Post Office Ledaig

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02955/CON AC	Partial demolition of shed	Cullpool House Cullpool Isle Of Luing Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4TX	Sub Post Office Cullpool

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09.00 - 17.00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Marise Lochgighthead Brae PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. 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 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02825/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Pennyraig Smiddy House Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7LW	Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay
14/02885/PPP	Site for the erection of 2 dwellinghouses	Land At Upper Killyvan The Oa Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
14/02888/PP	Erection of 85kW wind turbine 36.6 metres high to blade tip	Land 400M South East Of Colonsay House Kiloran Isle Of Colonsay Argyll And Bute PA61 7YU	Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay
14/02948/PPP	Site for erection of dwellinghouse	Land North West Of Sith Is Fois The Oa Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	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 No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02925/PP	Erection of detached garage/workshop	9 High Street Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay
14/02953/LIB	Alterations and extension to derelict building to form holiday letting units	Former Masonic Hall Main Street Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7JH	Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay
14/02955/PP	Alterations, extension and change of use of derelict building to form holiday letting units	Former Masonic Hall Main Street Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7JH	Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Central Validation Team, 1A Marise Brae, Lochgighthead PA31 8RD.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.

Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

Upper Sonachan Wind Park Public Drop-in Sessions

Portsonachan Village Hall
Wednesday 28th January 2015 12 noon - 7:30pm

Lochawe Community Village Hall
Thursday 29th January 2015 12 noon - 7:30pm

Ecotricity are holding two drop-in sessions to introduce proposals for a wind park at the Upper Sonachan Forest between the B840 and the A819 near Claidich, north of Inverary, Argyll and Bute.

Members of the Ecotricity team will be there to discuss current proposals and the Environmental Impact Assessment work that is being undertaken.

If you're unable to make it to the drop-in sessions and want more information, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Email: upper-sonachan@ecotricity.co.uk
Call: 01463 223377

You can find further information at:
www.ecotricity.co.uk/upper-sonachan

ecotricity

First Registration of a Croft

Mr Alistair John Colthart has registered his croft 4 Kinlochlaich, Kinlochlaich, Lismore and Appin on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 30th September 2015. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/. Ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C365.

Invitation to Tender for Nevis Landscape Partnership's website design

TENDER RETURN DATE - 20/02/2015

REGISTER INTEREST/REQUEST FURTHER INFORMATION - tenders@nevispartnership.co.uk

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www.highland.gov.uk

New Gaelic Classes in Lochaber High School

New Beginners Class Starting Tuesday 20th January, 7pm to 9pm

Ulpan Classes Units Unit 88 to 97 and 73 to 82, Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th January. 7pm to 9pm

Conversation Class Build on your intermediate Gaelic skills in a fun, creative and meaningful way with plenty laughs built in! Thursday 22nd January 7pm to 8.30pm.

Enrolment for all classes will take place on Monday 19th January from 7pm to 8pm at the foyer, Lochaber High School.

Cost for 10 weeks- £45 or £22.50 for HC employees and GM Ed parents.

For further information, please contact Margaret Mulholland, Gaelic Team, Highland Council at 01463 703690 or margaret.mulholland@highland.gov.uk

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Argyll and Bute Council

Public Notice

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Opinions sought on croft house grants

CROFTERS across the Highlands and islands are being urged to take part in the Scottish government's consultation on proposals to revise the Croft House Grant Scheme (CHGS).
The move to revise the rates offered to crofters to construct, improve or maintain crofting housing, in order to attract and keep people in remote rural areas, has been welcomed across the board.
Proposals include the reduction of geographical priority areas from three to two, non-island and island; an increased level of £28,000 and £23,000 for the proposed new high and standard priority areas; and, because the government considers the cost of improvements to be 'broadly similar' irrespective of location, standardising assistance in the new geographical areas.
Welcoming the consultation, Crofting Commission convener

Susan Walker said: 'The payment rates have not been revised for 10 years and are in need of review to ensure that the grant helps crofters in genuine housing need.
'From our discussions with other agencies and stakeholders, there are a range of innovative ideas for how the CHGS could be developed to contribute to providing housing solutions in the crofting counties and help to stem the flow of young people from these areas.'
Councillor Donald Crichton, vice chairman of the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's sustainable development committee, said: 'I welcome the fact that the consultation has been launched at long last but its recommendations fall short of expectations.
'It is disappointing that the government appears to be giving very little with one hand while taking away a lot with the other.
'It is proposing a minimal in-

crease in the building grant and cutting the improvement grant substantially.
'In my view the government fails to recognise the differential costs of building a house on the islands compared to the mainland.
'Missing that obvious point doesn't fill me with confidence that the minister and her civil servants grasp the real challenges faced in the islands where costs are significantly higher than on the mainland.'
MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, Dave Thompson said: 'For the consultation to be successful, it is imperative that folk with an interest in the crofting community respond with their views.
'I too will be making a personal contribution to the consultation and in doing so I intend to highlight that the assistance rates should be at least doubled.'
Michael Russell, MSP for

Argyll and Bute, said: 'The legal requirement for crofters to have to live on or close to their croft can present challenges in terms of availability and quality of suitable housing.
'Therefore, I am pleased that the Scottish Government has announced a consultation into croft housing and the associated payment rates.'
Jamie McGrigor, Highlands and Islands MSP and the convener of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Crofting, said: 'Crofters are clear that the CHGS is a cost-efficient way of the government supporting housing in remote and rural areas but have been very disappointed and frustrated that the grant levels have simply not kept pace with inflation.'
View on the proposed amendments are being sought until March 31 and the document can be found via www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications

Sign up for new rural funding payment system

FARMERS and crofters across Scotland are being invited to register for the new online system for rural funding, Rural Payments and Services.
The new system, which has replaced Rural Payments Online, launched last week and is designed to be simpler, with better information and guidance.
It will help to deliver nearly £4 billion of support to Scotland's farming, food and rural sectors over the next five years alone.
Rural affairs minister Richard Lochhead said: 'The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which was implemented on January 1, is radically different to the previous policy so we needed a new online system.
'Rural Payments and Services has been specifically designed to make submitting an application or claim much clearer, simpler and smarter, and I am pleased

to say the system is now live and farmers and crofters are invited to register.
'My officials are writing to farmers and crofters to let them know that they are now able to register to use the system, with more information about how to go about doing that.
'By having application and claim forms, guidance and up-to-date map and boundary information all in one place, the streamlined and secure Rural Payments and Services should save our hard-working farmers and crofters time, hassle and paperwork.
'I would encourage as many people as possible to use this new system, but recognise that it may not be suitable for everyone. That is why help and advice is available from local area offices.'
Visit www.ruralpayments.org to register.

Cereal estimates up for 2014

SCOTLAND'S 2014 cereal harvest is likely to be the largest in 20 years, with an estimated production of more than three million tonnes of cereals.
In total, around 3.2 million tonnes of cereals are expected, an increase of 384,000 tonnes on 2013.
This represents a recovery from the 2012 crop year, when decreased production was caused by poor growing conditions and a prolonged wet harvest.
This has been a good year for cropping despite occasionally difficult conditions; harvesting began early and progressed quickly, with more consistency in yields across the country.
Wheat and winter barley have seen the largest estimated rises in production, both increasing by around 52 and 46 per cent respectively.
Around 990,000 tonnes of wheat, up from 650,000 tonnes, and around 400,000 tonnes of winter barley, up from 280,000, are expected.
Spring barley production is stable at around 1.7 million tonnes, despite a fall in grown areas. Oats are the only major cereal crop to see considerably reduced production; down 18 per cent from 190,000 to 150,000 tonnes, following an 80 per cent increase in 2013 when oats replaced wheat and oilseed rape crops in part of the country.

Agricultural dealership supplies vehicles for Oxfam aid work in South Sudan

AN AGRICULTURAL vehicle dealership secured a contract worth more than £80,000 to supply quad bikes to help with Oxfam's work in South Sudan.
Gordon Agri, one of Scotland's largest dealerships, based at Drymen, Loch Lomond, recently provided the charity with eight Arctic Cat diesel all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), coupled

with general purpose trailers and a service/maintenance pack to cover a two-year period.
Arctic Cats are a road legal two-seater vehicle that can run on red diesel, making them ideal for use in Oxfam's South Sudan Crisis appeal.
The machines will be used to support the supply of food, water and other essentials to

the large number of refugees in South Sudan.
Because of the volatile state of the country the security and safety of Oxfam workers and volunteers is key and meant Gordon Agri had to adapt the vehicles.
A spokesman for the company explained: 'It was requested that the Arctic Cats were supplied

in white, rather than standard green, in keeping with international peace keeping and support vehicles.
'We were of course happy to complete the transformation by applying specialist painting products and techniques.
'All the equipment had to be prepared for air freight and although we are experienced at

containerisation, the air industry works with far tighter controls.
'We had to ensure that all materials and liquids were accompanied with technical data sheets to comply with air freight regulations.
'The crating of the machines also had to comply with air freight standards and as a company we are pleased to have gained this

experience for future requirements.'
Gordon Agri is now listed as an accredited supplier to Oxfam.
The spokesman added: 'Due to us delivering the goods on time and within budget we anticipate supplying additional machines to support Oxfam in the excellent work they carry out in crisis hit regions throughout the world.'



The Gordon Agri team with Oxfam's ATV order

CAP roadshow presentation on video

ANYONE who missed any of the Common Agricultural Policy roadshow explaining the new system can still see the presentation.
More than 3,000 stakeholders attended 34 locations to hear Scottish government officials explain how CAP support will be delivered from 2015 and what farmers and crofters needed to do to receive CAP funding.
The roadshow is now finished - although further roadshow events focussing on Pillar 2 are planned for 2015 - but anyone who couldn't make it can watch the presentation on YouTube via this link: <http://youtu.be/Klrwd63y6BQ>

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CROFTING CENSUS
Have you completed yours?

The Crofting Census is a legal requirement and all crofters must complete and return the form by Friday 16 January 2015.

The Crofting Commission is working to create a successful crofting system and we need the help of crofters. The Crofting Census provides crofters with the opportunity to shape the future of crofting.

For more information visit:
www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/croftingcensus

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PERSONAL NOTICES

LOCAL SERVICES

Thank you

Ann Stewart would like to thank family and friends for the gifts and flowers she received on her birthday. Also thanks to Forbes McHardy and staff at The Glen Bar and Restaurant for their fantastic service and buffet.

BIRTHS

MACDONALD - Born in Raigmore Hospital on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2014 to Jason and Jenny MacDonald, a beautiful son Lachlan John. Delighted grandparents Jean MacDonald, Ballachulish, and first grandchild to Richard and Irene Stewart, Strathpeffer. Thanking all staff in attendance. Deo Gratias.

MORRISON - Iain Morrison and Elaine Craig are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their baby boy Matthew on Monday January 5, 2015. First grandchild for Barbara Milne, Oban and second grandchild for Mary Mackay, Dunoon and Joe Morrison, Glasgow.

ENGAGEMENTS

HARRISON - BAIRD - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement between Jane Harrison, Taynuilt to Andy Baird, Ahoghill.

DEATHS

HORNE - Suddenly at home in Taynuilt on Monday January 5, 2015, Robin, beloved husband of the late Marjorie. Dear brother, brother-in-law, uncle, grand uncle and great uncle. Funeral service at Perth crematorium on Monday January 19, 2015 at 12.30pm, to which all family and friends are respectfully invited. No flowers, please. A memorial service to be held at Muckairn Church, Taynuilt on Saturday February 7 at 11am.

JARDINE - At Ballachulish on January 8, 2015, the Rev John Henry Jardine, dearly loved and loving husband of the late Beryl Spencer, dear father of Mark, Paul, Alice and Ruth, father-in-law and grandfather. Former headteacher at Glenwood Secondary School, Castlemilk, and member of the Iona Community. Service of committal at Linn Crematorium, Glasgow on Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 4.00pm. Friends welcome. Family flowers only please. A service of thanksgiving at Glenelg Parish Church, Invernesshire will be arranged at a later date.

