



Special new bus hits road



The shape of things to come?



Bonnie Babies
page 8

Also inside this week: New dentist joins Fort practice to cope with extra demand • Energy plant pledge to use local wood

Council opts not to bid for £2.6m contracts

SHOCKED councillors learned this week that cash-strapped Argyll and Bute Council failed to bid for local roads and grounds maintenance contracts worth £2.6 million - leading to speculation that the council are planning to outsource its own roads and maintenance services.

EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

— yet we did not quote - it is incredulous. 'I am horrified that this was not taken forward. 'I am sure the people of Argyll and Bute will be horrified as well.

'This would have saved jobs in our communities - we now face redundancies.' Oban councillor Roddy MacCuish who also attended the ACHA board meeting said: 'Argyll and Bute Council have potentially lost out on £2.6 million.

"I am sure that the people of Argyll and Bute will be horrified."

Councillor Robert MacIntyre

Alistair MacGregor, chief executive of ACHA confirmed to The Oban Times that Argyll and Bute Council was put on ACHA's tender list - but had chosen not to tender.

Robert MacIntyre, leader of the SNP opposition group at Argyll and Bute Council, said he was at a loss to understand why the council pulled out of the process.

'We were offered a chance to quote and it wasn't until an ACHA board meeting on Monday that we learned the council had not quoted.

'We have the staff, the depots, the expertise, the equipment and in some cases we are already on-site

'I can clearly recall the chief executive calling for ways in which we could bring revenue into the council, working together to save jobs.

'I am disappointed in the administration with one agenda - cut, cut, cut. He added: 'Who in this

current economic climate can ignore £2.6 million?'

Oban community councillor Neil MacIntyre, said: 'Everyone working with the council would want the administration to apply for contracts such as these. These could have kept people in jobs: meanwhile they are facing unemployment.

'It is a shame they did not even try to put in a tender. We should be trying to keep everything local. The feeling among the workforce is that management didn't even bother to apply.'

A local roads worker, who did not want to be named, said: 'There is a growing feeling amongst workers that the council are planning to tender out its own garden and roads maintenance services and that is why they did not tender for this work. And that would make sense if there was no Argyll and Bute Council roads and maintenance departments in three years.'

Argyll and Bute Council denied they planned to close the departments saying that it is their intention to continue to use 'in-house staff.'

A spokeswoman continued: 'The Roads and Amenity service participated in the initial tender process for two ACHA contracts in 2010 and made a commercial decision not to return tenders.'



Oban's Spotlight Theatre Group are preparing to bring 1940s Manhattan to the west coast with the New York-based musical Guys and Dolls. With hits galore, stunning sets, mesmerising costumes, and a trick or two up their sleeve, it looks like it will be a stage show to remember. The Oban Times have teamed-up with Spotlight to offer five pairs of matinee tickets for the show that is taking place on March 3, 4 and 5. See page 11 for more details.

Will Argyll and Bute gain more government cash?

AS THE Oban Times went to press the Scottish parliament was due to discuss the financial settlement for Argyll and Bute Council.

The issue was raised as part of the parliament's debate on the Scottish budget.

Argyll and Bute councillors and officials raised concerns with the government after the council lost an added and unexpected 5.9 per cent from its settlement budget.

Shaving £5.434 million from the original figure - a cut that was twice the

national average.

At a crisis meeting between council leaders and the government an agreement was reached to review the figures.

It is understood Argyll and Bute had negotiated a different settlement last Friday but news was embargoed until today (Thursday).

Highlands and Island list MSP Jamie MacGrigor, MSP was expected to raise a question in the Scottish parliament on the subject.

Rubbish causes concern at top Kintyre beauty spot

LAND managers at one of the 'jewels in the crown' of South Kintyre have appealed for help to keep the beauty spot in tip-top condition.

The Forestry Commission admits frustration is mounting with those who are leaving their unwanted mark on Beinn Ghùilean.

A commission spokesman said: 'We are committed to making this a welcoming place and want to keep encouraging more people to the area.

'It would be very useful if the public could help be our eyes and ears and alert us or the police if they see anyone vandalising parts of the forest.'

On regular hill walker said urgent action was needed to put a stop to the problem.

'I think that this is an issue that needs to be addressed urgently, and before the harm currently being done becomes irreparable,' said the Campbeltown man, who asked not to be named.

'In a nutshell, the amount of refuse blatantly left behind, fires being lit, and downright vandalism that is now occurring on Beinn Ghùilean, and its surrounding area, is unacceptable.'

As well as empty plastic bottles and fires being lit, he said he was saddened by the debris left behind on the lower slopes by campers.

Offshore turbine opponents lodge official complaint

THE group demanding the Argyll Array be moved 22 miles from the shore of Tiree have submitted a formal complaint to Argyll and Bute's MSP Jim Mather.

No Tiree Array believes the current plans place turbines too close to the island at just three miles away.

This, the group claims, will affect the views, fishing, surfing and wind-surfing the island has become so famous for.

The complaint to Mr Mather focuses on the way public consultation into the draft plan was carried out, and on his dual role as MSP for the area and the man responsible for the draft plan as energy minister.

Tall ships race for Oban Bay

TALL Ships will make an overnight visit into Oban Bay in the summer as part of the route between Greenock and Lerwick in Shetland.

It is understood that 13 ships will come into the bay at some point between July 13 and 16. Councillor Duncan MacIntyre has encouraged Tall Ships to come into port as part of the town's bi-centenary celebrations.

Three charged with SAMS theft

THREE men have been charged in connection with a theft from the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) base at Dunstaffnage.

SAMS has upgraded their security measures since the incident.

A report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.



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Dunollie House will open doors to the public

DUNOLLIE House, on the northern edge of Oban, will be opening its doors to the public 'in a small way' in the spring thanks to the generosity of Madam MacDougall of MacDougall, 31st Chief of the Clan MacDougall.

The home of the Clan MacDougall since 1745 was unable to be opened to the public until now due to lack of facilities - but a legacy has made possible the opening of the historic doors to the public for the first time.

One third of the house will be open to visitors as early as May.

A newly established exhibition room, education room, toilets and car-park will mean that small pre-booked trips will be able to visit the house, while other larger groups will be able to use the grounds for events and make guided trips to the ruins of Dunollie Castle.

Organisers are still hoping to raise funds for further improvements to the building and facilities - donations can be made at www.dunollie.org

Derelict town hotel faces further planning delays

'Everyone in Oban wants to see the hotel started,' claims Callum MacLeod

DEVELOPERS of the derelict Argyll Hotel on Oban's seafront are reeling this week after planners put back the project, yet again.

'Amend plans'

An '11th hour' meeting between Historic Scotland, architects and Argyll and Bute Council planners could not resolve outstanding issues from consultees and third parties. Therefore planners have sent the applicants, Alan and Callum MacLeod back to the drawing board to 'amend plans.'

Callum MacLeod said the decision was 'unbelievable'.

He said: 'It makes you wonder whether planners are deliberately trying to sabotage the project. We spent more than one year in pre-planning discussions with the council. Now, post validation they want so much more information.'

'We told planners we wanted the hotel ready to open for 2012. At this rate I cannot

imagine that happening. 'At the 11th hour they have put another spanner in the works.

'Everyone in Oban wants to see the hotel started,' he added.

'It seems that planners are getting involved in non-material objections and it is jeopardising the whole project. As far as we can tell there are only two material objections - both of which we are willing to resolve.

'We have had a good number of positive responses to our application.'

Listed building

Argyll and Bute Council said: 'The Argyll Hotel has been the subject of a listed building consent application for demolition and a planning application for redevelopment.'

'Various issues have been raised by consultees and third parties which - along with matters raised by planning

officers - have been the subject of a meeting with the agents for the applicant.

'They have undertaken to consider these issues and seek further instruction from the applicants which may lead to plans being amended or further information being supplied, which may in turn prompt the need for further re-consultation.

'In the light of that, it is not possible at this point to be conclusive as to when the applications will be supported or determined, although we are aware of the ongoing deterioration of the building and would wish to see the applications determined as soon as they are in a position to be decided.

In the meantime, maintenance of public safety remains the council's primary concern, hence the requirement to ensure that the owner safeguards the structure to the council's satisfaction.'

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Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB
Tel: 01631 568000
www.obantimes.co.uk

Editorial

Editorial Director
Stewart MacKenzie
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Stuart Laundry
slaundry@obantimes.co.uk

Northern Editor
Stephen Norris
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Chief Reporter
Euan Paterson
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

Senior Reporter
Louise Lee
lleee@obantimes.co.uk

Senior Reporter
Steven Flanagan
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Christine McCartney
cmcarterney@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Edel Kenealy
ekenealy@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Richard Haddock
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

Web Co-ordinator
Marian Miller
mmiller@obantimes.co.uk

Newsdesk
01631 568060
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising

Advertising Sales Manager
Fiona MacInnes
fmacinnes@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Rhona McGilp
adverts@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Fiona Bennett
fbennett@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Vanda MacDonald
copy@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Margaret Freitag
adverts@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Claire Firth
cfirth@wyvmedia.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Kevin Summers
ksummers@wyvmedia.co.uk

Branch Offices

Fort William
Tel 01397 703003
Fax 01397 702495

Lochgilphead
Tel 01546 602345
Fax 01546 602661

Campbeltown
Tel 01586 554646
Fax 01586 553006

Arran
Tel 01770 302142
Fax 01770 302021

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Police take 'slow down in town' plea to the isles

Speed checks on the island of Mull have proved drivers are going a little faster than necessary.

Sergeant Mark Stephen and PC Steven Brown were out and about at Tobermory School Campus doing roadside speed checks and highlighting the 'Slow Down in Town' message to drivers as they dropped their children off at school.

Sergeant Steven said it was not a major problem at the moment but one or two minor incidents had given cause for concern.

He said: 'People should be aware of the speed limits and stick to them. The main access to the school entrance is a single track road with no footpath.'

'Everyone should check their speed.'

Sergeant Mark Stephen and PC Stevie Brown are pictured showing Jack and Mhairi from Primary 4 at Tobermory Primary School the speed gun used earlier in the day at a roadside check in the village. 16_104police1



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

CARSON A BHIODH ANNAS oirm a' faicinn nan Tòraidhean a' tarraing air seirbheisean poblach nuair a tha cothrom is cumhachd aca? Chan eil duine ciallach dol a dh' àicheadh nach eil e ionchaidh a bhith a' cumail sùil air eifeachdas nan structaran a tha a' riaghladh chosgaisean poblach, ach 's e tha draghail an seo gum bheil poileasaidhean a' dol an sàs a tha an cunnart cron maireannach a dhèanamh air Stàit Shochair na dùtha.

Agus tha sin a' tachairt fo leigeadh suidheachadh na h-eaconamaigh a leasachadh. Tha Daibhidh Camshron den bheachd gun caill an dùthaich mura teid gluasad air adhart agus tha an Riaghaltas nan deann a dh'ionnsaigh ath-leasachadh sheirbheisean poblach, a' tòiseachadh le Seirbheis na Slàinte ann an Sasainn.