MACCORQUODALE - Peacefully, surrounded by all her family, on Friday January 9, 2015, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, aged 77 years, Murdina (nee MacDonald), beloved wife of the late Archie, cherished mother of Iain and the late Kenneth and Fiona, devoted nana of Ewan, Kenneth, Iain and Rowan and much loved mother-in-law of Diane. Funeral will take place at Oban Parish Church, Glenclutrin Road, Oban, on Friday January 16, 2015 at 1.00pm. Thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Retrial collection/donations if desired, will be taken for Ward B at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban.

MACPHEE - Peacefully, at the Belford Hospital on January 11, 2015, Donald 'Dan' MacPhee, aged 53 years. A loving and dearly loved brother and uncle. Sadly missed by all who knew him. Funeral service in Kilmornaig Parish Church, Spean Bridge on Saturday January 17, 2015 at 1.00pm, thereafter to Blarouf Cemetery. All friends respectfully invited. Arrangements by John McLellan Funeral Directors.

MACPHERSON - Ernie, in his 69th year, passed away very peacefully at home with his family. Beloved husband of Irene (Ilene) nee Russell, much loved father to Laura and Douglas, adored papa to John and Calum, dear father-in-law to Ronnie and Marina. Sadly missed. The funeral service will take place in Kilmorlich Parish Church, Cairndow on Friday January 16, 2015 at 11.30am, and thereafter to Kilmorlich Cemetery, Cairndow to which all are respectfully invited. Family flowers only please but donations, if desired, to 'Marie Curie Cancer Care'.

NOBLE - Peacefully on Sunday January 11, 2015, George Scott Noble beloved husband of Olive Murray, loving father of George and John and dear brother of the late Gilbert. Funeral will take place on Thursday January 15, 2015 at 1.00pm at the Parish Church, Oban

RENNIE - Nancy Cowan Guy. After a long and brave struggle Nancy died peacefully surrounded by family at Lorn and Islands Hospital on January 9, 2015. Daughter of Margaret and Alex Walker. Beloved wife of George. Loving mother of Morag and Morvern and grandmother of Colin and Fiona. Funeral service will be held at St. Oran's Church, Connel on Thursday, January 15 at 3.30pm. A committal service will take place at Cardross Crematorium, Cardross on Friday, January 16 at 10.15am. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection/donations, if desired, for Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

ROBERTSON - Alastair Campbell (Sandy). Peacefully on January 6, 2015 aged 88. Husband of the late Jill, father of James (d), Bruce, Malcolm, Barbara and a beloved granfather, sadly missed. Funeral Service at Kilmorven Parish Church, Oban, on Friday January 30, at 1.00pm. Retrial collection in lieu of flowers, please. Enquires to Hamish Hoey & Son Ltd. 01631 562269.

ROSS - Suddenly after a short illness on Wednesday, December 31, 2014 at the Southern General Hospital, Helen, beloved wife of the late Donald Ross (late of Bonawe). Much loved mother of Donald and Kenneth and mother-in-law to Aileen. Devoted granny to Callum, Alexander and Katie. Deeply missed by her sister-in-law and her nephews and nieces.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HENDERSON - The family of the late Sheila Henderson, wife of the late Duncan Henderson, Newton, Acharacle wish to thank all who came to pay their last respects at the funeral service, to all who contributed the sum of £650 for the Macmillan nurses at the Belford Hospital, and also to those who sent expressions of sympathy. Thanks to the Rev Fiona Ogg and organist Ella Gill for conducting a lovely funeral service, and also to Mike McFall and staff for their professional and dignified funeral arrangements. Special thanks to Alex Morrison for a rich and humorous eulogy and to grandson Hector Henderson for piping. Thanks also to Loch Shiel Hotel for their excellent hospitality after the funeral. Our grateful thanks go to the nurses of the Belford Hospital, Fort William for the loving care they afforded Sheila during her last months. The Henderson Family.

McFADYEN - Margaret and family of the late John would like to thank all for their kindness and expressions of sympathy. Thank you to Father James MacNeil for his comforting words. To Ian MacInnes and staff for their compassion and dignified arrangements. Also to the Rowanree Hotel for an excellent buffet. With grateful thanks to all who helped care for John. Finally a very special thank you to Oban Gaelic Choir past and present for their wonderful voices. The sum of £234.62 was collected and donated to Alzheimers Scotland (Oban and Bran Branch).

MACKECHNIE - Florence and the late family of the late Alice M. MacKechnie would like to thank all the relatives and friends for kind expressions of sympathy, flowers, cards and especially for attendance at the cemetery service. Thanks to Rev. Johnny Paton for a lovely service. Billy McClymont, John Archibald for dignified funeral arrangements, Isle of Mull Hotel for handsome buffet. Thanks to Elizabeth, Marie and Fiona for their kindness to Alice. Special thanks to Dr Frank Teunisse and Dr Liz Pictou for their care and attention.

SIMPSON - The family of the late Joey Simpson would like to thank everyone for the kind expressions of sympathy received following our sad loss. Thanks to those who cared for Joey at Oban and Connel surgeries, The Lynn and on Ward B. Thanks to Rev Chris Fulcher and Donald MacKinnon for a comforting service. Ian MacInnes for funeral arrangements and The Glen for catering. Special thanks to Dugie MacLean and Fire Service members (past and present) for their assistance and touching tributes paid. Finally our thanks to Iain Hurst for playing Joey's favourite tunes, and to the friends who visited him over the past year, which we much appreciated. Joey's collection for Erskine Hospital raised £665.

MEMORIAMS

CAMPBELL - Treasured memories of our dear mother and gran Marion, who died January 17, 1997. Remembered today and always. - Lorne, Kathie, Alasdair and Christine Loved always - Kirsteen and Harry

CLARK - In loving memory of Angus Ross Clark, a much loved husband, father, father-in-law and adoring Granpa, who passed away 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 everyday by all the family. - Peggy, Morag, Dugie, Donald and Gavin. Mike, Kaye and Lorraine. Nicola, Paula, Ryan, Cooper, Taylor, Dara, Iona, Colin and Ciaran.

CRAWFORD - In memory of Jessie, died January 20, 1995, dear wife, mother and gran. Sadly missed. - Eddie and family.

CRUICKSHANK - In lasting memory of Jimmy a much loved husband, father and grandfather who left us suddenly on January 15, 1999. Though sixteen years have passed You are forever in our hearts. - Kate, Iain, Dougie and all the family.

EVANS - In loving memory of a dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, who passed away peacefully on January 10, 2008. Sadly missed by all and forever in our thoughts. - Nigel, Hazel, David, Gareth and Kaitlyn.

GALBRAITH - In loving memory of George of Langamull and of Drumfingall, Derivaig, Mull, who died on January 20, 1995. - Brenda and family.

HAY - Treasured memories of Jimmy, a much loved son, brother, brother-in-law and uncle who died on January 10, 1998. Precious memories keep you near as time unfolds another year. Forever loved. - Mum, Donald, Anthea, Iain and families.

HIGGINS - Linda Joyce, (nee Donnelly), born January 13, 1956, died January 15, 2014. Wife of Daniel and mother of Steven. Rest peacefully as although you are sadly no longer with us, you remain fondly remembered.

MACDONALD - 20th anniversary. In memory of a dear mum, mother-in-law and granny Cathie MacDonald (Rosemount), who died on January 12, 1995. Gone but not forgotten. - Margaret, Archie, Fiona and Duncan.

MACDONALD - In memory of Catherine MacCallum (Cathie) who died January 12, 1995. Dear wife of Robert MacDonald (Bobby), who died July 20, 1965. Always remembered. - From Alistair and family, Glenalma, Soroba Road, Oban

MACINNES - In loving memory of Duncan (Eriskay), much loved husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather who sadly passed away January 3, 2013. We thought of you with love today but that is nothing new. We thought about you yesterday and the days before that too. We think of you in silence and often speak your name. All we have are memories and your picture in a frame. Your memory is our keepsake. With which we will never part. God has you in his keeping. We have you in our hearts. - Nellie and family xx.

MACIVER - In loving memory of dear Duncan, who died January 12, 2007. Precious memories. - Chrissie and Rob, Colin and Jocelyn.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of my nana Nancy, who passed away on January 16, 2013. Always remembered. - Duncan.

MACLEOD - In loving memory of our dearly loved son Douglas who was accidentally drowned at the Marina, Largs on January 13, 2007.

The call was sudden The shock severe To lose a son we loved so dear As thoughts drift back as they often do We cherish memories we have of you. - Dad and Mum.

MACMILLAN - In fond and loving memory of our dear son, Mark, who died January 14, 1991 aged 15 years. The hardest thing in life to bear Is to want your child and he's not there With tears in our eyes we whisper low We love you Mark and miss you so. - Love you always Dad and Mum, Ballachulish xx

MACMILLAN - Treasured memories of my dear brother Mark. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day Sadly missed. - Iain, Frances, Lucy and Cara xx

MACMILLAN - Mark. Miss you always. Love you. - Jane xxx

MACMILLAN - Our cousin Mark, aged 15, January 14, 1991. Always in our thoughts. - Lynne and family xxx

MACMILLAN - In loving memory of Mark, died January 14, 1991, age 15. Forever in our thoughts. - Maureen, Andrew and Andrew

MACRAE - Precious memories of Len loving husband dad, and grampa, who died January 18, 2003. Forever in our hearts, always in our thoughts. - Love Kate and families.

Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

CHURCH NOTICE

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers) meet 2nd Sunday of each month 11am Port Appin Hall PA38 4DE Tel 01631 730594 All welcome

CHARITY DONATIONS

Oban Hospice CARING FOR THE FUTURE Donations always gratefully accepted Please contact Jack Tollan Birch Hill Achnacreebeag North Connel, PA37 1RE

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT Working towards a time when every person in Scotland has equal and ready access to the best information, treatment and care for cancer West of Scotland Fundraising Office 1st Floor, Erskine House North Avenue, Clydebank Business Park, Clydebank G81 2DR Tel 0808 100 6000 In memory of Dawn Joyce

CANCER RESEARCH UK Fighting Cancer on all fronts... CRC Scotland spends more on research than any other organisation Commitment of over £15 million each year Cancer Research UK Angel Building 407 St John Street London EC1V 4AD

MARIE CURIE CANCER CARE Oban & Lorn Fundraising Branch Donations always gratefully accepted Please contact Mrs Lillian Kermode Tynwald, Glenburn, Soroba Road, Oban 01631 571009

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Thought for the week

Looking back, looking forward

JANUARY - dark days, winter bugs, bills to pay. The lights and celebrations of Christmas are so quickly forgotten and it can be a low month for many. And yet, the days are lengthening, the white flowers of snowdrops appear, deceptively fragile looking and yet able to withstand the worst of winter weather. The month of January takes its name from the Roman god Janus, depicted as having two faces, since he

looks to the past and to the future. It is good to look back and to take stock of the past. What were the highlights, treasured memories to keep and savour? What wasn't so good and is there anything we can do to put things right? What excites or challenges us about the year ahead? Looking back, looking forward are good things to do in this first month of a new year - but it is all too easy to miss out on the present.

Here is a verse to think about: Look to this day; Yesterday is already a dream And tomorrow is only a vision, But today well lived Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Rev Joyce Watson, Scottish Episcopal Church, Isle of Iona.