Nuair a nochd 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS', Paipear Geal aig an Riaghaltas air leasachadh Seirbheis na Slàinte, san lùthar seo chaidh, bha mòran ann an saoghal poilitigs agus Seirbheis na Slàinte fhèin gu math draghail mu mhead agus astar nan amasan leasachaidh agus sia mìosan air adhart chan eil na draghan sin air sioladh. Thathas a' moladh smachd riaghlaidh mòran de bhuidhean slàinte a ghlusadh bhò Urrasan Slàinte agus a thoirt dha dotairean gus cothrom a thoirt dhaibhsan na taicean as fhearr a thaghadh dha na h-euslaintich a tha fòn curam. Ach chan eil cinnt sam bith gum bheil a h-uile ionad-dotaireachd deònach, gun ghuth air comasach, an seòrsa rianachd seo a lèimheachadh agus mar a bhiodh dùil, tha iomagain mhòr air cuid mu na h-ire gum bheil an roinn phrìobhaidhich gu bhith a' tighinn a-staigh air Seirbheis na Slàinte. Tha fiù 's na proifeiseantaich as taiceile dha molaidhean an Riaghaltas a' faicinn cunnart ann a bhith a' feuchainn ri leithid de ghrad atharrachadh a dhèanamh ann an seirbheis a tha cho mòr agus cho cudromach ann an ùine cho goirid. Sin is coireach gum bheil comhairle bhò proifeiseantaich air gach taobh a' moladh dhan Riaghaltas gabhail air an socair. Tha an Riaghaltas an-dràsta a' cur romhpa na h-atharraichean a thoirt gu buil ann an Sasainn taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna agus £30bn a chaomhnadh aig an aon àm!

Carson a bhiodh dragh oirm an seo? Nach tèid cuisean a rèiteach aig deas mun tìg na h-atharraichean gu tuath? Theagamh gum bi sin fìor gu ìre, ach mar as motha thig an roinn phrìobhaidhich an sàs 's ann as motha an cunnart dha ìre sheirbheisean den a h-uile seòrsa air na h-ìomail!

DESPITE recognition that all public sectors must share the pain of economies, the scale and pace of proposed reform of the NHS in England is frightening medical professionals at all levels and the government is being urged to moderate its plan to transfer the majority of health budget management to GPs and save £30bn within two years.

Scotland is not being used as a pilot area this time but as the private sector involvement in all public service delivery increases peripheral areas have cause for concern!

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

Permission on hold for Mull centre alterations

REPORT by LOUISE LEE
lleee@obantimes.co.uk

ALTERATIONS have been made to a new state-of-the-art resource centre without planning permission.

Objectors raised a number of concerns over retrospective plans for the Mull and Iona Community Trust's (MICT) Community Resource centre in Craignure.

Argyll and Bute planning officers had recommended approval of the retrospective application - but councillors have put a decision on hold for further consideration of the concerns raised.

These included claims that the building had been built 1.8 metres further onto the

site than had been originally approved, it was half a metre higher than agreed, windows overlook a neighbouring property, no concrete ramp was shown in original plans, trees were removed from the site without permission and additional rooms and windows were added to the building.

One objector asked: 'Who approved the changes to the plans without contacting the adjacent property owners? Who authorised the additional rooms and windows?'

One letter of support outlined the positive nature of the building for the community, as it will bring much-needed offices, a charity shop, meeting rooms

"The changes have not been approved or authorised."

Argyll and Bute planning report

and community enterprise space.

A report before last week's planning committee meeting stated: 'The changes have not been approved or authorised by the planning application. The current application seeks authorisation.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman confirmed: 'The principal planning officer advised

that the application had been required to address alterations in footprint, floor level, fenestration, drainage arrangements and other minor details to the previously approved consent.

'There had been 14 representations received, the responses to which were located within his report.'

'The proposal was consistent with the development plan and gave rise to no adverse privacy or amenity issues that could not be controlled by conditions and therefore he recommended that the application be approved.'

Previously Siàn Scott, MICT's project manager, explained that the changes

to the resource centre were requested last year by Argyll and Bute Council's building control department in order to meet the current building standards regulations with regard to fire prevention and safe access and egress.

'As a result of these changes, a number of the windows on the south-east elevation now overlook the private space of the neighbouring property. In order to regulate this, the planning department asked the trust to submit a new planning application which was lodged on October 21.'

Councillors agreed to continue the application to the next meeting of the committee for further information.

Coastguard centralisation 'dangerous' claims Isles MSP

PLANS to centralise Coastguard services in Aberdeen would be dangerous to the whole Scottish coastline, Western Isles MSP Alasdair Allan has warned.

Dr Allan's comments came after meeting First Minister Alex Salmond with Shetland MSP Tavish Scott.

Dr Allan said: 'I believe that both the Shetland and Stornoway stations serve vital functions and that the current plans to centralise services in Aberdeen are equally dangerous for all areas of the Scottish coastline.'

The matter is to be debated in the Scottish Parliament today (Thursday).

Taynuilt man caused collision

A TAYNUILT driver who drove too close to the car in front, causing a collision, was fined £200 and had his licence endorsed with six penalty points at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Steven Smith, of Taynuilt, admitted careless driving and failing to stop after an accident in Oban on October 1 last year.

Sentence deferred on Oban thief

AN OBAN man pled guilty to theft and struggling violently with police when he appeared before the town's sheriff court.

Jordan Suter, of Lorn Court, will be sentenced on February 15.

Talented Oliver's eye for a poster

TALENTED youngster Oliver Harris from Mull is the winner of this year's Argyll and Bute Council road safety calendar competition.

Oliver's poster, which bears the message 'Be Wise and use your eyes', was selected as the overall winner by a panel of judges.

Each year, the Road Safety Unit asks local school children to design posters, with the overall winner receiving a £50 voucher and a trophy for their school.

Nine-year-old Oliver, a pupil of Tobermory High School, was thrilled to be this year's winner.

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, Argyll and Bute's spokesperson for Transport and Infrastructure, said: 'Road safety is an extremely serious subject and this competition is a great way of getting young people to think about it. Oliver's poster really gets the message across. It is perfect for displaying in every classroom.'



Safety first: Oliver Harris shows off his prize winning road safety poster.

Deterioration of A85 at Cruachan being monitored

THERE is concern that a stretch of the A85 near Cruachan Power Station could slip into Loch Awe after fresh signs of deterioration on the road.

Oban civil engineer Richard Ayling, of Digital Land Surveys, said he is becoming increasingly worried by cracks and a noticeable dip on a 30-yard stretch of the road, saying it has become noticeably

worse in recent months. With a slip already having occurred there some years ago, taking out part of the road, he's concerned there could be a repeat.

He said: 'There is a series of cracks on the road surface itself, right next to the muddy layby near to the power station.'

'About 30 years ago there was a big section of the road that slipped into the loch.

Eventually, they filled it, but the cracks are in just about the same place.

'Just over half of the road could slip into the loch if it goes.

'I've got to admit, when I come to that section of road, I slow down just in case it has gone.'

Monitoring

A spokesman for Scotland Transerv said they are aware of the potential problem and

have been monitoring the road since 2007.

He said: 'We are not immediately concerned. Standing priorities mean we will be developing a resolution, but it will compete with other funding priorities.'

'We're not saying that [we're not worried about it] otherwise we wouldn't be monitoring it closely. Our top people are aware of it.'

Tiree Golf Club powers ahead with turbine

TIREE Golf Club is hoping to erect a 50-foot wind turbine next to its clubhouse in an effort to drastically reduce its running costs.

Plans for the turbine were officially lodged with Argyll and Bute planners this month.

However, the club is yet to decide whether or not to commit to building

the turbine, which would measure 14.75 metres to the tip of the blade - three times the height of the club house.

Final estimate

The sticking point is the cost. The club's committee has yet to be presented with a final estimate and as such is yet to take a formal decision on whether or not

to give it the go ahead. Alan Jones is the golf club committee member dealing with the application.

He said: 'It's a five kilowatt turbine and the idea is to offset the cost of heating the building.'

Innovative

'It's quite an innovative plan and I think there are only one or two other golf

clubs that have done the same thing. We are still at the planning stages though and we're still looking at funding options. Nothing is set in stone.'

He said estimates show that the turbine would eliminate electricity costs during the summer and drastically reduce the bill in the winter.

Celebration of island life will begin in April

OFFICIALS of the Scotland's Islands project are appealing to organisers of events which showcase the vibrant culture and creativity, outstanding natural environment and quality produce of island communities to come forward and apply for funding.

In particular, they are keen to hear from islanders looking to organise food and drink related events to highlight the diverse mix of activities found in the islands.

Showcase

A year of events and activities to showcase Scotland's islands gets under way in April. While the first round of funding is complete, islanders can still get involved by submitting their applications to Scotland's Islands before the close of the second round of funding on February 14. Funding is also available through Awards For All, which has no set closing date.

Scotland's Islands, an initiative developed through a partnership of the six local authorities with island communities, aims to raise the profile of the islands, attract new visitors, bolster community and economic development and strengthen links between the islands and mainland cultural organisations.

Residents of Argyll and Bute's island communities are being asked to contact Scotland's Islands or their local council for more information on how to apply.

Great opportunity

Councillor Neil MacKay, spokesman for Enterprise, Energy, Culture and Tourism at Argyll and Bute Council, said: 'This funding is for all types of events, large and small.'

'We are urging local groups to get in touch so that we can do everything we can to support their applications.'

'This is a great opportunity for the communities to highlight what special and diverse culture our islands have.'

For more information on how to apply for funding from either body and to see what events are already involved visit www.scotlandislands.com

Three tenders received for £2.5 million Coll scheme

THREE companies have submitted bids to build Coll's new £2.5million community centre, although it is still not known if the tenders are on budget.

Development Coll say that the three companies, MacLeod, Thorburns and TSL, submitted full tenders in time for last Friday's deadline.

The documents are now being assessed and a final decision on who to award the An Cridhe project to is expected to be made within a fortnight.

Chairman of the An Cridhe

project, John Fraser, said: 'The tenders are now being assessed. How long it takes depends on the tenders. We're hoping that it will be decided in the next fortnight.'

'Of course, if it is a one horse race, there's no problem and we can get started.'

Development Coll had intended to award the tender for An Cridhe before Christmas, but two of the three firms involved in the bidding process said they were unable to provide an accurate estimate in time.

Flare gun test sparks rescue mission at Dalmally

DALMALLY was subject to a full search and rescue mission on Tuesday morning, but the call turned out to be a false alarm.

Residents of the village contacted Strathclyde Police at about 8.30am, when a flare was spotted in the region of Stronmilchan, in the hills.

Fearing that someone was in danger, a helicopter was scrambled to the area and officers put Oban Mountain Rescue on alert.

A number of cars were checked to ensure no hillwalkers were missing, and locals were interviewed in an effort to determine the source of the flare.

The operation was stood down at 11.30am when it was discovered that the flare was in fact fired by an individual checking to see if it worked.

Strathclyde Police's Inspector at Oban, Julie McLeish, said: 'It was discovered that a local resident had been testing the flare gun.'

'As well as the cost and the time wasted by police in investigating this, it caused genuine concern to the local community.'

Inspector McLeish has urged anyone who wants to test a flare gun to first get in touch with their local police office to advise them of their intention.

She added: 'With any report such as this, extreme care has to be taken to make sure it's not a missing hillwalker.'

'This operation was time consuming and expensive. It could have been avoided completely with one phone call to the police.'

Lifeboat leads Scottish figures

OBAN'S lifeboat was launched 57 times last year, the highest number of launches by an all-weather lifeboat across Scotland.

The figure is also up on 2009's figure of 53, although the increase has been put down to an increase in the number of 'medivacs,' where someone needs to be taken to the mainland to go to hospital.

The actual number of rescues has dropped significantly.

Figures show that 34 of the 57 call outs last year were carried out in darkness.

Difficult budget choices will be made says council leader

ARGYLL and Bute Council will deliver a balanced budget but severe reductions in the council's settlement from Scottish Government mean that services will have to be cut.

That's the message from council leader Dick Walsh,

just three weeks ahead of the council's final budget setting date.

Councillor Walsh said: 'I want everyone to be clear that Argyll and Bute Council will deliver a balanced budget.'

'All 36 elected councillors

have a legal responsibility to set a budget.

'We've said from the outset that this budget will involve taking some very difficult decisions. Residents should be under no illusion that based on the settlement that we have received from the

Scottish Government, there will be no option now but to cut services to make these savings. While we'd planned for significant budget cuts there was no way we could have predicted how severe our settlement would be. We did not know until the

actual figures until mid-December, which has left us little time to discuss further savings before we announce our budget on February 10.

'We've made it clear since our budget consultation in August that we need to make cuts. Now we're only weeks

away from announcing what those cuts are, no one should be surprised at how severe they have to be.

'But everyone should be clear - we will deliver a balanced budget and it will involve taking some very difficult decisions.'

Third community project for town gets off the ground

Oban's on the up

'We have learned to our cost, in the past, that if we don't do it - it won't be done.'

OBAN is on the up and it is thanks to the goodwill of the community.

That's the feeling of community activists Graham MacQueen and Catherine Gillies who are setting about getting a third community-led project for the town off the ground in matter of months.

'First there was the incredible finds at Dunollie House that give it national and international importance and the many people who got behind the project to open it up to the public,' says Catherine of the 1745 Dunollie House project.

'Then of course, more recently, the public goodwill to keep Oban Phoenix Cinema in community ownership.

'And thirdly, plans to keep the White Building in community ownership for the community.'

'Working together, the community of Oban, Lorn and the Isles is very strong. We have learned to our cost, in the past, that if we don't do it won't be done. It will only happen if we make it happen.'

'The confidence a community gets from its cultural heritage is well documented. The pride people will get from saving their cinema, or protecting their history is immeasurable but it will impact on everyday life in the town.'

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by LOUISE LEE lee@obantimes.co.uk

'... I am sensing that the community is rising up and taking control.'

Graham MacQueen

'We understand that people in authority are trying to provide cash to put into essential services and there may not be much left in the pot, but without these collective cultural experiences there is a huge loss to the community. It is a great time to live in Oban because we are starting to do it for ourselves on the things that matter to us as a people.'

Graham MacQueen added: 'The response from last week's Oban Times on the future of the White Building has been phenomenal. So much so we have begun to set up a community enterprise to keep the building in community use. 'For the first time in a long time I am sensing the community is rising up and taking control. It is possible due to fears about the recession. We are standing up and saying we can do it, and we will do it. It is not the normal response from people on the west coast but I like it.'



The class of P6/7 at Park Primary School watch on as classmate Alex Roberts, examines what could be the fruits of their labour. 15_t04parkapple1

Park pupils go 'dooking' for past orchards

OBAN'S Park Primary School is appealing for information about local orchards as part of a P6/7

class project to plant their very own. Ilana MacLaurin's class are hoping to find out more

about the past and present of orchards in the area as they prepare the first batch of saplings for planting in

the school grounds. Anyone with any information can contact the school on 01631 563941.

Consumers warned over puppy-dog scam

BWARE of a new scam offering free puppies to newspaper readers.

An advert appearing in newspapers throughout the area is offering Yorkshire Terriers pups free to a good home.

But when Anne Baxter, from Bunesan on the Isle of Mull, replied to an email address she was told she would have to pay huge

shipment fees for the pups. Anne had lost her own Yorkshire Terrier six months ago and was keen to get a new dog.

In a response to her request for more details about the puppies, a Rev Issac replied: 'I want you to know that I and my family are on a missionary trip to West Africa along with the two

Yorkshire terrier puppies. So my wife and I decided to ask one of our friends in the UK to help us contact the pet lover's association that we are looking for someone to adopt our babies. We got your email from them and we pray over it and we decided to give you our precious babies. 'We are going to ship to you via a diplomatic courier

service company with express delivery on next day delivery. Please note that we shall both split and pay the shipment fee to get the puppies to you as we are not sure of the cost and we don't have big money here yet as we are on a missionary mission and we have to limit our spending for now.'

It is understood that people have replied to the advert, paid shipment fees - and of course, the puppies never arrived.

A spokeswoman for Consumer Direct said: 'Don't let the scammers con you. 'Be sceptical: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Don't be afraid to bin it, delete it or hang up on any scam. 'Resist pressure to make a decision right away. Consider asking a friend or family member for advice, or even an accountant or solicitor if big sums of money are involved. Read the small print and be sure you understand all the terms and conditions of an offer. 'Never give your bank account details to someone you don't know. 'In particular, never email anyone your financial information - even if you do know them. 'This particular scam has been used for a number of years and it simply shows the means people will go to take money from vulnerable people.'

Town centre streets to lose out - again

PLANS to upgrade road surfaces and street amenities throughout Oban may again be delayed - this time indefinitely.

The A85 was due a long-awaited and oft-postponed road upgraded this coming Autumn, however, the Scottish government says the plans may not now get the go ahead.

Oban town centre was to gain upgraded pavements, road surfaces, lighting, street

furniture, bins and signage. Many businesses within the town were looking forward to having a new look for the town centre.

The Oban Times has reported on a number of current problems with uneven paving in the main thoroughfare, with several falls resulting in a number of law suits against the Scottish government. Keith Murray, Transport

Scotland's project manager said: 'Oban is still a high priority for us, but all projects are being reviewed in light of the horrendous winter. 'In the Isle of Skye alone we had to spend £1 million on clearing roads. 'As the money all comes out of the same budget things have to be reviewed. 'At the moment we are unable to say whether it is in or out of next year's plans.'

Barra hosts consultation meeting on Mingulay SAC

THE ISLE of Barra this week hosted a public meeting as part of the consultation process into the establishment of a possible Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to the east of Mingulay.

The meeting at Castlebay Hall on Wednesday (yesterday) was organised by Scottish Natural Heritage

to give islanders the chance to have their say about the controversial proposal.

The full consultation itself is open for returns until February 22, 2011.

Details of the proposed SAC are available on the SNH website, and in full paper form from SNH's office at Stilligarry, South Uist.

What improvements do you want to see in, and around, Oban?

IDEAS to improve Oban are being sought by the town centre manager.

Campbell Cameron, who works for Business Improvement District Oban (BID4Oban), has started to collect ideas about the way people feel the town centre could be improved.

Campbell told The Oban Times: 'There are many suggestions coming forward to improve the town centre.

'Some people want a cleaner Oban Bay, street art, a canopied shopping area, a bandstand, McCaigs Tower lighting, tree cutting, toilets, heritage centre, Park and Ride facilities. While others want much bigger projects such as a new park and branding and signposting for Oban. 'Whatever we do there is no doubt it will improve Oban.

'Members of the BID4Oban steering group are in the process of approaching all the businesses in town to gauge support for the project to improve the town. So far the response has been very positive. 'We are moving forward. Over the last month we have been very involved with the cinema - but as that has now become an autonomous group it is back

to our survey work with every business in town.

'Everyone in the town will have an equal vote in BID4Oban therefore the small independent businesses will have the same say as the large multinationals on what improvements we want to make in the town. 'Mr Cameron can be contacted on 01631 720247. What are your ideas for town centre improvement?

Police appeal after handbag snatch attempt

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after a failed attempt was made at snatching a handbag in Oban.

The incident occurred on Soroba Road near to Lynn Court at about 6pm on Saturday, January 15. A 21 year old woman was walking in the area when she felt someone trying to grab the strap of her handbag.

She ran off and managed to keep her bag, but only managed a glimpse of the man she believed was responsible.

He is described as between 20-30 years of age, of medium build and wearing a dark coloured cap.

Anyone with any information should contact Constable Andy Simpson on 01631 510540, or drop in to Oban Police Office.

Oban Airport emergency training

EMERGENCY services from across the area will descend on Oban Airport this Saturday, January 29 - but there's no need for anyone to worry.

The airport will be the focus of a training event, designed to test the airport's response to a genuine emergency.

The training event will take place between 11am and 2pm. Visitors to Oban on Saturday afternoon may notice more emergency vehicles in the area than usual as a result of the exercise.

Road repairs receive added cash

ARGYLL and Bute Council will receive almost £100,000 more than they had anticipated for road repair projects.

Extra money to be pumped into Scotland's roads was announced two weeks ago - this week the council heard what money they would actually receive.

Allocated £598,000, three times the amount of some authorities, the council will have a number of projects on which it would no doubt like to spend the cash.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman said: 'We have been distributed the money on the basis of each local authority's share of the existing Winter Maintenance Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) assessment.'

However, the total sum is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the repair bill following weeks of severe winter weather throughout the area.

Loch Etive car driver found

THE driver of a car found semi-submerged in Loch Etive on Monday morning has been found safe and well.

A spokesperson for Strathclyde Police said the female motorist was traced to her home address.



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Ardrihaig man admit drugs charge

AN ARDRISHAIG man who lapsed back into drug use was given community service at Oban Sheriff Court.

Graham Alan Leith, 31, of Seaside Park, Ardrishaig, admitted possessing 1.9gm of diamorphine worth £60 after his car had been stopped by police.

Taking into account Leith's early guilty plea, Sheriff Eric Brown sentenced him to 80 hours community service, reduced from 120 hours.

Sheriff threatens jail for traveller

A TRAVELLER whose shouting and swearing from a caravan caused alarm to dog walkers near Inverawe power station has been fined £405.

William MacDonald, 21, who gave his address as 37 Hillcrest Drive, Alloa, pled guilty to the charge at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday.

MacDonald was on bail from Alloa Sheriff Court at the time of the incident.

Sentencing, Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'You should know that you are teetering on the edge of being given a custodial sentence.'

Victim didn't want court 'hassle'

THE victim of an alleged assault in Oban town centre did not report the incident to police because he didn't want the 'hassle' of a court case.