Tribute to the late Joseph Simpson MBE

BY THE time I knew Joey he was in partnership with Robert McDonald, running the plumber's business and was expected to be available for call outs at any time of day or night every day of the week. This coupled with him being a retained fire fighter in the Oban unit. His life was a monument to what one can pack into life, the lesson taught is that a structure must rest on solid foundation. His strong foundation was his family. His wife Cathy whom he first met when he was 14 years of age just shows the depth of that foundation. They had a son William, but they were reinforced even more by their brothers and sisters. William was an only son however he had all of his cousins who were as close as any brother or sister. In particular Caroline who is there for William to this day. The pipe band and the military were the other two walls, showing his service to community and country. Joey was really of quiet demeanor and went about his duties without fuss. In fact one Obanite mentioned to me his regret on hearing of his passing and remarked that he did

not know Joey had been awarded a MBE. Such was the man, he never bragged. Joey received his MBE for his services to the Crown, Country and Community. He was conscripted and served his country in the Black Watch regiment. He fought in an often forgotten conflict, Korea, he was wounded in the clash and was discharged back home, fortunately he recovered and like many in the forces never spoke about their experiences at war. When he retired he helped out at the local War and Peace Museum and I would have loved to have heard the craic with his fellow comrades. In the fire service Joey was officer in charge of the retained Oban unit. Joey, and his experience was put to the test when there was a serious fire in an Oban hotel, where 10 people lost their life and some of his crew were injured. For Joey, that incident was only the beginning. The formal Home Office enquiry was followed by the judicial proceedings, everything all under the microscope. It was some two years before everything was concluded.

Not many professional fire personnel of even the most senior rank has ever had such a traumatic experience. Behind all this, however, was the support of 'the family'. At the funeral of his beloved Cathy, Joey remarked: 'You know, she was the love of my life'. It was surely a proud moment for both of them to attend Buckingham Palace to receive, from her Majesty the Queen, his MBE. Even if it was the pipe band or fire station needs, the family was there as it is today, demonstrated in the soup lunches or Christmas children's party. Joey was an enthusiastic band member and even held the office of president. Joey must be remembered as the bass drummer adorned in his Scarlet tunic with his body clothed in a leopard skin and wearing a Busby in the central position of the band as they paraded down the street. When Joey did have some leisure time, he sometimes would go shooting or fishing with Hector or Foxy, his brother-in-law for company. With all sympathy to all the Simpson, MacTavish and MacAdam family.

AM

Special ecumenical service in Oban

AN ECUMENICAL service is being held at Oban Parish Church to let other congregations in the town see how services are conducted there. From 10.30am this Sunday, January 18, the Episcopal and Baptist congregations are joining the Glenclutrin congregation led by Rev Dugald Cameron. Episcopal church minister Very Rev Nicki McNelly and Baptist minister Rev Ian MacFarlane will be leading worship alongside Rev Cameron and parish assistant minister Chris Fulcher, who said: 'As the service is being held in the parish church this year it

will reflect our tradition, so giving folk from the other denominations a flavour of how we worship from week to week. 'Next year we will join together in another church in the town and so learn something of that denomination. 'Everyone is welcome to join us for this service, regardless of denomination, as we join to worship God together and get to know each other a little better.' The service is based on a theme and resources which are produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and this year's theme is 'The Well is Deep'.

100th birthday

A FORMER Ballachulish woman marked her 100th birthday on Christmas Eve with three generations of her family in Benderloch's Lynn of Lorne care home. Kathleen Peace was also joined by fellow residents and staff at the home. Accordion player Ross MacPherson played Happy Birthday and a few tunes to entertain the guests. Among the well-wishers were Kathleen's daughter Angela Horsell, who lives in Ballachulish, granddaughter Beth Hilton and great-grandson Max Hilton.



Kathleen Peace was joined by three generations of her family at her birthday party in the Lynn of Lorne, Benderloch. 16_102hundred01

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Fort manager not worried about eight-game fixture backlog

'In my last season in charge we got 20 points on a run of Wednesday and Saturday games'

FORT William manager Calum MacLean believes his squad are more than capable of handling a fixture backlog when the time comes.

Football

The postponement of last Saturday's league encounter away to Formartine United means the Claggan Park men now have eight outstanding games to be rescheduled before the end of the season.

Hurricane-force winds and heavy rain in the north-east forced the match to be called off and cut off telephone lines, meaning Formartine had to resort to social media to inform Fort about the call-off before they travelled.

MacLean's squad is more than used to these situations, with many games cancelled already this campaign due to frozen and waterlogged playing surfaces.

Some of the postponed fixtures are likely to be pencilled in for midweek evenings later in the season, leaving the team to play two matches a week for a period of time.

But the manager says his players will relish these circumstances.

MacLean said: 'The games will probably run Wednesday-Saturday-Wednesday-Saturday.'

'In my last season in charge we got 20 points on a run of Wednesday-Saturday games, we were playing all the time which was good.'

'The players prefer that actual-

ly, they just want to play football.'

Fort will have home advantage this Saturday when they welcome Fraserburgh to Claggan Park providing the weather holds out.

Their opponents, who also had a weekend off when their match against Lossiemouth was postponed, are 27 points ahead in the Highland league table despite being only six places higher than Fort who lie in 13th spot, though MacLean's boys have four games in hand over them.

After accomplishing a record-breaking run winning their last four matches in a row, the manager was asked if they can make it five.

'Why not?' he said. 'We are not frightened of anyone at home.'

'Fraserburgh are a good footballing side but we gave them a good game earlier in the season even though they won 3-0.'

'And I think they were top of the league at the time.'

Sean Ellis, who returned to play for Fort along with Stuart Vance on a short-term deal over the festive period, is expected to leave for his home in Australia this week, with Vance due to follow soon after.

Both players only managed single substitute appearances due to the recent postponements, but it is hoped they could return next Christmas.



The field prepare for the difficult conditions of the Riverbank Splodge 20_f03athletics01

Splodging through the mud and mire

LOCHABER athletes were joined by visiting runners for this year's Riverbank Splodge race at Glen Nevis on Sunday.

It was Michael Bossard of Lochaber Athletic Club who completed the seven-mile route first of the 69 participants, manoeuvring difficult underfoot conditions to reach the finish line in 51 minutes and 42 seconds.

Steve MacDonald and Callum Fraser, both of Lochaber, took second and third, finishing in 51:54 and 52:06 respectively. Diane Baum, Lochaber AC, was first lady home, arriving at the Claggan Park finish line in a time of 59:13.

The runners faced wind, rain and sleet but the weather was not the only difficulty as the route took them uphill before reaching

mud, bog, burn crossings and slippery terrain at River Nevis.

Participants thanked volunteers for their efforts, which included clearing fallen trees and branches from the route as well as the usual duties of registration, timekeeping and marshalling.

Meanwhile, the youngsters took part in their own race at Melantee as part of the club's junior winter league. The field was split into a number of age and gender categories but best times overall went to Daniel Teape and Innes Orr, who crossed the finish line together in 11 minutes and six seconds, while Rebecca Johnstone was first home of the girls in 11 minutes and 47 seconds.

Top 20 finishers of Riverbank Splodge

Athletics

(Lochaber AC unless otherwise stated): 1 Michael Bossard 51:42; 2 Steve MacDonald 51:54; 3 Callum Fraser 52:06; 4 Lawrence Ramsay (unattached) 52:21; 5 Luke Taylor (Highland Hill Runners) 52:33; 6 Allan Ross 53:50; 7 Stephen Burns 54:52; 8 Jon Gay 55:45; 9 Steven Burns 56:44; 10 Ryan Stewart (unattached) 56:54; 11 Finlay Walton (Westerlands Cross Country Club) 57:08; 12 Aidan Donnelly 57:12; 13 Diane Baum 59:13; 14 Hughie MacKintosh 59:25; 15 Andy Dale 59:34; 16 Michael Bell 59:47; 17 Sarah Mackenzie 59:53; 18 Allan Lamont 1:00:12; 19 Bruce Griffiths (unattached) 1:00:54; 20 Neil Waslidge (unattached) 1:01:24.



Volunteers and youngsters celebrate 10 years of Lochaber Street League, but fear for the future of the club 20_f03streetleague01

Junior football league under threat

THE FUTURE of Lochaber's junior summer football league could be under threat due to lack of volunteers.

Organisers and youngsters met in the Nevis Centre for a tournament on Saturday to celebrate 10 years of Street League but the event was tinged with sadness as it is feared this could be the end of the popular club.

Three key committee members, including chairwoman Rosemary MacPhee and right hand man

John Treasurer, who have dedicated their time to Street League since its inception, are stepping down and appealing for new volunteers to secure the future of the football group.

Mrs MacPhee said: 'Street League is still hugely successful after 10 years and during this time we have seen a lot of wonderful youngsters come through.'

'It has been an absolute pleasure to work with the youngsters but now we're looking for new

Youth football

volunteers who can bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

'It's a great organisation to be part of and all volunteers work in partnership with Highland Council and Police Scotland Highlands and Islands division.'

To volunteer for next year's events contact Donna Calder on 07747659221 or via the Lochaber Street League Facebook page.

George wins Bryan Whyte Trophy

MORE than 100 people turned out to a competition in memory of a Lochaber darts star who died in a car crash last year.

There wasn't a dry eye in the house at this year's Buckie Darts Open, as tributes were made to Bryan Whyte, who won the event in 2013 and 2014.

The 34-year-old Spean Bridge



Bryan Whyte.



Winner George Main (left), won the trophy in honour of darts star Bryan Whyte. George is pictured with Bryan's brother James

man had been set for further success in the sport, as he was called up to play for Scotland before his tragic death near Inverloch Castle in February.

Raffle

Mr Whyte's brother James Whyte travelled from Fort William to attend the event in the town's Fishermen's Hall on January 3, and was delighted to hear proceeds from the raffle held on the day will be donated to the late Mr Whyte's fiancée Dawn Gordon and their four children.

Of the 102 players, it was Inverness man George Main, a friend

Darts

of Bryan's, who won the trophy and £500 prize.

He said: 'It was a very emotional day knowing that it was for the Bryan Whyte Trophy, and I am so chuffed at winning and following in the footsteps of such a fantastic person and player and who will always be in our thoughts.'

Organiser Johnny Dunbar added: 'We would like to thank everyone who came along and took part in this great day of darts and were delighted to get more than 100 players.'

Alleycats are the top dogs

Ten pin bowling

ALLEYCATS have a new spring in their step after becoming the new scratch division leaders in the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league.

The competition returned for week 11 in the Nevis Centre following the festive break and Alleycats now have 47 points, bumping The Creeps to second place with 46 and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are third with 45.

In the handicap division, Rotavators retain the top spot with 46 points, while Alleycats remain in second place with 42 points, followed by Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with 37.

The top individual game came from Gus Fraser of Council, who scored 209. It was a triple success for Fraser who also had the top handicap game with 261 and the top two-game handicap series with 448. Brian Johnstone had the top two-game scratch series with 348.

Council rolled the top scratch game of the week with 609, the top handicap game of 847 and the top two-game handicap series with 1627.

Alleycats scored a season high so far with 1190 for the scratch team series.

Highest scratch average is held by Pam Weller of Alleycats on 156, followed by Tony Whitelocke, also of Alleycats, with 153 and Stewart Duncan, The Creeps, on 144.

Bronze for Rebecca in Edinburgh

Cross country

FIVE YOUNG Lochaber athletes were selected for a north team for a cross-country race in Edinburgh at the weekend.

Rebecca Johnstone of Invergarry earned a bronze medal in the under 13 race at Holyrood on Saturday, finishing the tough four kilometre route in 15 minutes and two seconds.

Rebecca's older brother Ben took part in the longer under 15s race and finished in 18 minutes and 45 seconds, while Craig MacLean fought off tough competition in the under 20s, completing the route in 35 minutes and 42 seconds.

Two Lochaber teens took part in the under 17s category and Steven Burns narrowly missed out on a medal with his time of 26 minutes and 20 seconds, closely followed by Bruce MacLean in 27 minutes and 45 seconds.