However, Arfon Lamont found himself in the witness box of Oban Sheriff Court after two of his friends did make statements alleging that Donnie Lopez and Russell MacLennan attacked the 19-year-old.

Both Lopez, 23, of Soroba Road, and MacLennan, of Dalintart Drive, Oban, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

In court, two female witnesses said they could remember little of what happened in April 2009.

However, their police statements were read out in court, in which both alleged that the defendants had attacked Mr Lamont.

Mr Lamont said he had gone to the police station to give a statement, but had changed his mind 'to avoid this hassle'.

The trial continues at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday, February 14.



Rutherford's nail technician, Mandi Sander, is pictured painting wee Louise MacDonald's nails during Sunday's fundraiser at the Oban salon. 15_104010562

Fundraiser for little Louise raises more than £2,000

AN INCREDIBLE response to a fundraising day at Rutherford's salon in Oban has resulted in more than £2,000 being raised for young Louise MacDonald.

The figure is double what the salon had hoped to raise with the event, and will mean 12-year-old Louise will travel down to Glasgow in style for her first ever go at ice skating—a welcome break from her recent health troubles.

Rutherford's owner Pamela Mackay was blown away by the response.

She said: 'We were absolutely mobbed. We were struggling to get extra chairs at one point.'

'It was a really good day; both Louise and her mum Marliese were there throughout and they ended up helping out getting people cups of tea and coffee—thank goodness that they were because we were run off our feet!'

"It's quite amazing how generous people have been."

Pamela Mackay

'It was quite amazing; someone even came in and just gave Louise £50. Other people were coming in to drop off items for the raffle, things like bottles of vodka and even teabags.'

'The girl that owns Bollywood even came in with a bracelet worth £300 and just dropped it in for the raffle. It was incredible—I bought five lines of raffle tickets then!'

She thanked all the staff who worked for free at the event and everyone who turned up to support Louise.

She said: 'It's quite amazing how generous people have been. Beforehand everyone

was saying that January was a bad month to do this kind of thing, but it just goes to show how supportive people are when someone is in need.'

Pamela decided to hold the fundraiser after learning of Louise's health problems.

As a result of her neurofibromatosis, an incurable genetic condition that causes tumours to grow on nerve tissue throughout the body, she recently developed a tumour on her optic nerve, which doctors felt required chemotherapy.

However, the treatment hit her hard and she lost 17lbs in just two weeks, prompting doctors to give her a break from the chemo. On top of that, there is a suspected diagnosis of epilepsy—and Louise is now recovering from the mumps.

Plans can now get underway to send Louise to Glasgow on May 27, her birthday.

Island development supporters recorded as opponents of plan

Isle of Luing trust director amongst those listed as against 'own' project

SUPPORTERS of a contentious development on the Isle of Luing were left fuming after they were listed as opposing the scheme.

Supporters of The Atlantic Islands Centre were shocked to discover they were recorded as objectors when they had in fact written to Argyll and Bute council in support of the application.

Clerical error
The proposal includes a museum, licensed café and exhibition/function room on land near Cullipool House.

Norman Bissell, vice-chairman of the Isle of Luing Community Trust, which lodged the application, believes the error is clerical and not a malicious attempt to mislead.

'Even one of the directors of the community trust was put down in objection to the

building,' he said. 'Any decision made on these initial documents will be flawed as they do not show an accurate picture of who is for, or indeed who is against the building of the centre.'

'Councillors need an accurate list to make an informed decision. Many islanders are unhappy at being placed in the wrong category.'

'Many of us have to live side by side on the island and it has caused a lot of distress and concern thinking that one person was saying one thing to the trust and another to the council. I am sure it is not intentional but there are some very serious mistakes.'

'By the community trust's calculations 36 permanent islanders are in favour of the centre while 16 are against.

'The large numbers of responses to the planning application gives a false level of feeling on the island.'

Not residents
'There were 110 supporters of the planning application who submitted letters and 115 objectors, not 89 supporters and 134 objectors as stated in the council papers which went to the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee (PPSL).

'We have identified many inaccuracies listed. For example, there are 23 objectors and three supporters who are not residents of Luing but gave an island address instead of their home address.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman said: 'This application was

reported to the December planning, protective services and licensing committee, and has been continued for a local hearing on Monday, January 31, on Luing in view of the high number of third party representations received.'

'The proposal attracted a large number of representations, both for and against. In the report to the December meeting, four letters were inappropriately listed as being objectors, whereas they were in fact supporters.'

'This was brought to our attention and the matter is being rectified by way of a supplementary report to the hearing which will also tie up any late representations. There will, therefore, be an accurate record at the hearing.'



Allan 'Winky' MacDougall, centre, receives his long service award 15_104winky01

'Winky' starts again - with long service medal

HE IS one of the oldest probationary firefighters in Argyll but Oban's Allan MacDougall already has more than 20 years' service under his belt.

Allan, known as 'Winky', was a retained firefighter for 20 years in Oban before going full-time three years ago and on Friday he received a long service medal from Paul Connelly, area commander for Argyll and Bute.

Allan, a former fuel delivery vehicle driver, said he was delighted to receive the award,

adding: 'It is an honour to do the job, especially in your home town. When I was younger there were adults in the area where I lived who were firefighters and that rubbed off on me.'

Cdr Connelly was full of praise for 47-year-old Allan.

He said: 'He is a very special individual because he has done 20 years retained but is committed to doing it full-time and, as a result, will have to start his service all over again. I don't know anyone else who has done that.'

Russell under fire to name Argyll and Bute schools he would close

EDUCATION secretary Mike Russell should reveal the eight or nine schools in Argyll and Bute that he feels should be closed, claim Highlands and Islands list MSP Jamie McGrigor and Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid.

However, Mr Russell responded to the claims by

saying the pair should 'stop digging.'

During a parliamentary debate Mr McGrigor asked the education minister to name the schools he believed should be closed in a bid to clear up uncertainty over closures throughout Argyll and Bute.

This was after a leaked

email revealed Mr Russell believed 'that eight or nine schools could be closed with minimal difficulties.'

'Name those schools'

Mr McGrigor said: 'He should name those schools and explain how he reconciles his suggestions with the legislation that he says he supports, which

states that each school should be considered individually on its educational merits?'

Alan Reid MP said: 'Mr Russell should be open and honest and tell the public what eight or nine schools were on the closure list he handed the council.'

'The SNP government are cutting Argyll and

Bute Council's grant by £5.5 million more than the Scottish average.'

'Mike Russell should be doing all that he can to get this cut reversed.'

'Yah-boo politics'

In response, Mr Russell said: 'I have a long track record in opposing school closures in this area and

across the country and I will talk about it any time they wish.'

'But I have never said that every single school in every part of Scotland should stay open forever and if they now think that, then they have moved from one indefensible position to another in record time.'

'It's time the Liberals and the Tories stopped playing infantile yah-boo politics and started helping local communities.'

'For good measure they could also apologise for the financial disaster their London government is foisting on Scotland and Argyll.'

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Lifeboat's first call out of 2011

OBAN lifeboat, the Mora Edith Macdonald, launched at midnight on Monday to evacuate a patient from Craignure, Mull - its first calling of the new year.

The male patient was transferred to Lorn and Islands District Hospital at 1.18am.

Sound of Mull buoy withdrawn

THE NORTHERN Light-house Board have discontinued the use of a Buoy Station in the Sound of Mull.

The starboard buoy at Bo Rocks, latitude 56° 31.530' north and longitude 005° 55.530' west, was permanently discontinued from Tuesday (January 25).

NEWSDESK 01631 568060

Paragliders rescued by helicopter from snow on Perthshire mountain

THREE paragliders narrowly escaped death at the weekend after scaling the snowy slopes of Ben More with no climbing equipment whatsoever.

Air currents
The group decided to take to Ben More on Saturday in the hope that air currents would have been adequate for them to take off and enjoy paragliding back into the glen.

However, they decided to cross the snow line on Ben More, despite wearing nothing more specialised than jeans, trainers and lightweight jackets.

Sheet ice
When they encountered sheet ice they were left stranded - and with night fast approaching things looked bleak. Thankfully, one of the party had walking poles and was able to navigate his way down to a safe launch point and glided down to the glen, where he contacted the Killin Mountain Rescue Team.

While the group did have a GPS system, they were unable to obtain co-ordinates.

A spokeswoman for Central Scotland Police said: 'Killin Mountain Rescue Team and an RAF helicopter were scrambled. The two lucky and grateful men were eventually plucked safely from the mountain by helicopter and deposited back to earth. 'One of the rescued men was celebrating his birthday. It was indeed a memorable and very happy 25th birthday for him.'

Limitations
After being rescued, the group were instructed on the importance of being properly prepared for all conditions when climbing.

The spokeswoman said: 'No matter what your chosen sport or enjoyment is, be prepared for the conditions when venturing into the high ground and wilds of Scotland. 'Do not go beyond your limitations or what you are equipped for. 'Ben More is a serious mountain and people have sadly lost their lives there before.'

Oban teenager freed from jail to complete college course

AN OBAN teenager who admitted two charges of assault and one of breaching bail has been released from custody to enable him to complete a college bricklaying course.

Gavin Lafferty, 17, had been held in custody since his arrest in December for breaching bail conditions imposed after he had appeared on the assault charges.

Appearing at Oban Sheriff Court, he admitted charges of assault in Rockfield car park, on September 9, last year and in Soroba Road, on November 30.

Pleas of not guilty to two further charges - one in connection with the November 30 assault and a separate incident on December 12 - were accepted by the crown.

Sheriff Eric Brown deferred sentence for the preparation of community service and social inquiry reports.

Sheriff Brown agreed to release Lafferty on bail until February 15, subject to a 7pm to 6.30am curfew.

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Ewan takes initiative in looking for job

A NORTH Lorn teenager morning and isn't keen on the idea of hanging about on street corners.

Ewen MacPherson, aged 16, has launched himself onto the jobs market but due to the economic climate - it is proving very difficult to get a permanent start.

Polite and courteous Ewen, who left school at Christmas, says he is really keen to work. He is happy to get up in the

Ewen said: 'I had a job last summer on a boat lifting 400 creels a day but I had to go back to school. 'When I left school I got a temporary job in a fish farm but the permanent worker came back and I was left without a job. He said: 'I would love to learn a trade such as a electrician or a plumber - but I am happy to turn my hand to anything.' Ewen's advert is on Page 15

Ewen MacPherson wants to work

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MSPs meet over flight fees

HIGHLANDS MSPS met senior airways executives to discuss the proposed rise in domestic air passenger fees. Jamie McGrigor, Scottish Conservative MSP for the Highlands and Islands sponsored a cross party briefing in the Scottish parliament regarding the rise in domestic air passenger fees by BAA at Heathrow airport due to come into force from April.

Air industry experts warned MSPs that new charges may lead to a reduction in air services to and from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen to London Heathrow with the knock on impact on tourism as the number of flights are reduced.

Mr McGrigor said: 'This is potentially a very serious issue for Scotland and all of us should be working hard to ensure that there is no reduction in the level or frequency of air services between Scotland and Heathrow.'