Coach Jim Treasurer said: 'The Holyrood course was badly cut up and muddy which made it strength sapping and wet and windy weather contributed to a hard race.'

'This was a long trip for the young athletes but they enjoyed the experience of racing at the highest level.'



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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, mistaid 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

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter. Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



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Oban Lorne maul table-toppers in one-sided game at Glencruitten

Gap at the top narrows to seven points but Green Machine has two games in hand

Oban Lorne	40
Cambuslang	0
RBS West Division Two	

Rugby

THE GREEN Machine fielded its strongest side of the season and put in arguably its most dominant display in a six-try demolition of table-toppers Cambuslang.

In the build up to this match coach Corrie Louw demanded victory to jump-start a title charge and his team responded with a flying start, spending the first 10 minutes camped in the visitors' 22 at Glencruitten.

An already impressive Lorne pack was strengthened by the addition of Greg McGill and 17-year-old Jamie Bate, starting his first game of senior rugby in the back row.

Cambuslang's defence stood strong during this early onslaught on a pitch in great condition, despite the inclement weather.

But Oban's opening score was inevitable and it was Struan Smith who touched down for the home side. His try came after some great individual runs from the Oban pack gaining vital momentum against a weakening defence.

Andrew Abraham converted for a 7-0 lead.

Oban took a lot of confidence from this score and were looking very dangerous with ball in hand.

Dave McCabe, Cammy Smith and Callum MacLachlan were all dominating over their opposite numbers and a flowing move, starting from the halfway line and involving the majority of the team, resulted in centre Craig Wright extending the lead on 25 minutes with a try in the right

corner. This was one of the best tries Oban has scored this season, and an example of well-executed handling and quick recycling of the ball at the breakdown.

The home side was now well on top and scored its third try of the afternoon on the half hour mark with stand-off Andrew Abraham crossing over.

Oban led 21-0 and were easing through most areas of the game.

The scrum, in particular, was impressing with props Carl Lay, Tommy Sutherland, Donald Budge and Andrew Johnston all being rotated at the right time by the coaching staff to have maximum impact on the game.

A shell-shocked Cambuslang attacked well in the closing stages of the first half but did not look close to scoring against a confident Oban defence.

With the weather turning colder and wetter, the sides struggled with ball in hand in the early stages of the second half.

Both teams were failing to form a structure in the game and therefore had no real platform from which to attack.

Cambuslang had a try disallowed by referee Willie Malone with 20 minutes to go, because of a double movement and this served as a wake-up call for Lorne.

The home side turned up the pressure in the final 15 minutes by scoring three further tries. Corrie Louw picked and ran from a five-metre scrum on 65 minutes for try number four,



WELL-TAKEN: Cammy Smith dives over for a well-taken try against league leaders Cambuslang at Glencruitten last Saturday

Cammy Smith got Oban's fifth with a fantastic powerful run within the 22 and Struan Smith got his second of the day with a couple of minutes to go by taking a quick tap and going over from five metres out.

The biggest cheer of the day was for young debutant and man-of-the-match Jamie Bate who stepped up and slotted over the last conversion to gain his first Oban Lorne points and seal an impressive 40-0 win.

Coach Corrie Louw said he was happy with the overall performance of his team, particularly the improvement in discipline.

Seven points

Saturday's win narrows the gap at the top of the league to seven points with Oban Lorne having two games in hand on their rivals.

Next up for Oban Lorne is a tough away trip to Strathendrick this Saturday. Strathendrick pulled off one of the league's

shock results this season by winning 19-9 at Glencruitten. A win for Oban Lorne will see them pull away from the rest of the league and hopefully narrow the gap on Cambuslang even further.

Oban Lorne: C Lay, R MacQueen, D Budge, G McGill, L MacLachlan, S Smith, J Bate, C Louw, G MacEachan, A Abraham, P Moisiadis, C Smith, C Wright, C MacLachlan and D MacCabe.

Subs: A Johnston, T Sutherland,

A MacDougall, C Thwaites, T Prys Jones and D Hoey.

Oban Lorne's S1 and S2 teams take on Preston Lodge on Saturday while the under 16s travel to East Kilbride on Sunday.

Argyll and Bute RFC's home game against bottom side Glasgow East was called off on Saturday when the visitors failed to raise a team.

Argyll are away to Police Scotland in Glasgow this Saturday.



FOREARM SMASH: Dave McCabe barges his way past a Cambuslang defender during last Saturday's match

Photo: Kevin McGlynn

Magnus secures professional contract with Edinburgh Rugby

Rugby

RUGBY prospect Magnus Bradbury has secured a two-year professional contract with Edinburgh Rugby after his debut last October as an academy player.

The 19-year-old back row player has been cutting his teeth at Boroughmuir this season but will turn professional on June 1 this year.

The 6ft 4in player, who hails from Bonawe, started his career at Oban Lorne and worked his way through the age grades for Glasgow, then Edinburgh and Scotland and is in the Scotland under-20 squad for this year's Six Nations. Magnus made his full pro team debut for Edinburgh, in the starting XV, in October's Guinness PRO12 fixture at the RDS against Leinster.

He said: 'It was a great experience and really opened my eyes to the intensity of the pro game. Training with the guys is one thing but that game was a snapshot of what a step up it is.'

'This is something I've been working towards for years and I just want to keep on pushing, training to the best of my ability and to keep on raising my game.'

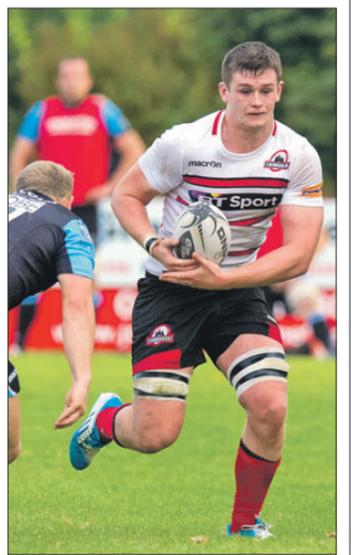
Like all academy players, Magnus has benefited from being mentored by a senior player in his position, in his case captain Mike Coman.

He said: 'Mike has definitely helped me. We discuss my game, how it's going and where I can improve.'

'Next season I really want to work hard to establish myself as a player and get as much game time as I can.'

PRO CONTRACT: Magnus has impressed in an Edinburgh jersey and has been rewarded with a professional contract

Photo: Scottish Rugby/SNS Images



Top-of-the-table clash in Oban Pool League

THE OBAN Pool League returned to action last Thursday night with the much-anticipated top-of-the-table clash between The Lochavullin's Cellar and The Lancaster 'A' headlining.

Perfect records

Both sides came into the fixture with perfect records but defending champions The Lochavullin's Cellar had home advantage.

With a fair percentage of Oban's finest cueists featured many would expect an exhibition showcasing their talent but with so much riding on the result nerves and pressure put an end to that.

Despite not being at their best, The Lochavullin's Cellar's superiority at putting frames to bed from winning positions saw off an under-performing Lancaster 'A' and put themselves firmly in the driving seat as they chase a third straight title.

The Lochnell continued their excellent run of form moving up into third spot after a comfortable home win over The Lochavullin.

Folly

Although they have been beaten twice this season, both were against the top two and it would be folly to write off their credentials so early with many big

games still to be played. After an early season defeat Markie Dan's 'A' have been overlooked as title contenders by most, but a fourth consecutive victory saw them slowly climb the table almost under the radar.

Tempers

The Lancaster 'B' were their opponents last week and, although tempers threatened to boil over, Markie Dan's prevailed to thrust themselves into title contention.

The concluding game of the week saw Markie Dan's 'B' pick up their second win of the league season to ease away from the bottom two and confine The

Pool

Outreach to the wooden spoon position.

Tonight (Thursday) the remaining eight teams contest The Oban Filling Station Cup quarter-finals.

Results, January 8: Lochavullin's Cellar 7-3 Lancaster A, Lancaster B 3-7 Markie Dans A, Lochnell 7-3 Lochavullin, Outreach 4-6 Markie Dans B.

Fixtures, January 15: Markie Dans B v Lochnell, Lochavullin's Cellar v Lancaster B, Outreach v Lancaster B, Lancaster A v Gluepot.

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WEATHER

Thursday Rain
Winds strong west south westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

Friday Sleet showers
Winds strong westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

Weekend Outlook Sleet and rain on Saturday
Sunny intervals on Sunday
Winds moderate westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 15, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm						
Thur	00.18	3.0	06.33	1.9	12.50	3.1	19.40	2.0
Fri	02.10	3.1	07.42	1.8	14.33	3.2	20.46	1.8
Sat	03.14	3.3	08.51	1.6	15.33	3.4	21.41	1.5
Sun	04.03	3.5	09.55	1.3	16.20	3.6	22.29	1.2
Mon	04.46	3.8	10.49	1.0	17.02	3.8	23.14	0.9
Tues	05.28	4.0	11.38	0.8	17.42	4.0	23.57	0.6
Wed	06.08	4.2	12.25	0.6	18.21	4.0	** **	**

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrisaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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Sports cash lost as Tesco shelves new store plans

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

LOCHABER has lost £500,000 earmarked for an indoor sports centre because Tesco has shelved plans for a new store in the area.

But the group behind the proposed facility has been told 'not to worry'.

The supermarket giant announced last week the development at Blar Mor, on the outskirts of Fort William,

was to be scrapped after having permission to build since 2010.

This means Highland Council will not receive the planned £400,000 when the supermarket doors open, or a further £100,000 to be received when a second development opened on the site, both promised through Tesco's community benefit fund.

But the local authority has already pledged £600,000 in principle to Lochaber Sports

Association (LSA) for the £1.47million training centre, which is currently under planning review.

Jane Blanchard of LSA said she was concerned about how the facility, set to include a 3G pitch, would be paid but is still confident. She added: 'When I heard about Tesco I knew I had to ask the question but I've been told our case for a new facility is still very positive.'

'None of us will know for definite until it is discussed at a Highland Council meeting in March but I've been working on a business plan with High Life Highland, which will be running the centre, and Ian Murray, [chief executive], thinks we have a strong case.'

'It's all still very vague but we remain very positive that it's going to go ahead and we've been told not to worry about the Tesco situation.'

Bill Clark, Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig said the pledge 'should be honoured' and the local authority 'will need to find the money from somewhere'.

A Highland Council spokeswoman declined to comment on how the £500,000 would be replaced but said a business case for the facility will be considered in the next two to three months.

She added: 'The council continues to be engaged in positive discussions with Lochaber Sports Association about potential support for, and development of, the Fort William indoor training facility.'

Including the £600,000 in principle from Highland Council, LSA has currently raised £1,118,305 of the £1.47 million target. The fate of the sports centre is expected to be decided at the next full Highland Council meeting on March 12.

Disappointment at decision to pull out of Fort William

'DEEPLY disappointing' and a 'waste of time' were the words used by Lochaber public figures to describe the decision to scrap plans for a new Tesco in Fort William.

Dave Lewis, chief executive officer for the supermarket giant, announced last Thursday that the planned store, along with a further 55 in Scotland, will no longer be going ahead.

He said: 'It is with a heavy heart that I am announcing today that we are unable to proceed with 56 new planned store developments across the country, including our planned store in Fort William. I know this news will be a real disappointment to many people in your community and we are extremely grateful for the support we have received for our plans.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, said the loss of potential jobs and

supermarket competition will be 'a hard pill to swallow'. He added: 'This is deeply disappointing news for residents in Fort William and right across Lochaber. As someone who lives in Fort William, I know how much this new store was sought after.'

Bill Clark, Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig, said in light of the news he is glad the local authority's planning committee granted permission for a new Aldi supermarket in the town last month.