Drink driver is fined and banned

AN UNEMPLOYED chef who admitted driving his friend's car while drunk and without insurance was fined £600 at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday.

Lee John Campbell, 23, who gave his address as Flat 2, Solas, Oban, admitted that, in the early hours of January 10, 2011 he drove his friend's car near Dunbeg.

He was also disqualified from obtaining a licence or driving for four years.

Thief stole iPod on New Year's Eve

A MAN with a history of drug problems stole an iPod Nano from an unlocked vehicle to help fund his habit.

Derek Darrah appeared from custody to plead guilty to entering the car and possession of diazepam in Rockfield Road, Oban, on December 31, when he appeared before the town's sheriff court last week.

Sheriff Eric Brown deferred sentence until February 15 and Darrah was released on bail to an address in Rhuvall Road, Oban.

Man carrying knife offered no reason

AN OBAN man could offer no explanation as to why he was carrying a hunting knife when stopped by police officers near Dunbeg.

Procurator Fiscal David Glancy told Oban Sheriff Court last week that 20-year-old Colin Carmichael of Combe Street, Oban was so drunk, police could get no sense from him.

Sheriff Eric Brown deferred sentence until February 15 for the preparation of a social inquiry report and community service assessment.

Training awards for caring duo

Two employees of Oban's Infinity Trust were handed SVQ certificates in Health and Social Care Level 3 after completing a Modern Apprenticeship with Argyll Training Ltd. The training took a year and was funded by Skills Development Scotland. John MacColl (left) and Norrie Morrison are pictured receiving their certificate from Argyll Training's Annie Johnstone.

140 days in jail for drug addict who ignored chances

AN OBAN drug user in possession of heroin and who failed to complete community service for a prior offence, has been jailed for five months.

At Oban Sheriff Court on Monday, Sheriff Douglas Small told William Burns, 31, of 11 Columba Court, that he would spend the next 140 days behind bars

after wasting numerous opportunities he had been given to change his ways.

Sheriff Small told Burns: 'You have been given chance after chance after chance. You have reached the end of being given chances.'

The court heard that Burns was ordered to complete 100 hours community service on July 21, 2009,

after admitting stealing from vehicles on July 10, 2008. However, he only completed 69 of those hours.

Admitted possession Burns also previously admitted that, on July 30, 2010, at his home address, he had 1.1 grammes of heroin in his possession, carrying a street value of approximately £50-60.

Laura Russell, defending, said her client had recently started to help himself after registering with the Argyll and Bute Addiction Team (ABAT), was receiving help from a consultant psychologist, and is on methadone drug programme.

However, Sheriff Small - who had previously placed Burns on a Drug Treatment and Testing Order, which

he breached - said: 'Why should ABAT be any better?'

'You're asking me to give him yet another chance, but I don't see why I should do that given the amount of chances he's had already.'

Burns was sentenced to 80 days behind bars for breaching his community service, and 60 days for his possession of heroin.

Vandals destroy well-known Oban garden landmark

MINDLESS vandals destroyed 'Bobby' the West Highland Terrier - a mini-landmark on Oban's Pulpit Hill for more than 13 years.

The garden sculpture was vandalised in the early hours of Saturday morning by rowdy 'teenagers' making their way along the quiet residential street.

Sculpture owners Kenny and Sheena McLennan have vowed to shame the culprits into coming forward. They said: 'We want people to know what their children are doing when they are not at home. They are out destroying other people's property.'

Irresponsible Sheena added: 'That wee statue has sat on this crossroads for years. People used him as a way of giving directions. But some irresponsible teenagers destroyed him during the night. It is a terrible thing and something we will not put up with in this street. We want whoever did this to be

ashamed of the damage they have caused.'

Kenny said: 'Someone has gone to a lot of bother to destroy the wee dog. It is a senseless crime because nobody will gain out of it.'

'They have ripped him off his plinth and smashed him in the street. It certainly isn't the normal behaviour of someone acting on their own. It is vandalism and it is unacceptable.'

The couple's grandchildren named the wooden West Highland Terrier 'Bobby' after Sheena's late father Bobby Harris.

Taken seriously Sergeant Colin Johnson, of Oban Police Station, said: 'Anyone with information about the incident should come forward to the police station or call Crimestoppers. People can report matters to the police at any time of the day or night and I would encourage anyone with information to come forward.'

'Vandalism is a crime and we take it very seriously.'



Oban couple Kenny and Sheena McLennan have vowed to shame the culprits into coming forward. 16_104dog2

Marine Harvest first to move on China deal

MARINE Harvest is reaping the rewards of being the first company to ship Scottish salmon to China, following this month's landmark trade agreement between the countries.

Marine Harvest Scotland say they have been examining the potential of the Chinese market for some time and, in close co-operation with the Marine Harvest China office, ensured they were in

a position to supply from the moment the trade agreement was struck.

While Scottish salmon has only been on sale in the country for two weeks, it has already proved popular and Marine Harvest is now looking to expand its farming activities in Scotland to meet the growing demand.

Madeleine Easson is the account manager for Marine Harvest Scotland,

which farms most of its fish in Argyll. She said: 'We're delighted to be selling Scottish farmed salmon in China and it's likely to prove popular in a country where fish is seen as a greater delicacy than meat and poultry.'

'We believe that the sales made this month are the first of many shipments to China and the start of a long term trading opportunity.'

Argyll and Bute gather census team ahead of March deadline

Questionnaire goes online in English and Gaelic

A TEAM of more than 100 has been employed in Argyll and Bute to gather information for the 2011 census.

The census, which takes place on Sunday, March 27, is the only survey to ask all residents the same questions at the same time.

It lets people across Scotland send a message to government and businesses about the services they and their community need, now and in the future.

In all, 107 part-time staff has now been employed in Argyll and Bute as enumerators.

The final stage of selecting census takers took place over the last two weeks across the area at a series of events which tested applicants' knowledge of Scotland and their aptitude in being able to support the census process.

The census is a reliable measure of the size of the population and information is used to help target and deliver billions of pounds worth of public services.

The census information also helps the planning of health, education and transport services as well as business investment and retail opportunities throughout Scotland.

Personal information gathered in the census is kept confidential for 100 years.

For the first time, householders will be able to fill in their census questionnaire online in English or Gaelic.

There is a census helpline which will operate from March 7 on 0300 1231702 and online help can also be found at www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk

Injured motorcyclist admits careless driving charge

A MOTORCYCLIST who suffered life threatening injuries in a collision admitted causing the accident - even though he has no recollection of it.

Barry Marcus spent 10 weeks in hospital recovering from numerous broken bones and had his spleen removed after his motorbike slipped from under him and into the path of an oncoming vehicle on the A816 Oban to Lochgilphead Road in November 2009.

Marcus, of Scott Avenue, Glasgow, pleaded guilty to an amended charge of careless driving when he appeared before Oban Sheriff Court.

Procurator Fiscal David Glancy said 28-year-old Marcus had been thrown clear of the bike and ended up in a roadside ditch.

Duncan Durbin, defending, said Marcus had no recollection of events and his memory remains impaired.

Sheriff Eric Brown fined Marcus £280 and placed six penalty points on his licence.



Schoolgirl vandalised Bonawe community eco-garden

A 'BORED' schoolgirl has admitted her part in causing damage estimated at £700 to a community garden.

Sixteen-year old Stephanie Waiton, of Glenmore Cottages, near Oban, used a metal pole to puncture a polytunnel which formed part of an eco-garden at Ardchattan Primary School,

Bonawe, last July.

Punctured Procurator Fiscal, David Glancy, said: 'The polythene skin of the tunnel had been punctured 30 times.'

Mr Glancy explained that following local inquiries, a juvenile had been held in connection with the incident,

who had then implicated 16-year-old Waiton.

Laura Russell, defending, said Waiton was 'extremely embarrassed' about her behaviour. 'She is really very sorry about the distress caused to the local community,' said Miss Russell.

Calling for a social inquiry

report and a community service assessment, sheriff Eric Brown said: 'Very significant damage has been caused. At the end of the day, someone has got to pay for that. Mindless vandalism has become all too prevalent in society.'

Sentence was deferred on Waiton, until February 15.

Lorn Lines

THERE was a good turnout of members of Oban Photographic Club for the first meeting of 2011, held in the Regent Hotel, Oban on January 10.

The speaker was well known local walker, climber and mountaineer, Bill Matthews, who showed slides and commented on the many areas in which he had walked.

The pictures included scenes from Ben Nevis, Skye, including the famous 'In Pin', climbing frozen waterfalls and scenes taken looking across mist filled valleys.

Bill also showed slides taken when he went climbing with a group in the Himalayas.

Everyone appreciated his pictures and descriptions of the mountains, the people and the steep mountain paths.

At the meeting on Monday, January 17 there was a chance to see the Photo Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB) portfolio and an audio visual presentation by club member Peter Cleave.

The PAGB images, which were the pick from photographic clubs all over the county, were excellent and gave members ideas of what they could, perhaps, go out to photograph during the coming months.

Peter Cleave had obviously spent a great deal of time and effort in putting together his audio visual show. His three subjects were boats of all descriptions, images to portray a musical mood and finishing with a sequence entitled 'Is Oban Colourful?'

Members thoroughly enjoyed his show and he was told to get another ready for next season!

The club's next meeting on February 7 is the Scottish Photographic Federation digital image portfolio.



AT their meeting on January 20, members of Oban Speakers Club enjoyed three excellent speeches.

The first half chairman, Bill Leech, introduced Roy Wood who talked on Burns in his speech 'A man's a man for a' that'; John Maclean, who had the audience in total silence as he talked about 'The Ibrox Disaster'; and in contrast Ian Fullarton, who brightened things up with his talk on 'Up Helly AA'.

Their immediate critics were Frank Walton, Tom Clegg and Cameron Fletcher.

In the topics session, chairman Jim Fraser gave a wide range of subjects to speakers Frank Walton, Norman Martin, Donald Macaskill, Tom Clegg, Willie Melville and Cameron Fletcher.

Timekeeper for the evening was Eamonn Arthur and the general evaluator was Guido Faccenda.

The next meeting, the annual ladies night, will be held in the Regent Hotel on Thursday February 3.



LORN Garden Club welcomed Maurice Wilkins, head gardener of Arduaine Garden, to St John's Hall, Oban on Tuesday January 18.

Members were treated to a lively and funny talk accompanied by beautiful slides, chosen from a plant expert's collection. Maurice described the many inspirational gardens he has visited over the years, many being so special he returns to them year after year.

The gardens were in Scotland, some in England and a few in Europe. A great deal of information about the plants was passed on to the crowd of attentive listeners.

The talk was followed by lovely home baking and tea with a great deal of discussion, including the up and coming garden visits Lorn Garden Club is organising.

The next meeting is at St John's, Oban, on February 15.