He added: 'All of this has been a waste of time. If we had granted the Morbaine development [Aldi] at the same time as Tesco when they were both up for planning in 2010 we would at least have had something. We're now in the position more than four years later where we have neither and it'll take a long time before Aldi is ready so it'll stay that way for the foreseeable future.'



School bus takes flight in hurricane force winds

A SCHOOL bus was left hanging precariously off a cliff last Friday after being blown through the air by hurricane-force winds on the isle of Scalpay.

Thankfully the South Harris Coaches vehicle, left, was empty when it was whisked into the air the previous night, with driver Callum Macleod waking up in the morning to find it lying over the edge.

He said: 'It was resting on a rock, which stopped it from falling down and was a total write-off.'

For more reports on weather problems in the West Highlands and islands, see page seven.

Welcome news as crime figures drop

POLICE have reported a big reduction in overall crime figures in the south Highland area from April to December 2014 compared with the same period the previous year.

In the region, which stretches from Fort William to Portree, Nairn and Aviemore, there has been a 40 per cent drop in crimes of violence with 19 incidents reported last year, down from 32 between April and December 2013.

Damage, fire-raising and malicious mischief has dropped by 25 per cent, while miscellaneous crime, including breach of the peace and antisocial behaviour, is down by 23 per cent.

Crimes of dishonesty have fallen by 16 per cent.

Thomas MacLennan, leader of the Lochaber area committee, welcomed the statistics.

He said: 'This is excellent news, the police should be commended for achieving these figures.'

'It shows what a great area Lochaber is to live.'

Skye parents in last ditch attempt to save school

PARENTS in north-west Skye have made a last ditch attempt to save their village school from closure, as Highland councillors were deciding its fate yesterday (Wednesday).

As The Oban Times went to press, members of the local authority's education, children and adult services committee were voting on whether to approve the recommendation to close Edinbane, Knockbreck and Struan schools and move pupils into a new and larger Dunvegan primary school, leaving some pupils with a 24-mile round trip.

The move would see a new amalgamated facility with four classrooms built to house up to 66 pupils and the council believes modern surroundings, plus increased interaction with other children, will contribute to a better learning environment.

But the Edinbane community is determined to keep a school in the village, saying they will even take responsibility for the building's maintenance.

Speaking before the meeting, Fances MacLean, chairwoman of Edinbane parent council, said: 'We had a meeting on Thursday night and there's still massive support for saving the school.'

'Ideally we want the building with the school in it, even if that means we buy the building and look after the building and grounds.'

'If there's no way of that happening we don't want the council to dispose of it. We'd like to keep it and use it as a community facility.'

'We've written to the council about it but now it's just a case of waiting on the result of the decision.'

Food shop closed for two week revamp

KINLOCHLEVEN'S co-operative food store is to close for almost two weeks from Saturday, January 17.

The Stevenson Terrace store will undergo refurbishment during the fortnight before re-opening on Friday January 30.

During the closure, a 'pop-up shop' will be available adjacent to the main store, selling necessities such as bread and milk.



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Spean Bridge residents' anger grows over road repair delays

GORDON WEBSTER
fort@obantimes.co.uk

SPEAN Bridge residents have 'had enough' of negotiating with a maintenance firm to get their crumbling roads fixed, following 'appalling' resurfacing work in the village.

John Fotheringham, chairman of Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council, has made freedom of information requests to Transport Scotland and highway contractors BEAR Scotland to ask why rough sections of the A82 Glasgow to Inverness road have not

yet been repaired, despite being informed last August that they would.

The junction where the A82 joins the A86 road to Newtonmore has had tar added twice since October, but this has quickly eroded, leaving potholes and drainage problems.

In addition, a 200-yard section from the junction to the Bridge Café in the south of the village was left untouched in the autumn maintenance programme, as BEAR said it would cause disruption to businesses and was not necessary because it had completed a pavement survey there.

Mr Fotheringham says all roads through Spean Bridge need attention

and has questioned the commitment of the contractors. He said: 'We have no confidence in BEAR to handle our issues. The whole thing is just appalling and we have had enough.'

'The [A82/A86] junction was patched up in December and it's breaking up again. Transport Scotland seem to be oblivious to what's happened but I don't think there is anything they can hide this time.'

A spokeswoman from BEAR Scotland said: 'We have been monitoring the site and following on from the interim repairs carried out in December.'

'Full resurfacing of the affected area is planned for early this year.'

KEEP THE FAMILY WARM THIS WINTER

February bookings now being taken for Lochaber home surveys

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NEW Website

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opening SOON

The Floorshop's new shop will be opening at the old Cinema premises, Cameron Square in Fort William on the 19th January 2015

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Open 10-5 Mon - Sat

Pensioner admits poaching a deer

A PENSIONER from Fort William has admitted poaching a deer from Glenfinnan Estate.

James Kennedy, of Tigh na Feidh, Achintore Road, pled guilty to wilfully killing and disembowling the animal, as well as removing it from the land whilst acting with another on February 2 last year. The 69-year-old did not appear in court, but fiscal depute Fraser Matheson said a letter had been received detailing his plea.

Sheriff Richard Davidson deferred sentencing until February 3 for background reports and Kennedy's personal appearance.

Ardgour's energy savers go on show

ENERGY-SAVING households in Ardgour will be open to the public next Saturday, January 24, to show how biomass heaters work.

The two houses use different systems, a log boiler in a semi-detached property and a woodchip boiler in a large detached house, so anyone interested in having one fitted in their homes can see them first-hand.

This is part of a project by Sustainable Ardgour to reduce the area's carbon footprint.

For more information or to book a visit contact Helen MacGillivray on 07771 821975 or helen@sustainableardgour.co.uk.

Burns Supper to raise trip funds

A TRADITIONAL Burns supper is to be held in Lochaber high school to raise money for the sixth year pupils' upcoming trip to London.

The over-18s only event will include a four-course meal, including haggis, neeps and tatties, and speeches, songs and poetry. The school's ceilidh band will also take to the stage.

Tickets are available from the school office. Those attending should take their own refreshments as no bar will be available at the event.

Charity back from brink but more helpers needed



HARDY SOULS: Glenfinnan residents didn't let hail dampen their spirits 20_103shinty01

Shinty fun marks old Scots new year

RESIDENTS of Glenfinnan braved wind, hail and a power cut in the village to celebrate the old Scots new year with their annual shinty match on Saturday.

Though the weather scared some off, a hardy group of both adults and children braved the

conditions for a light-hearted game at the viaduct field. The Glenfinnan community traditionally celebrates the old new year (January 13) on the Saturday closest to the date.

January 13 was replaced when the Gregorian calendar replaced the Julian calendar in 1752.

Shopmobility plugs funding gap but desperately needs new volunteers

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A FORT William charity has been pulled back from the brink of closure thanks to grants and fundraising but now needs more volunteers to keep the service afloat.

Shopmobility Lochaber was given a boost of £8,000 from Bank of Scotland's community fund and the Moffat Charitable Trust late last year, after an £18,000 funding gap caused concern for the future of the vital charity, which provides wheelchairs and scooters to more than 800 people.

A Christmas raffle run from Shopmobility's office, behind Fort William train station, also raised more than £500. But now charity co-ordinator Billy Ward is appealing for more trustees as some volunteers have reduced their hours because of other commitments.

He said: 'We're getting there money wise but it's a slow process. We're supposed to have enough in the bank to cover a year's running costs at all times, in case any funding is unexpectedly cut. We don't have it right now but I'm keeping at it.'

'The main thing now is getting

some fresh blood to help us out. Some of our trustees have other commitments or can't give up as much time between one thing or another. We don't need much from you, only to attend meetings to help make decisions about the charity and occasionally work in the office to cover sickness and holidays.'

Shopmobility helps locals and visitors get around and recently loaned a wheelchair to a pensioner on her 90th birthday, allowing her to celebrate by exploring Lochaber, including riding the gondola at Nevis Range and visiting Glenfinnan viaduct.

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, pledged his support to the service, saying it 'really makes lives better'.

He added: 'The positive impact of Shopmobility Lochaber on our town is immeasurable. Not only do local people benefit from the service but it provides a shining example to visitors of the good natured hospitality of Lochaber people. If you've got the time, I'd encourage you to volunteer with this service.'

For more information about volunteering call 01397 700051 or visit the office between 9.30am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday.

New move in fuel poverty battle

AN ENERGY company developed specifically for the Western Isles could be formed in an attempt to reduce fuel poverty for islanders.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has appointed consultants to assess the possibility of establishing what they have branded the Outer Hebrides Energy Supply Company to provide cheaper electricity in the area.

It is hoped this will reduce the number of Western Isles residents living in fuel poverty, currently 71 per cent of the population, according to a report by the Energy Advisory Service.

Angus Campbell, leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'Initial market testing indicates that there is interest from certain suppliers in working with us to develop a product that can be offered specifically to Hebridean consumers and we are looking forward to working in more detail on this over coming months to see if a package can be put together.'

Popular names in Lochaber revealed

A TOTAL of 181 babies were born in Lochaber last year, 93 boys and 88 girls.

The Fort William registry office for births, deaths and marriages released the 2014 statistics for the region which show the most popular boys' name to be a toss-up between Archie, Daniel and Dylan.

There was also no clear favourite girls' name, with Emily, Hannah and Isla each chosen by three different families.

Marriages for the year stood at 196, with 90 religious ceremonies and 106 civil, while there were two civil partnerships - one male and one female.

There were 197 deaths during 2014.

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Health trust cash helps rural villagers get online

THE COMMUNITY of a rural village in north-west Skye is to benefit from IT and internet classes, thanks to a grant of more than £32,000.

The Glendale Trust has secured the money as part of a project to increase computer knowledge for people of all ages.

The £32,258 from the People's

Health Trust will be used to buy equipment, run classes and employ a project leader.

Elgar Finlay, Glendale Trust development officer, said: 'We're delighted. The project launches this week and it means we can teach our elderly how to use the internet as well as allowing our primary school pupils the use

of equipment they don't have at school. Living in a rural area can be quite isolated for older people so we're hoping to help with that, both from the company during the classes to helping them fill out forms and communicate online.'

The grant will also provide wireless internet to Glendale's

community hall, which will be free for locals and visitors.

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, welcomed the news. He said: 'The Glendale Trust has played a blinder throughout the application process and thanks should go to local volunteers and the People's Health Trust

for awarding this grant. It is particularly good news as the idea for the project originated from the local community, a great demonstration of the strength of local communities here in the Highlands and Islands. I am confident these IT and broadband classes are just the thing that is needed.'

Fort cadet Oskar on the march to lift gold award

A FORT William military cadet who went through rigorous training in Bavaria has become the first person in his battalion to gain a gold Duke of Edinburgh's award.

Cadet colour sergeant Oskar Wineberg, from 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force, travelled to Germany with four colleagues from his unit last August for physical training and volunteer work.

He became the first soldier to achieve the grading since the battalion was formed in 1942.

CSgt Wineberg, 17, attends Lochaber high school and serves in the force's Fort William Detachment (Inverness Company).

He said: 'I have really enjoyed completing my Duke of Edinburgh's award with the Army Cadet Force. It has been a great experience working my way up through the bronze, silver and

gold awards and it has given me a huge sense of achievement.

'It has been hard work but I have met lots of interesting and fun people. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme has enabled me to visit new places and learn new skills. I can't recommend the scheme highly enough and would encourage cadets to get involved. 'I am very much looking forward to visiting Holyrood next year to receive my gold award.'

CSgt Wineberg received a gold badge from his battalion last month but will be officially handed his full gold certificate at the Palace of Holyrood House in Edinburgh later this year.

SUCCESS: Oskar receives a badge in anticipation of his gold Duke of Edinburgh's award from Highland councillor Caroline Caddick



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Energy scheme sparks things up for Sunart

A LOCHABER community is to benefit from improved health, transport, housing and leisure services thanks to a new energy scheme getting the green light.