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Pupils on top film short-list

Ardnamurchan, Mallaig and Sgoil Lionacleit students in running for prestigious awards

PUPILS from Ardnamurchan High School, Mallaig High School and Sgoil Lionacleit are in the running to win national short film awards after submitting entries in this year's FilmG competition.

FilmG, MG ALBA's Gaelic online media shorts competition, last week announced its short-list of films for this year's award ceremony at The Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow, on February 18.

The glittering occasion will feature screenings of the winning films plus live music from 'Mànrán', whose debut single 'Latha Math' was released last week.

Competition is tight for the five top prizes of best film, best performance, best production, best script and best interpretation of this year's theme, *Làmh an Uachdar (The Upper Hand)*.

A record 71 entries were submitted from Scotland and beyond - 37 in the 12 to 17 years category.

Ardnamurchan High School, best film winners in the 12 to 17 year age group last year, is again in on the act, with two nominations for best performance - Katy MacPhee as minister's wife Morag in the film 'Am Priobadh' and Duncan Foxley for his leading role as a shinty player in the film 'Buaidh!'

Mallaig High School's film 'Ceumnan Beag' is shortlisted in the best script category, while Roanid Robertson's portrayal in the film of a young girl recovering from an accident has earned her a nomination in the best performance category.

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MG ALBA chief executive Donald Campbell said this year's competition had 'surpassed expectations' in terms of the number of films put forward and the high calibre of entries received.

He said: 'We are delighted with the level of creative talent emerging through our FilmG competition and we are encouraging as many people as possible to get behind the short-listed finalists by voting for their favourite film online.'

All of this year's entries and the short-listed films are available to view on the FilmG website at www.filmg.co.uk.

Viewers can vote for their favourite in the prestigious people's choice award until January 31, when the online poll closes.



Land next to Lundavra Road in Fort William: possible site for new school. 10_f04site01

Public meeting to consider new school site

A PUBLIC meeting on where a replacement school for the amalgamated Fort William and Upper Achintore primaries should be built is to be held in the town next Thursday.

The meeting, in the council chambers on High Street, will hear a presentation from Highland Council education

officials followed by a question and answer session. An exhibition on two possible sites for the new school, at the Angus Centre off Angus Crescent and a greenfield site west of Lundavra Road, will be on view to the public in Fort William Library from 10am on the day of the meeting. Council officials

will be on hand to answer questions. The events are part of a month-long consultation to find the best site for the proposed school, which will feature a school library, community hall and sporting facilities. The education, culture and sport committee will decide the matter on March 10.

Church lane drivers criticised

FORT William Community Council has criticised drivers using the entrance to Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church to enter and exit the High Street.

The council says the practice not only encroaches on a pedestrian area but will become a danger to children in the busy summer months.

The group has contacted Highland Council to inquire if any access conditions were imposed when the lane to the church was opened up.

Guilty teenager admonished

A FORT William teenager who was found guilty of making a threatening 'throat-cutting' gesture to two youths has been admonished.

Arkadiusz Bebenek, aged 17, of I Melantee, Claggan, made the gesture to Jamie McArthur, 17, and Nicole Higgins, 16, at the football pitch near Kennedy Road, Fort William, on May 20.

Sentencing at the trial was deferred for six months for good behaviour. Fort William Sheriff Court heard Bebenek had not been in any trouble since the incident and he was admonished by Sheriff Iain Fleming.

Surprise visitor presents food award to Fort William chef

SCOTTISH food ambassador Hardeep Singh Kohli cooked up a surprise for a Fort William chef when he visited the kitchen to present him with an award.

Ross Sutherland, head chef at the Lime Tree's An Ealdhain restaurant, was given a Silver Eat Scotland award by comedian and food writer Hardeep. The prize comes on top of a recent award that placed An Ealdhain amongst the top 14 restaurants in Scotland.

Ross, who is the youngest chef in Scotland to hold

a Michelin Star, was also given the additional bonus of an invitation to experience working with masterchef Heston Blumenthal.

Ross said: 'I was taken aback when a tall Sikh in a pink turban turned up to present this award.'

'I recognised Hardeep straight away after having watched him on Celebrity MasterChef.'

'I am very pleased that national food organisations are starting to recognise the good food we produce at the Lime Tree.'



Chefs Ross Sutherland, left, and John Wilson getting their award from Hardeep Singh Kohli.

Town centre tree trimming concern

FORT William Community Council (FWCC) has written to Highland Council to explore the possibility of placing a preservation order on mature trees in the town centre.

The move comes after FWCC secretary Trisha Jordan noticed a tree surgeon's van, a member of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) staff and two workers surveying a large pine in the grounds of Parade House, SNH's Lochaber HQ.

Ms Jordan was advised

the workers had been asked to survey the lower limb of the tree for possible cutting to make more room for car parking.

Consulted

SNH informed FWCC that no work had been approved other than trimming back of the trees nearest the roof area of the building and should there be any suggestion of pruning other trees FWCC would be consulted.

Ms Jordan said she was concerned that the Parade was in danger of losing

cultural identity and its picturesque appeal, and suggested it might be 'prudent' for FWCC to suggest a preservation order on the trees and the Parade 'for historical and cultural reasons'.

'This is an area which was gifted to the people of Fort William by Fairfax Lucy and as such the council as trustees has responsibility for maintaining and sustaining this part of our culture and heritage for future generations,' she said.

Fort museum scraps entrance fees

A FORT William museum is to scrap its entrance fees to try and attract more visitors.

West Highland Museum, in Cameron Square held a free month in November, which attracted more than 1,100 visitors through the doors.

Museum chairman Chris Robinson said he hopes the move will increase visitor numbers to around 35,000 a year. Thirty years ago, the museum welcomed about 70,000 visitors every year, but this number

has dropped dramatically since then. In an effort to cut costs five part-time reception staff have been let go. When the museum reopens in March, there will only be two paid positions.

Mr Robinson said: 'The displays will be reorganised and we anticipate that there will be a different museum experience.'

'Our aim is to offer a real change to the visitor experience and hope to encourage many more people to see the treasures within and for locals to engage with the museum.'

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Fort William RC Primary School earns first Green Flag

FORT William RC Primary School is celebrating after being awarded its first Green Flag for being eco-friendly.

Over the last two years, the school's eco committee, with one pupil from each class, has worked on a number of projects to improve the school. The projects include a playground tidy-up, creating a library from old unwanted books, and the creation of a sensory garden in the playground.

The garden was built on an area of wasteland that was levelled before the children planted grass and flowers to create a play area.

Teacher Carol Ann Melville said: 'The kids have worked really hard towards this for the last two years. 'Now we've got the flag, all we need is a flagpole!'

The school's eco committee with their new Green Flag. 10_f04flag01

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Woman found guilty of child neglect admonished by sheriff

A WOMAN who fell asleep on her couch allowing two young children in her care to escape the house has been admonished.

Nursery staff took them inside and contacted McPhee.

Margaret McPhee, 40, of Alma Road, Fort William, was found guilty of failing to supervise the children and neglecting them in a manner likely to cause suffering or injury to their health. The incident occurred on January 26, 2010.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard McPhee fell asleep about 10am, and the two children were able to leave the house. They walked down a busy public road and were found outside the nursery they both attend.

At a trial in July McPhee was found guilty with sentencing deferred for six months for her good behaviour.

Hearing McPhee had been in regular contact with social services, Sheriff Iain Fleming said: 'You have been given an opportunity by this court, and you seem to have taken this opportunity.'

Business Gateway services are delivered by Local Authorities, Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Government, with the support of associated partner organisations. Maximum call charge from BT landline is 3p per minute. Call costs from other networks may vary. Text costs vary depending on your mobile operator.

Gritting measures to remain in place

HIGHLAND Council has agreed that emergency measures to conserve road salt must remain in place until stocks return to a sustainable level.

Only 12,300 tonnes of salt remain – 500 tonnes below the 12,800 tonnes required for eight days of heavy use.

Emergency measures, where low priority routes are treated with grit only, were introduced on December 23 after road teams used up 40,300 tonnes in only four weeks. Efforts are made to treat localised sections with salt in the interests of public safety.

It is hoped restrictions can be lifted by the end of this week if further scheduled salt supplies arrive. At this time last year, the stock stood at 5,055 tonnes.

Touchdown for Tony in Lochaber

THE MAN behind a new RAF museum will touch down in Fort William to attend the latest meeting of Lochaber Historical Society.

RAF Lossiemouth station historian Tony Carlin has created a museum at the base and will present a talk called 'The History of RAF Lossiemouth and the RAF in Scotland'.

Tony will bring some artefacts and his talk will include the history of the RAF in Lochaber.

The meeting, in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, at 8pm, on February 3, is open to everyone.

Locals staggered by party of 'nuns'

LOCAL people in Mallaig looked on in amazement as seven nuns arrived in the village by car on Friday afternoon for the 2pm sailing on the Western Isles to Inverie.

Suspicions were aroused when the group started swigging champagne and struck up 'hymns' at the harbourside - with several baritone voices clearly audible. The 'nuns' turned out to be a stag party of four men and three women on their way to the Old Forge Inn for the weekend.

Motorist denies poor driving

A FORT William woman has denied knocking down and injuring a pedestrian through her poor driving on a Caol street.

Lindsay Scott, aged 36, of 41 Blar Mhor Road, denies driving without due care and attention and without reasonable consideration for other road users on Ardour Road on October 22, colliding with a man and knocking him to the ground, injuring him.

The trial was due to be heard at Fort William Sheriff Court today.

Police files

THE WAR memorial on the Parade, in Fort William, was vandalised sometime between 11am on Wednesday January 12 and 9am on Thursday January 13.

A SILVER 'Giant Boulder' mountain bike was stolen from outside a house at Lochside sometime between noon on Saturday January 22 and 2pm on Sunday January 23.

Anyone with knowledge of these incidents is asked to contact Fort William Police Station on 01397 702361 or the confidential line on 01397 702000.

Kind-hearted Fort pupils raise £200 for hospice



Ellen Reid of Highland Hospice receives the £200 cheque from Fort William PS pupils Emma Watchman, Kai Menzies, Ethan Cairns and Jenny McHugh

BIG HEARTED Fort William Primary School pupils presented a £200 cheque to Highland Hospice last Thursday after fundraising for the charity at festive events last month.

The children sang in Cameron Square and

collected donations after performing their Nativity play at the school.

Highland Hospice area fundraising manager for Skye, Lochaber and Lochalsh Ellen Reid said: 'Local fundraising means so much to us. We

would like to say a big thank-you to the kids for their continued support.'

Accepting the cheque in the school gym, Ellen told pupils and staff: 'To run the hospice costs us £44,000 a week.'

Launch of new guide to eco-friendly building

AN EIGHT-week public consultation on new eco-friendly planning guidance from Highland Council got under way this week.

The draft sustainable design guide encourages high quality and sustainably designed buildings, minimal impacts on the natural environment and greater use of local and renewable materials.

The planning and development service has already pledged to help deliver sustainably designed and constructed buildings throughout the Highland Council area.