Sunart Community Renewables has met the target of £290,000 for a hydro-electric project in a previously untapped power source in Strontian, securing its future for the first time since the fundraising launch last year.

The hydro scheme will cost around £850,000 but now that one third has been raised through local stakeholders, commercial lenders can step in and fund the remainder.

But project manager Dale Meegan said the group hopes to raise as much as possible without loans, to allow profits to be spent in the community.

She added: 'When we went to consultation the main areas people said they would like improved were support for the community, mainly older people, and leisure facilities so that's what we want to spend the money on when we start making a profit.'

'The more money we raise from shareholders the less we have to spend on paying back loans from corporate groups so profits can go straight back into the community.'

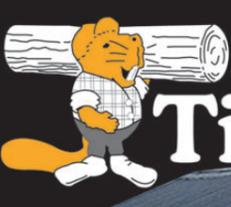
Plans are now underway to appoint a contractor and it is hoped work will start in the spring.

The community share offer is open until the end of February and anyone wishing to invest can go to www.SunartCommunityRenewables.org.uk or contact Ms Meegan on 07718 132680.

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Storms bring unrelenting misery to West Highlands

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

STORM-force winds, torrential rain and heavy snowfalls have wreaked havoc across the West Highlands and islands over the past week.

Winter threw everything it had at the west coast, with thousands suffering from power cuts, including around 4,000 homes in the Oban area.

The entire population of the Hebrides was hit by a power cut on Friday morning, with some householders going without electricity for 72 hours, while 153 schools across the Highlands were closed for the day.

Many of Oban's outlying areas were left without any electricity for most of Friday and Mallaig was without power on Friday and Saturday.

Other villages including Glenfinnan, Onich and Strontian were also left in the dark for long periods, with some telephone lines also knocked out.

At the time of going to press, all but 30 properties left without power had been reconnected in the SSE distribution area.

Alan Broadbent, SSE's director of engineering, said: 'I would like to apologise again and reassure customers that we are doing all we possibly can during extremely treacherous, challenging and severe weather conditions.'

Wind speeds of up to 113mph were recorded on Lewis, the highest there since records began, while Appin resident David Colthart recorded a 112.97mph gust at his wind turbine which is a mile outside of Oban.

The high winds brought the volunteer crew of Oban RNLI Lifeboat Mora Edith MacDonald into action for the first time this year after a man fell off the pier on Thursday, January 8.

The crew braved wind speeds in excess of 55mph at around 11:40pm, after Stornoway Coast-



STORM TOSSED: The fishing boat the *Crimson Arrow* blew aground near Dunollie Castle. Photo courtesy of Stephen Lawson

guard received information that the man had been blown into Oban Bay at the North Pier.

The coastguard was on the scene in minutes and the man was rescued from the water.

The Waterfront Restaurant's roof in Oban was damaged as winds blew off slates and other material on January 9.

Police cordoned off the area while the debris was cleared up; nobody was injured.

The fishing boat *Crimson Arrow* was also blown from its mooring at Kerrera on Saturday

morning and ended up being driven ashore onto the rocks near to Dunollie Castle.

The boat was eventually pulled clear by a local scallop boat with minimal damage.

The Skye Bridge was also closed to all high-sided vehicles for most of the weekend.

Having seen its way through the worst of the wind and rain, the West Highlands were then hit by snow on Tuesday and through into Wednesday morning, causing major problems for motorists.

In Argyll and Bute, nine

primary schools were closed on Tuesday morning because of weather conditions and four on Wednesday.

In the Highland council area, 40 schools and nurseries were closed on Tuesday, with that figure increasing to around 90 for Wednesday as the snowfall worsened.

Further inland, the snow gate at Tyndrum on the A82 was closed on Tuesday afternoon because the road was impassable.

Caledonian MacBrayne's West Highland ferry timetable was thrown into disarray with cancellations on most routes at the height of the winds on Saturday.

The ferry operator advised passengers to check weather forecasts and be prepared to be flexible with their travel arrangements because of the disruption to the service.

Doug Young, who is a member of Coll Community council, praised the extra scheduled flights from Oban by Hebridean Air Services, which had proven to be a lifeline for the island after there were no sailings from Oban for seven days.

The snow was expected to have cleared in the west highlands today (Thursday) but there is a possibility of further snow showers for Friday and Saturday.



PRECARIOUS: Drivers on Corran Brae in Oban struggled with the road conditions.

Safety first as thousands left without a signal

ANGRY Vodafone customers have been without mobile phone service in Argyll since January 8 as the company struggles with repairs to masts.

The adverse weather conditions across the West Highlands have meant maintenance work has been put on hold for 'health and safety' reasons.

Oban resident Robert Woods, who has been with Vodafone

for 10 years, hit out at the length of time the network had been down: 'Customers pay for a service so Vodafone should be ensuring that service is continuous, especially in weather like this when people really need their phones in case of emergency.'

'Scottish Hydro Electric were out in all weathers doing repairs. If their engineers can manage, why can't Vodafone's.'

MP for Argyll and Bute, Alan Reid, has said stricter targets should be in place for network operators to improve service.

He said: 'A mobile phone network is no good to anyone if it's not working and the companies involved must drastically improve the time it takes to repair network faults.'

'The extra investment extending mobile phone coverage is

great news, but repairs are just as important. Ofcom and the Government should impose target times for repairs to be carried out and fine companies if they fail to meet these targets.'

However, a spokeswoman for Vodafone said: 'We're sorry our customers in Oban are experiencing problems with their signal. Due to the weather conditions recently across the

Highlands and Islands, coverage has been limited.'

'Our engineers are working hard to get affected sites back up and running but in many cases this means they have to climb the masts to carry out repairs. For reasons of safety, they can only do this when the weather allows.'

'We are treating this as a priority and we'll get the service back to normal as soon as possible.'

TIMESLINE

People to have a say on the future

ARGYLL people are being encouraged to take part in a consultation beginning on Monday to find out why they live here and what council services they use.

The council will launch the Planning Our Future consultation to help address a declining population. A survey is available until February 20 on the council website, or at libraries and customer service points.

Community wants to fly the Saltire

A PETITION will be launched to fly a Saltire on the front green in Lochgilphead.

Lochgilphead community council wants Argyll and Bute council to rethink its decision on only having the Union Jack flown on council flagpoles.

The community council will write to the council and launch an online and paper petition.

Police alert over bank card frauds

OBAN police have received reports of a series of telephone calls from fraudsters claiming to be from banks. Sergeant Allan Moore said a series of frauds had been sweeping the area and reminded people to be vigilant. He said: 'Never give out bank or credit card details over the phone.'

New Skye festival confirms first acts

THE FIRST acts have been confirmed for a new music festival being launched in Portree this year.

The Skye Live festival, held over the Easter weekend of April 3 and 4, will include performances by Skye-based contemporary folk acts Peatbog Faeries and Niteworks.

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OWNING an animal, whether you are buying one for the first time or have had them for years, can be a big task with lots of work involved.

There are lots of pet stores on the west coast of Scotland providing high quality items, which will ensure the comfort and safety of your pet.

Pets need lots of time devoted to them and if you find this a problem you could take advantage of professional pet-sitting services for when you're away from home for short periods. For longer holidays, booking them into a kennel is usually the best idea.

If your pet gets injured you will need to take them to the vet.

Depending on what has happened, the bill for bringing them back to full health can be expensive so to avoid being out of pocket taking out a pet insurance policy is advised.

Just like humans, your pet needs plenty of exercise. If you are unable to provide your pet with the exercise they need, employing a dog walker could be a good idea.

Training your animal is also important whether they are young or old. If you are struggling to train your pet there are classes available.

Whether you have a cat, dog or horse, grooming is an essen-

tial part of their routine to avoid discomfort.

If you are unable to carry this out yourself there are grooming services, which are happy to take care of this aspect of your animal's well-being for you. Many also operate on a mobile basis and will visit your home if required.

Lastly your new pet should never be bored, get them lots of toys and play with them regularly. Remember, the more time you spend with your pet the more rewarding the experience will be.



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	<p>SUZIE, EBONY AND PICA</p> <p>We have 3 black cats looking for homes Suzie, Ebony and Pica</p>		<p>KEIRA</p> <p>Keira is a 2yr old American Bulldog looking for a new home.</p>		<p>TIGGER AND FROSTIE</p> <p>Nice mousers looking for an outside home together</p>
	<p>MR T</p> <p>Mr T our tabby looking for a quiet home</p>		<p>PATCH</p> <p>Patch is a 1yr neutered dog. Bouncy and nice natured</p>		

Tenants say their dream homes are turning into a nightmare

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

ANGRY residents of a new housing scheme in Dunbeg say their new dream homes are turning into a nightmare.

The 50 houses at Marine Court, owned by the West Highland Housing Association, range from one-to-three bedrooms properties, with the first occupants taking up residence last year.

Some of the tenants have now said that the problems they have encountered since moving in have put them off the idea of purchasing the houses under the 'rent to buy' scheme.

They have also claimed that their complaints about the houses are not being dealt with by the housing association, or in some cases being ignored completely.

Kevin Tidser moved into his two-bedroom property in May with his wife Josephine and their eight-year-old son.

He claimed that the association was not dealing with issues he raised. He said: 'We have a leak in the bathroom, coming through



HOME TRUTHS: Emma Aitkenhead (left), Ashleigh Munro and Neil Khan (centre) and Kevin Tidser (right) 16_t03marine

the ceiling and they can't find it. 'When we moved in, the gap at the bottom of the front door was so big I could fit a book underneath it. They've been out to fix it but it's still not right. I think these problems have put me off buying it.'

Kevin's neighbour Emma Aitkenhead moved into her house last year with her husband Mark and their three pre-school children. She said she had complained to

the association about condensation gathering on her windows, and was told it was because she had curtains.

'I couldn't believe it when they told me that was the cause and advised me to leave the curtains open. I told them I couldn't do that with three young kids in the house.'

'I have also phoned them three times about dampness. They said they would send someone out but they never did.'

'The problems really are a talking point among residents.'

Neil Khan and Ashleigh Munro claim when they complained about a leaking boiler, the landlord sent someone who wasn't qualified to fix it.

Neil said: 'Our boiler went and the guy who came round told us he worked in the office and wasn't a plumber.'

'The front door has been a big issue for us as well. We had to replace flooring at the front

door because water was leaking in. The heating is turned up to 33C but the house is still freezing because of the draughts.'

Ashleigh added: 'The housing association sent out a letter saying the reason there were draughts was because residents weren't closing their doors properly. It's ridiculous. It's nothing to do with that - it's farcical.'

A Facebook group set up by one of the residents on January 10 to discuss the issues has now

gathered 46 members. However, a number of posts on the Facebook page said they were delighted with their properties and the estate in general.

Lesley McInnes, West Highland Housing Association's chief executive, apologised to residents and said the association would be addressing the issues raised.

'These issues need to be addressed and we will be arranging meetings to look at the problems individual residents have raised,' she said. 'We are conscious of issues residents have been having with doors in the properties, and letters were sent out on Tuesday morning to every one in Marine Court to arrange a visit to the properties to look at them.'

'Clearly people are aware that high winds and adverse weather have been an issue for everyone over the past week which may have held up some repair work.'

'However, if people are saying that they have raised issues over a long period of time and they haven't been dealt with properly then that's something we need to address and deal with.'

Squadron targets more volunteers

THE 2521 Oban High School squadron of the air cadets is looking for local adult volunteers for its civilian committee.

The squadron wants to build on the foundations of its 40th anniversary celebrations last year and move on to the 2020 vision the Royal Air Force has for the cadets.

Adult volunteers over the age of 21 can commit to either one night week as a civilian instructor or, on average, one night and a quarter a week and a few weekends each year, as a member of the civilian committee.

Any training need will be provided, with both positions requiring a Protecting Vulnerable Groups check through Disclosure Scotland.

Anyone who is interested should go into the cadet centre on Tweeddale Street on a Wednesday night from 7pm, or email oc.2521@aircadets.org for more information.

Jack and Isla most popular names

THE top names for boys and girls born in Argyll and Bute last year have been revealed.

Isla tops the names for girls, with Jack for boys.

Other top names for girls are Sophie, Ava, Charlotte, Jessica and Lucy with Amber, Amelia, Grace, Lola, Olivia and Sophia.

Popular boys names include Alexander, James, Jamie, Andrew, Charlie, Ethan, Hamish, Harris and Kyle.

Inveraray prepares for Burns night

INVERARAY Burns Club will host its annual Burns supper on Saturday, January 24 at the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray from 7pm.

Guest speakers this year are Ayrshire Burnsian Ian Farrell, Bruce Robertson and Jane McLeod from Lochgilphead.

Inveraray's own Brian Spalding will be addressing the Haggis, while music and song will be performed by Cumnock's Bletherskyte.

Police's countryside alert

OBAN police are increasing patrols in the district areas around Lorn in response to a spate of thefts from rural areas.

Quad bikes, power tools, copper wire and fuel have been taken from properties over the New Year period.

Between January 2 and 5 police recorded thefts of: a quad bike and a generator from Barochreal Farm, Kilninver; a quad bike from Kintraw Farm, Barbreck, near Lochgilphead; and two chainsaws and fuel from Corachie Cleamatis, near Taynuilt.

PC Paul MacMillan, of Oban Community Investigation Unit (CIU), said: 'The issue of rural thefts is something we are taking very seriously, with road policing

and CID involved in crimebreaker initiatives in the district areas.

'I would be keen to speak to anyone who may have CCTV overlooking the A85 and A816 in particular. We are looking for any suspicious activity observed between January 2 and 5, or any large vehicles which have seemed out of place.'

PC MacMillan can be contacted on 01631 510515 or by email at paul.macmillan@scotland.pnn.police.uk.'

Sergeant Allan Moore of Oban police said the trend of thefts from rural properties was becoming prevalent because such homes and businesses are seen as 'soft targets'.

He said: 'We are increasing

patrols at night and carrying out static road checks in all hours of the day to tackle this issue.'

Explaining that police officers can review security at any property in the area if requested, he said members of the public could also help police with their investigations.

Sergeant Moore said: 'If you see something that looks suspicious, perhaps a vehicle driver taking too much interest in a property, then let us know. If it turns out to be legitimate, then that's fair and well.'

'We are open 24 hours a day and have patrols out 24 hours a day, so we welcome any information. The more information we get, the better.'

Threat to music festival

THE UK'S top small musical festival may be forced to cancel after 2015 if rising costs for policing cannot be reduced.

Award winning T'ree Music Festival (TMF) has seen costs rocket after Police Scotland introduced a Scotland-wide charging policy.

An £18k bill for policing for this year's festival has the potential to cripple the event in future years. The cost includes officers' off-duty and sundries such as accommodation, travel and food.

A TMF spokeswoman said: 'There have been some changes to the TMF policing costs for 2014 and we have a meeting with Police Scotland coming

up to discuss this - we won't be making any public comments before then.'

'We want to ensure fans that TMF 2015 will be going ahead and we're looking forward to another incredible weekend.'

Police Scotland charge between £49 and £83 per hour for every officer and it is understood that an extra dozen officers per shift are being called to the island to police the event.

A Police Scotland spokeswoman said: 'Commercial events, where the organiser, company or organisation may intend to make a profit, can be expected to be charged full cost recovery when police services are provided. Police Scotland

will work with event organisers to identify opportunities to minimise costs through consideration of alternative solutions, such as private security firms, without compromising the safe and successful running of an event.'

The loss of the event would see a £600k loss to the T'ree economy.

Oban South and the Isles councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'We need to ask whether or not we need as many police as are being proposed or not. There might be other ways for the event to be managed.'

TMF has won awards every year since its inception in 2010 and sold 1,600 tickets in 2014.

Convicted Oban hotelier placed on probation for sexual assaults

COURT REPORTER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

AN OBAN hotelier who faced sentencing for two sexual assaults on staff members has lost his 'hard won reputation', according to his defence advocate.

Raymond Hyams, of North Connel, was last December found guilty of three charges of sexual assault and one of making sexual remarks at the Queen's Hotel between September 2010 and April 2012.

On Wednesday last week at Oban sheriff court Sheriff Douglas Small sentenced the 59-year-old businessman to nine months on probation and 200 hours of unpaid work.

Speaking in mitigation at the sentencing last Wednesday,



LOST REPUTATION: Raymond Hyams was placed on probation for nine months and given 200 hours unpaid work

Hyams' defence advocate Stewart Ronnie told Sheriff Douglas Small: 'He (Hyams) has lost a hard won reputation and has already lost business. He has already started to feel punishment for the conviction.'

Mr Ronnie also referred to a social enquiry report published for the sentence hearing that stated although Hyams maintained his innocence, he was at low risk of re-offending.

The first of the two victims told the court previously that Hyams' behaviour towards her had begun within weeks of her

starting work at the Corran Esplanade hotel in September 2010 until she left in March 2012.

This included touching various part of her body and looking down her top.

The second victim had told the court that Hyams had made inappropriate comments to her, including frequently touching her hair and body.

Hyams had accused the victims of meeting in an Oban pub in what was described in court as a 'witches coven of disgruntled ex-employees' to plot against him.

Sheriff Small said Hyams had shown a complete lack of respect for the victims.

He will remain on the Sex Offenders' Register for the duration of the probation order.

Thieves steal brass screws from castle wall security rail

EUAN PATERSON
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DUNSTAFFNAGE Castle remains open to the public, despite thieves making off with brass screws supporting the safety rail round the castle's wall walk.

The popular walkway around the historic site in Dunbeg has been closed off amid safety concerns following the theft, which occurred between December 29 and January 9.

Oban police are investigating the incident and have called on the public to help them with their enquiries.

Sergeant Allan Moore said: 'The danger to the public is a major concern to us in this instance. Had this incident gone unnoticed, it could have caused a serious incident.'

'I would ask anyone who saw any suspicious vehicle activity near the castle, either during the dates given or before, to get in touch with us on 101.'

Historic Scotland has sought to reassure the public that the castle remains open, bar the wall walk.

As *The Oban Times* went to press, the agency was carrying out an assessment to establish the extent and cost of the damage.

A spokesman for Historic Scotland said: 'We are aware of an incident having taken place at Dunstaffnage Castle, and the police have been notified and we will continue to work with them on this matter, which is currently an on-going investigation.'

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Oban Lorne maul table-toppers in one-sided game at Glencruitten

Gap at the top narrows to seven points but Green Machine has two games in hand

Oban Lorne	40
Cambuslang	0
RBS West Division Two	

Rugby

THE GREEN Machine fielded its strongest side of the season and put in arguably its most dominant display in a six-try demolition of table-toppers Cambuslang.

In the build up to this match coach Corrie Louw demanded victory to jump-start a title charge and his team responded with a flying start, spending the first 10 minutes camped in the visitors' 22 at Glencruitten.

An already impressive Lorne pack was strengthened by the addition of Greg McGill and 17-year-old Jamie Bate, starting his first game of senior rugby in the back row.

Cambuslang's defence stood strong during this early onslaught on a pitch in great condition, despite the inclement weather.

But Oban's opening score was inevitable and it was Struan Smith who touched down for the home side. His try came after some great individual runs from the Oban pack gaining vital momentum against a weakening defence.

Andrew Abraham converted for a 7-0 lead.

Oban took a lot of confidence from this score and were looking very dangerous with ball in hand.

Dave McCabe, Cammy Smith and Callum MacLachlan were all dominating over their opposite numbers and a flowing move, starting from the halfway line and involving the majority of the team, resulted in centre Craig Wright extending the lead on 25 minutes with a try in the right

corner. This was one of the best tries Oban has scored this season, and an example of well-executed handling and quick recycling of the ball at the breakdown.

The home side was now well on top and scored its third try of the afternoon on the half hour mark with stand-off Andrew Abraham crossing over.

Oban led 21-0 and were easing through most areas of the game.

The scrum, in particular, was impressing with props Carl Lay, Tommy Sutherland, Donald Budge and Andrew Johnston all being rotated at the right time by the coaching staff to have maximum impact on the game.

A shell-shocked Cambuslang attacked well in the closing stages of the first half but did not look close to scoring against a confident Oban defence.

Struggled

With the weather turning colder and wetter, the sides struggled with ball in hand in the early stages of the second half.

Both teams were failing to form a structure in the game and therefore had no real platform from which to attack.

Cambuslang had a try disallowed by referee Willie Malone with 20 minutes to go, because of a double movement and this served as a wake-up call for Lorne.

The home side turned up the pressure in the final 15 minutes by scoring three further tries. Corrie Louw picked and ran from a five-metre scrum on 65 minutes for try number four,



WELL-TAKEN: Cammy Smith dives over for a well-taken try against league leaders Cambuslang at Glencruitten last Saturday

Cammy Smith got Oban's fifth with a fantastic powerful run within the 22 and Struan Smith got his second of the day with a couple of minutes to go by taking a quick tap and going over from five metres out.

The biggest cheer of the day was for young debutant and man-of-the-match Jamie Bate who stepped up and slotted over the last conversion to gain his first Oban Lorne points and seal an impressive 40-0 win.

Coach Corrie Louw said he was happy with the overall performance of his team, particularly the improvement in discipline.

Seven points

Saturday's win narrows the gap at the top of the league to seven points with Oban Lorne having two games in hand on their rivals.

Next up for Oban Lorne is a tough away trip to Strathendrick this Saturday. Strathendrick pulled off one of the league's

shock results this season by winning 19-9 at Glencruitten. A win for Oban Lorne will see them pull away from the rest of the league and hopefully narrow the gap on Cambuslang even further.

Oban Lorne: C Lay, R MacQueen, D Budge, G McGill, L MacLachlan, S Smith, J Bate, C Louw, G MacEachan, A Abraham, P Moisiadis, C Smith, C Wright, C MacLachlan and D McCabe.
Subs: A Johnston, T Sutherland,

A MacDougall, C Thwaites, T Prys Jones and D Hoey.

Oban Lorne's S1 and S2 teams take on Preston Lodge on Saturday while the under 16s travel to East Kilbride on Sunday.

Argyll and Bute RFC's home game against bottom side Glasgow East was called off on Saturday when the visitors failed to raise a team.

Argyll are away to Police Scotland in Glasgow this Saturday.

Games fall victim to bad weather Football

OBAN'S two amateur football teams were left kicking their heels last weekend when both their matches were called off.

Oban Saints were due to be at home to Alba Thistle in a SAFL Premier Division league match but a pitch inspection found the grass park at Glencruitten to be unplayable.

The 3G pitch at Oban high school was an alternative venue for the fixture, but gale-force winds meant it was impossible for football to be played in the conditions so reluctantly the game had to be called off.

Oban Athletic's West of Scotland Cup tie away to Tarbolton also fell foul of the weather with the game postponed because of a waterlogged pitch.

This Saturday the teams will be hoping to get back in action with Saints facing a tough away game against Harestanes and Athletic an equally difficult match away to Tarbolton. Both fixtures are West of Scotland Cup ties.

Annual challenge match at Mossfield Shinty

THE ANNUAL challenge match between Oban Camanachd and Oban Camanachd Veterans, due to take place at Mossfield last Saturday, was called off because of the weather.

The game has been re-arranged for this Saturday, 1pm throw-up.