Planning, environment and development committee

chairman Ian Ross said the guide had been prepared to encourage people and businesses to opt for buildings designed to respond to the Highland landscape and the changing climate.

Well designed

He said: 'We believe this new guide will prove to be a useful tool to enable people to produce well-designed, sustainable buildings that fit well in the Highland environment and offer high quality residential and business accommodation.'

Copies of the guidance are available on the council's website. The consultation ends on March 18.

Improved system to contact council officials

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) is introducing an improved telephone system from Monday with new numbers for existing extensions.

The new general number for the Comhairle will be 0845 6007090 and the new list of direct dial numbers has been published on the council's website.

The new internet-based system means there will

be no call charges to the Comhairle for all inter-office and school calls. Savings will also be made from decommissioning leased lines.

ICT sub-committee chairman Norman A Macdonald said: 'This new system will mean a modernised, improved telephone system for employees, service users and the general public.'

'Unattractive' woods set for major makeover

A HIGHLAND Council-owned woodland on Skye is to undergo a radical makeover under an environmental programme designed to further boost the region's outdoor appeal.

Storr Woodland, off the A855 between Portree and Staffin, is to be almost completely felled and non-native Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine replaced with indigenous species. The 200-acre woodland is already a popular spot for local daytrippers and tourists and attracts around 50,000 people a year.

Principal project officer Ann Hackett said £100,000 had already been allocated to the project in the capital programme.

Further funds are likely to follow from the Scottish Rural Development Programme and possibly LEADER, while cash from timber sales will also

REPORT

by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk help pay for the redevelopment scheme.

Ms Hackett said the woodland, situated at the access up to the Old Man of Storr, would benefit from being planted with native species.

Unattractive

'It's a fairly unattractive plantation at a very attractive location. We will be doing felling work and restocking work to make it a lot prettier,' she told *The Oban Times*.

'The woodland will be restocked with native species such as birch, alder, willow and rowan to mimic the type of native woodland that would have existed there in the past.'

Better signs, paths and improved parking was also part of the plan, which was

anticipated to take two years.

'When we take the timber out we will need to create an area of hard standing and once the timber has been removed we will create a car park,' Ms Hackett said.

Consulting

'There's a path from the bottom to the Old Man of Storr at the moment, but we would hope to create a circular route as well and better signs in the existing car park.'

'We are still consulting with SNH and our neighbours and Portree and Staffin community councils have also been consulted, although this is at a very early stage.'

Ms Hackett briefed the planning and economic development committee last week on the Storr plan and how more than £4 million of environmental improvement projects have contributed to sustainable economic growth across the Highlands.

Economic benefit

Committee chairman Councillor Ian Ross said: 'The projects bring very tangible economic benefits to communities and to tourism. Recent years have seen a rapidly expanding demand for all types of access to the countryside.'

'Highland-wide the tourism sector represented nearly £700 million direct spend in 2009 making capital expenditure in support of this industry a well-targeted investment.'

"It's a fairly unattractive plantation at a very attractive location. We will be doing felling work and restocking work to make it a lot prettier."

Ann Hackett, principal project officer, Storr Woodland



f04storr1no 97mmx55

Storr Woodland: to be replanted with native species.

Blinds and windows rattled as quake hits

GLENUIG was the seismic centre of Scotland for a few seconds on Sunday morning when an earthquake shook parts of Lochaber.

The British Geological Survey identified the Moidart village as the epicentre of the 3.5 magnitude quake.

Shockwaves rattled doors and windows as far as south of Fort William but appears to have had little impact in Mallaig and Skye.

Glenug crofter Eoghan Carmichael said: I got woken

up by a rumbling noise although I did not notice shaking at the time. I thought it was the water tank boiling. It did set the dogs off though – they were howling a bit.'

Mallaig harbour manager Robert MacMillan was unaware of anyone in the village being affected. Across the water in Sleat, Cruard crofter Graeme MacKenzie told a similar story.

But at Corran Gardens, near the Corran Ferry, one female resident felt the house shake and heard the blinds and windows

rattling.

A near neighbour also reported her Patterdale terrier sensing something was wrong when all appeared calm.

'The dog started to growl just before the shock then began to bark when the bang came,' she said.

The quake follows a tremor of a similar magnitude at Glenfinnan in October 2008.

Lochaber lies at the southern end of the Great Glen fault, a hotspot for mild seismic activity.

Housing issues and future of Caol Community Centre under spotlight

HOUSING and sustaining Caol Community Centre will be the main talking points at two upcoming ward forums in Lochaber.

At Strontian, on Monday February 7, the Fort William and Ardnamurchan forum will

discuss housing initiatives and challenges.

Tracey Urry, Highland Council housing and property manager for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, and Blair Allan, Lochaber Housing Association chief executive, will be on hand to answer questions

from the public. The meeting, in the Sunart Centre, starts at 6.30pm. The following evening at Caol Community Centre, Caol and Mallaig ward forum will focus on the centre's future.

This meeting will begin at 7.30pm.

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ISLE OF SEIL

THE CONGREGATION on the Isle of Seil is offering lifts to church.

Maura Rae said: 'If anyone would like to come to any of the services at Kilbrandon Church, but can't get there because of transport problems, there is always someone in the church who would be willing to give you a lift. 'People should phone me on 300379 and we will arrange to provide transport.'

Kilbrandon Church of Scotland services are on every Sunday at 10am. Everyone welcome.

IONA

INFANTS on Iona have made a tentative start at the new pre-five unit on the island.

Iona Primary School opened its doors for the first time to three and four year olds and so far the uptake from the island has been good. An official launch of the nursery is yet to happen, as children are still not in the school for their full entitlement.

GLENDARUEL

COLINTRAIVE and Glendaruel Development Trust has been granted a community right to buy the Glendaruel Hotel.

The hotel, which stands at the centre of the clachan of Glendaruel, has been closed for 18 months, which residents claim deprives them of an essential social hub and tourist attraction.

The development trust established a working group in August 2010 to explore possible uses for the building after the owners failed to get the business up and running.

Charles Dixon-Spain, chairman of the development trust, said: 'I am delighted to announce that with the help of the working group, which has put substantial time into this project, and our HIE-funded consultant Tom Sillar, we have secured the community the opportunity to decide whether it wants the trust to run the building as a social enterprise.'

The community is entitled to the right to buy under the terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, which gives the community first refusal when and if the hotel comes on to the market.

The act requires that a ballot is held to ascertain the community's opinion of such a course of action.

TARBERT

MP FOR Argyll and Bute Alan Reid has this week called upon Argyll and Bute Council to reject the proposal to close Tarbert village library.

Mr Reid said: 'Libraries provide a wide range

of important services in addition to the traditional ones of access to free books, magazines and newspapers. They are a very important source of educational resources for people of all ages, especially children. We all want to encourage children to read more, so libraries are important. 'The council has a very difficult job balancing its budget but I hope the council will be able to find savings elsewhere and keep these libraries open.'

INVERARAY

PEOPLE across Argyll with an interest in the sea are being invited to have their say on how a new marine planning system should work.

The new Marine (Scotland) Act will lay foundations for a more simplified local system, with the first step being to create Scottish Marine Regions.

Views are invited on the options for the boundaries of the Marine Region in the south west of Scotland at an open event at the Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray, at 11.30am on Tuesday February 1. Lunch will be provided for everyone who registers by Friday January 28.

For further information and to register for the event, contact Kirstie Dyson on 0141 951 0820.

The full consultation document and supporting information can be downloaded from scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/seamangement/regional/Consultation.

KILBERRY

THE KILBERRY Inn has held onto its coveted Michelin Bib Gourmand for a sixth consecutive year.

The Inn is one of only four restaurants in Scotland to hold the prestigious award, which recognises good food at moderate prices.

Chef and restaurant owner Clare Johnson became the first female in Scotland to achieve a Bib Gourmand more than ten years ago. She said: 'We are very fortunate to have such wonderful ingredients on our doorstep, from great seafood to delicious beef and game.

'The secret is to treat everything simply and with care, and allow the ingredients to speak for themselves and our guests seem to appreciate that.'

The Michelin accolade is one of many honours awarded to the remote restaurant, situated between Lochgilphead and Tarbert, in the last few years.

It received a César Award in the 2010 Good Hotel Guide and won the Scottish Restaurant of the Year Award in 2009.

The restaurant has also featured on the *Hairy Bikers* TV programme.



North Argyll Cycling Club back in the saddle

North Argyll Cycling Club riders showed they are a hardy bunch as 20 peddlers turned out for their first road ride of the year. A brisk ride up past the Rare Breeds Park and on to Barcaldine Castle proved a suitable test for the legs at this early point of the season. The club, sponsored by Energie Fitness, is always looking for new members of all levels and there will be regular events throughout the year.

BENDERLOCH

LOCHNELL Primary School, Benderloch, P5/6/7 pupils held a successful Christmas Craft Market which raised £226.23.

Pupils from P1 to P7 participated by making various festive crafts and selling them at the local farmers market in Victory Hall, Benderloch, and in school on the evening of the Christmas concert.

PUPILS from Lochnell Primary School received certificates and tokens



Lochnell Primary School pupils Lauren MacDonald, Harry Tamplin and Stuart Campbell at the Christmas Craft Market.



Lochnell pupils with their calendar certificates.

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for their prize winning entries to the Argyll and Bute Council Road Safety Calendar Competition.

A HIGHLY energetic, short coated black and white collie bitch was found in the centre of Benderloch last week.

The dog has prick ears and a lively temperament. She doesn't appear to have worn a collar.

The dog is being looked after at Lochandubh Kennels. If you lost the dog or know who has, phone 01631 720311.

KILNINVER

WEBSITE meetings to get Kilninver Church on line are continuing.

The webmaster requires pictures of life in and around the five churches in the parish which includes Luig, Seil, Kilninver, Kilmelford and Craignish. All photographs should be sent to rosy@shellach.com who is compiling the website.

CRINAN

THE DATE has been set for this year's Crinan Classic Boat Festival - Thursday June 30 to Sunday July 3.

Organisers have said the format will be similar to that of recent years but promised a few twists and turns.

Mike Dalglish said: 'It will be the same place, same boats, same whisky but hopefully even better weather and even better company. 'You would be crazy not to be there.'

The event website www.crinanclassic.com will be updated regularly and entry forms will be available in the coming weeks.

KILMELFORD

A BEETLE drive for teenagers will be held this Friday in Kilmelford Village Small Hall.

The venture organised by Kilmelford Parish Church has invited young people over the age of 11 to the games night from 7pm - 8.30pm. Tea, juice and buns will be served and there will be prizes up for grabs.

FUNDRAISING coffee mornings for The Cherish Fund take place every Monday morning in The Shower of Herring restaurant at Melford Village.

The coffee morning is between 10.30 until noon and always attracts a good crowd.

LOCHGILPHEAD

STAFF at the Co-op in Lochgilphead have kick-started a year of fundraising for ENABLE Scotland - The Co-operative's charity of the year for 2011.

To mark the beginning of the year-long campaign, on Friday, staff at the Oban Road store donned a variety of running and racing gear, and dressed as cheerleaders with pom-poms to cheer each other on.