Sports Hall Athletics on Saturday

Athletics

SPORTS Hall Athletics in Argyll will host its first competition of the winter, the Mid Argyll area, at Lochgilphead Joint Campus this Sunday.

The competition in Lochgilphead is promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club.

The next local area competition is for the Oban area on Saturday January 31 at Atlantis Leisure.

Then it's the Mull competition to be held at Tobermory high school on Saturday February 21.

The Kintyre competition, to be held at Campbelltown grammar, will take place on either March 8 or 15. Successful qualifiers from the four local area competitions will be invited to take part in the Argyll final at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on Saturday March 21.

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures Youth Football

ALL GAMES involving Oban Saints youth teams were called off last weekend because of the weather.

This weekend's fixtures: Clydebank v Under 13s; Under 14s v Blair Thistle; Under 15s no game; Milngavie v Under 16s; Under 19s v Broomhill.

Ernie MacPherson, Inveraray and Strachur Shinty

THE CONDOLENCES of everyone in the shinty community is extended to the family of 'Big Ernie' MacPherson who passed away peacefully at home on January 7.

A great shinty man and former Inveraray and Strachur captain.

Magnus secures professional contract with Edinburgh Rugby

Rugby

RUGBY prospect Magnus Bradbury has secured a two-year professional contract with Edinburgh Rugby after his debut last October as an academy player.

The 19-year-old back row player has been cutting his teeth at Boroughmuir this season but will turn professional on June 1 this year.

The 6ft 4in player, who hails from Bonawe, started his career at Oban Lorne and worked his way through the age grades for Glasgow, then Edinburgh and Scotland and is in the Scotland under-20 squad for this year's Six Nations. Magnus made his full pro team debut for Edinburgh, in the starting XV, in October's Guinness PRO12 fixture at the RDS against Leinster.

He said: 'It was a great experience and really opened my eyes to the intensity of the pro game. Training with the guys is one thing but that game was a snapshot of what a step up it is.'

PRO CONTRACT: Magnus has impressed in an Edinburgh jersey and has been rewarded with a professional contract

Photo: Scottish Rugby/SNS Images



FOREARM SMASH: Dave McCabe barges his way past a Cambuslang defender during last Saturday's match

Photo: Kevin McGlynn

Top-of-the-table clash in Oban Pool League

THE OBAN Pool League returned to action last Thursday night with the much-anticipated top-of-the-table clash between The Lochavullin's Cellar and The Lancaster 'A' headlining.

Perfect records Both sides came into the fixture with perfect records but defending champions The Lochavullin's Cellar had home advantage.

With a fair percentage of Oban's finest cueists featured many would expect an exhibition showcasing their talent but with so much riding on the result nerves and pressure put an end to that.

Despite not being at their best, The Lochavullin's Cellar's superiority at putting frames to bed from winning positions saw off a under-performing Lancaster 'A' and put themselves firmly in the driving seat as they chase a third straight title.

The Lochnell continued their excellent run of form moving up into third spot after a comfortable home win over The Lochavullin.

Folly Although they have been beaten twice this season, both were against the top two and it would be folly to write off their credentials so early with many big

games still to be played. After an early season defeat Markie Dan's 'A' have been overlooked as title contenders by most, but a fourth consecutive victory saw them slowly climb the table almost under the radar.

Tempers The Lancaster 'B' were their opponents last week and, although tempers threatened to boil over, Markie Dan's prevailed to thrust themselves into title contention.

The concluding game of the week saw Markie Dan's 'B' pick up their second win of the league season to ease away from the bottom two and confine The

Pool

Outreach to the wooden spoon position.

Tonight (Thursday) the remaining eight teams contest The Oban Filling Station Cup quarter-finals.

Results, January 8: Lochavullin's Cellar 7-3 Lancaster A, Lancaster B 3-7 Markie Dans A, Lochnell 7-3 Lochavullin, Outreach 4-6 Markie Dans B.

Fixtures, January 15: Markie Dans B v Lochnell, Lochavullin's Cellar v Lancaster B, Outreach v Lancaster B, Lancaster A v Gluepot.

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We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1. If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. 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, mistaid 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 Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB



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Fort manager not worried about eight-game fixture backlog

'In my last season in charge we got 20 points on a run of Wednesday and Saturday games'

FORT William manager Calum MacLean believes his squad are more than capable of handling a fixture backlog when the time comes.

The postponement of last Saturday's league encounter away to Formartine United means the Claggan Park men now have eight outstanding games to be rescheduled before the end of the season.

Hurricane-force winds and heavy rain in the north-east forced the match to be called off and cut off telephone lines, meaning Formartine had to resort to social media to inform Fort about the call-off before they travelled.

MacLean's squad is more than used to these situations, with many games cancelled already this campaign due to frozen and waterlogged playing surfaces.

Some of the postponed fixtures are likely to be pencilled in for midweek evenings later in the season, leaving the team to play two matches a week for a period of time.

But the manager says his players will relish these circumstances. MacLean said: 'The games will probably run Wednesday-Saturday-Wednesday-Saturday.

'In my last season in charge we got 20 points on a run of Wednesday-Saturday games, we were playing all the time which was good.

'The players prefer that actual-

Football

ly, they just want to play football.' Fort will have home advantage this Saturday when they welcome Fraserburgh to Claggan Park providing the weather holds out.

Their opponents, who also had a weekend off when their match against Lossiemouth was postponed, are 27 points ahead in the Highland league table despite being only six places higher than Fort who lie in 13th spot, though MacLean's boys have four games in hand over them.

After accomplishing a record-breaking run winning their last four matches in a row, the manager was asked if they can make it five.

'Why not?' he said. 'We are not frightened of anyone at home. Fraserburgh are a good footballing side but we gave them a good game earlier in the season even though they won 3-0.

'And I think they were top of the league at the time.'

Sean Ellis, who returned to play for Fort along with Stuart Vance on a short-term deal over the festive period, is expected to leave for Fort along with Australia this week, with Vance due to follow soon after.

Both players only managed single substitute appearances due to the recent postponements, but it is hoped they could return next Christmas.



The field prepare for the difficult conditions of the Riverbank Splodge 20. f03athletics01

Splodging through the mud and mire

LOCHABER athletes were joined by visiting runners for this year's Riverbank Splodge race at Glen Nevis on Sunday.

It was Michael Bossard of Lochaber Athletic Club who completed the seven-mile route first of the 69 participants, manoeuvring difficult underfoot conditions to reach the finish line in 51 minutes and 42 seconds.

Steve MacDonald and Callum Fraser, both of Lochaber, took second and third, finishing in 51:54 and 52:06 respectively. Diane Baum, Lochaber AC, was first lady home, arriving at the Claggan Park finish line in a time of 59:13.

The runners faced wind, rain and sleet but the weather was not the only difficulty as the route took them uphill before reaching

mud, bog, burn crossings and slippery terrain at River Nevis.

Participants thanked volunteers for their efforts, which included clearing fallen trees and branches from the route as well as the usual duties of registration, timekeeping and marshalling.

Meanwhile, the youngsters took part in their own race at Melantee as part of the club's junior winter league. The field was split into a number of age and gender categories but best times overall went to Daniel Teape and Innes Orr, who crossed the finish line together in 11 minutes and six seconds, while Rebecca Johnstone was first home of the girls in 11 minutes and 47 seconds.

Top 20 finishers of Riverbank Splodge

Athletics

(Lochaber AC unless otherwise stated): 1 Michael Bossard 51:42; 2 Steve MacDonald 51:54; 3 Callum Fraser 52:06; 4 Lawrence Ramsay (unattached) 52:21; 5 Luke Taylor (Highland Hill Runners) 52:33; 6 Allan Ross 53:50; 7 Stephen Burns 54:52; 8 Jon Gay 55:45; 9 Steven Burns 56:44; 10 Ryan Stewart (unattached) 56:54; 11 Finlay Walton (Westerlands Cross Country Club) 57:08; 12 Aidan Donnelly 57:12; 13 Diane Baum 59:13; 14 Hughie MacKintosh 59:25; 15 Andy Dale 59:34; 16 Michael Bell 59:47; 17 Sarah Mackenzie 59:53; 18 Allan Lamont 1:00:12; 19 Bruce Griffiths (unattached) 1:00:54; 20 Neil Waslidge (unattached) 1:01:24.



Volunteers and youngsters celebrate 10 years of Lochaber Street League, but fear for the future of the club 20. f03streetleague01

Junior football league under threat

THE FUTURE of Lochaber's junior summer football league could be under threat due to lack of volunteers.

Organisers and youngsters met in the Nevis Centre for a tournament on Saturday to celebrate 10 years of Street League but the event was tinged with sadness as it is feared this could be the end of the popular club.

Three key committee members, including chairwoman Rosemary MacPhee and right hand man

John Treasurer, who have dedicated their time to Street League since its inception, are stepping down and appealing for new volunteers to secure the future of the football group.

Mrs MacPhee said: 'Street League is still hugely successful after 10 years and during this time we have seen a lot of wonderful youngsters come through.'

'It has been an absolute pleasure to work with the youngsters but now we're looking for new

Youth football

volunteers who can bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

'It's a great organisation to be part of and all volunteers work in partnership with Highland Council and Police Scotland Highlands and Islands division.'

To volunteer for next year's events contact Donna Calder on 07747659221 or via the Lochaber Street League Facebook page.

George wins Bryan Whyte Trophy

MORE than 100 people turned out to a competition in memory of a Lochaber darts star who died in a car crash last year.

There wasn't a dry eye in the house at this year's Buckie Darts Open, as tributes were made to Bryan Whyte, who won the event in 2013 and 2014.

The 34-year-old Spean Bridge



Bryan Whyte.



Winner George Main (left), won the trophy in honour of darts star Bryan Whyte. George is pictured with Bryan's brother James

man had been set for further success in the sport, as he was called up to play for Scotland before his tragic death near Inverloch Castle in February.

Mr Whyte's brother James Whyte travelled from Fort William to attend the event in the town's Fishermen's Hall on January 3, and was delighted to hear proceeds from the raffle held on the day will be donated to the late Mr Whyte's fiancée Dawn Gordon and their four children.

Of the 102 players, it was Inverness man George Main, a friend

Darts

of Bryan's, who won the trophy and £500 prize.

He said: 'It was a very emotional day knowing that it was for the Bryan Whyte Trophy, and I am so chuffed at winning and following in the footsteps of such a fantastic person and player and who will always be in our thoughts.'

Organiser Johnny Dunbar added: 'We would like to thank everyone who came along and took part in this great day of darts and were delighted to get more than 100 players.'

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WEATHER		TIDAL INFORMATION			
Thursday	Rain showers Winds strong west south westerly Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.	Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, January 15, 2015 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)			
Friday	Sleet showers Winds strong westerly Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.	Date	am pm		
Weekend Outlook	Sleet and rain on Saturday Sunny intervals on Sunday Winds strong westerly Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.	Thur	00.18 3.0 06.33 1.9 12.50 3.1 19.40 2.0		
		Fri	02.10 3.1 07.42 1.8 14.33 3.2 20.46 1.8		
		Sat	03.14 3.3 08.51 1.6 15.33 3.4 21.41 1.5		
		Sun	04.03 3.5 09.55 1.3 16.20 3.6 22.29 1.2		
		Mon	04.46 3.8 10.49 1.0 17.02 3.8 23.14 0.9		
		Tues	05.28 4.0 11.38 0.8 17.42 4.0 23.57 0.6		
		Wed	06.08 4.2 12.25 0.6 18.21 4.0 *** **		
		Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)			
		Ardriaisaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
		Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
		Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
		Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
		Lochboisdale	+0.30		
		Ferry Crossings/Sea States			
		Oban to Barra/South Uist			Moderate
		Oban to Coll/Tiree			Moderate
		Kennacraig to Islay			Moderate

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