The Co-operative Group, as part of its commitment to inspiring young people, hopes that the money raised will help the charity transform the lives of thousands of young people with a learning disability.

Funds raised will be used to launch projects to work with 20,000 young people with a learning disability, along with parents, carers and local communities.

ENABLE Scotland is the country's leading charity for children and adults with learning disabilities.

LEWIS

LEWIS aid worker Linda Norgrove has been named winner of the 2011 Robert Burns Humanitarian Award.

The 36-year-old was kidnapped in Afghanistan last year and died during a failed rescue attempt.

Her father, John Norgrove, received the award on her behalf at the Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, Ayrshire.

Western Isles MSP Alasdair Allan, who nominated the late Ms Norgrove for the honour, said: 'I know that Linda's family are immensely proud, as is everyone in the Western Isles, of what Linda achieved in her life.'

'Linda ultimately gave her life in the service of people living in poor and dangerous conditions in Afghanistan. She showed, throughout her humanitarian work there and in other countries, her outstanding commitment to the ideals of universal human brotherhood which Robert Burns himself espoused.

'This is indeed a well-deserved award.'



Linda Norgrove.

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Down Your Way

This week - Laggan

LAGGAN Forest Trust has appointed a development manager to help it take the next step in creating an outdoor sports hub in a community-owned section of a forest near the village.

The trust was recently awarded a £294,000 grant to employ a development team to move along plans for Strathmashie Forest.

The team's main role will be to help with the creation of a new woodlands centre near the Wolfrax car park.

The trust hopes the centre will include a café, mountain bike hire, pony trekking as well as other outdoor activities.

The trust was awarded the grant by a variety of sources including LEADER, Highland Council, the Forestry Commission and Cairngorms National Park.

The new development manager, Robert Jackson, from Lanarkshire, will take up his post at the end of February. Interviews for a project officer to support Mr Jackson are taking place this week.

The trust owns three parts of the forest and manages the rest after Laggan become one of the first communities in Scotland to enter into an ownership agreement with the Forestry Commission in 1998.

Trust member Jim Langley told *The Oban Times* there was still a lot to be done before the plans can come to life.

He said: 'We commissioned an architect two years ago to design the centre and we've got outline planning permission from the council. But there is still a fair amount of work to be done over the next few years.'



Wolfrax at Laggan: expansion plans. 10_f04laggan01

A COMMUNITY group has been set up to try to solve Laggan's problem with poor broadband performance.

The village has long suffered from a slow connection speed, a problem which came to a head in November when the broadband signal failed altogether.

A number of complaints were lodged with the internet provider BT but now the Broadband Strategy Group has been set up and it has designed a plan for a community wide Wi-Fi network.

The group has to raise £60,000 to pay for the project, and says it expects the village to have quality broadband coverage before the end of the year.



Laggan Stores: created video for global viewers 10_f04laggan03

THE OWNERS of Laggan Stores have created an on-line video about their shop to let people across the world know a bit more about its past and present.

The 10-minute YouTube video - titled 'Laggan Stores - A Shop with a Difference' - tells the history of the store, including when it was used in the popular BBC drama 'Monarch of the Glen'.

The blurb for the video, which has so far received more than 650 views, says: 'This little video gives an insight into how the shop is run and how important such shops are to local communities and businesses.'

The shop was a community run venture until 2003 when current owners Jo Cummings and Ian Hall bought it. They are now considering retiring and say they want the shop to carry on as a going concern after they leave, and not be turned into a holiday home.

LAGGAN Heritage Group has appointed Isobel Geddes as its new chairperson.

The previous incumbent, Jean Escott, resigned last year, and her replacement was named at the group's recent AGM.

The group's monthly meetings are attended by people from surrounding areas as well as the village. They are aiming to record and publish all aspects of Laggan's history from the Bronze Age right up to the 20th century and last year mapped and recorded all the gravestones on Laggan's six burial sites.

The group is also holding its annual Burns Supper this evening in Laggan Hall at 7pm.

Next week DOWN YOUR WAY visits Luig

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BUNESSAN

BUNESSAN Primary School pupils, families and friends celebrated Burns Night early this year on Friday January 21 at Creich Community Hall.

This was a bit of a nerve-racking time for the new office bearers of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

However, with the guidance and determination of the chairwoman and the support of parents and carers, the night was a huge success for the PTA and the school.

Linzi, primary six, the most senior pupil in attendance, had the privilege of carrying the haggis platter as it was piped in by Neil MacCallum, chanter and piping instructor for Bunessan Primary School and father of Iain, a star dancer from the recent school show.

The Selkirk Grace was given by Linda Pollock, minister of Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon district. This was Linda's first Burns Supper in her new role as minister and the school hopes it will be the first of many. Linda has settled in well and has already been a huge support to school staff and pupils.

Entertainment on the evening was provided by the pupils. Proceedings opened with Linzi on the chanter who played solo Scots Wha Hae. It was then the turn of the primary 1-3 class who had worked very hard in their groups to compose poems which were read out by a selected member of each group.

Pupils Jamie, Chloe, Byron, Polly, Morven, Abbie, Katie and Linzi read out their own Burns style poems.

Fittingly the audience was treated to a closing rendition of *Auld Lang Syne* by primary four on their recorders.

Bunessan pupils show off their recorder skills.

These performances ended a very long and tiring week for the pupils as the school finally managed to put on their Christmas show *Stable Manners* which was meant to be performed on December 19 but because of the very wintry conditions experienced before Christmas had to be postponed until Tuesday January 18.

Two well-attended performances were enjoyed by a large cross section of the community making all the hard work of the children, staff, parents and carers worthwhile.

ISLAY

JON Magee, former Baptist Minister on Islay, has released his second published book, *Paradise Island, Heavenly Journey*.

The book follows on from his first publication, *From Barren Rocks to Living Stones*, which recounted his teenage experiences in Singapore.

Copies of the book are available on Islay from Florrie MacIntosh, Bowmore and Sheila Corson, Port Ellen. It is also available from all good book shops, both on the High Street and online.

ISLAY'S Community Garden committee will present a new three year plan at its AGM next week, also announcing a number of new members.

The AGM will be held at 7pm on Wednesday, February 2, at Service Point, Bowmore.

COLL

THE Island Café hosted a presentation on Coll's basking sharks on Saturday, supported by Henderson Shellfish and An Acarsaid.

The speakers were Richard Ormond and Mauvis Gore from the Save Our Seas Foundation and Marine Conservation International.

TREE

SKERRYVORE Lighthouse will feature in a BBC documentary on the history of the iconic buildings next week.

The Lighthouse Stevensons, airs at 9pm on BBC 2 Scotland on Tuesday; the 200th anniversary of the completion of the Bell Rock lighthouse, near Arbroath.

BENBECULA

A TWO-DAY conference is to be held on Benbecula to discuss improving energy efficiency of older, traditionally built homes in the Outer Hebrides.

Community organisation Uist will present the findings from research which has been carried out over six months into how best to insulate these homes, which constitute almost half of all island homes.

These houses have been classified as 'hard to heat' under the Energy Saving Trust's home insulation scheme, meaning they don't qualify for assistance with insulation costs.

The meeting, supported by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, will be held on January 27 and 28.

SCALPAY

THE new year started with snow on both low and high ground but light northerly winds allowed creel boats to get out of harbour at every chance.

Hogmanay appears to be a thing of the past as it once once known.

The icy cold weather, and forecasts of more to follow, reduced the number of visitors to the island over the holiday period and also affected the sheep flock. The moors are bleak and a lack of grass means the requirement of hand feeding.

Even the little birds have suffered and thoughtful people should throw out some crumbs to keep them fed in these difficult conditions.

While the light winds meant smooth crossings of the Minch for the ferries, gritters and salters were out in force on the roads to keep traffic on the main roads in Harris and in the Western Isles moving.

Mink now appear to be under control on the islands but few islanders will risk keeping poultry again given the threat that the vermin may return.

Catches of shellfish have been light at the start of the year, with velvet crabs scarcer than of late. Although market prices have been in their favour, many fisherman were concerned about being able to transport their wares to market as col-



Islay pupils from Keills Primary School have donated the £412 proceeds from their Christmas pantomime to the local lifeboat station at Port Askaig. The scholars, along with head teacher Kathleen Johnston, hand over their cheque to RNLi representatives headed by management committee chairman Captain Malcolm T Anderson.

lections around the islands have been difficult.

Pollock seem to be more plentiful and although the spring is their traditional season, one local line-fishing boat has had good catches. Herring are still scarce in home waters and only a few small herring have been noted in the Bay of Harris.

Salmon was once regularly caught by boats out of Scalpay, now salmon rearing takes place on farms at Scotisay Island, between Scalpay and Tarbert (Harris). The nets are close to shore and there is more salmon being reared in North Harris.

Scalpay has avoided much of the flu which has affected the mainland and neighbouring islands but there are plenty with the cold.

The supply of fresh water, day and night, at Tarbert (Harris) and at the North Harbour Scalpay should encourage more boats and yachts to stop here. At South Harbour Scalpay there is a natural basin for vessels to beach if required for cleaning or repair and Scalpay has a shop and Post Office if supplies are needed. Tarbert has general stores, bakery and bank facilities while there is a craft shop at Leverburch, a general store at Clachan, with fuel available at Tarbert, Ardashaig and Leverburch. Golfers should remember that Harris has its own course.

Grocery delivery vans are much appreciated in rural areas, especially over the winter when it is often hard for the elderly to get out to the stores.

Employment on Scalpay, and on Harris in general, proves difficult. Harris has seen industry come and go over the years, with Harris Tweed a big employer in its hey-day.

Thoughts of developing a quarry at Lingerbay seem to have been dismissed entirely now.

Fishing has changed from being dependant on herring, to fishing for shellfish with a much smaller number of vessels crewed by one or two men.

Although the Stolt salmon factory closed with the loss of many local jobs, fish farming has made a recent comeback but it is very difficult to encourage families to come to live on the islands if more jobs are not available and the building of dwelling houses, both for tenants and owners, is not given more consideration.

Perhaps more attention need to be given to land reform to allow more people to do something for themselves.

SKYE

A FILM made by pupils at Portree High premiered at the school last week.

The filmmakers, called Room 122 after the room they are based at in the school, were given the opportunity of making their film after winning a competition run by Highland Council Waste Awareness Team last summer. Room 122 submitted a script for their animated film to the competition, and were given the chance to see their story come to life with help from professional producer John McGeoch, of Easter Ross-based Arts in Motion.

'Ronnie Rubbish' is a 12-

mintue film about a character who fly-tips with terrible consequences for the community, but who eventually sees the error of his ways and becomes a committed recycler.

After the premiere, the film will be shown in other schools in the Highlands, and will also be shown at Highland Council service points.

Deputy head teacher Ken MacDonald said: 'The project has expanded our capabilities and due to the hard work of all pupils and staff involved we have a very professional film and documentary.'

'Everyone involved in the film has been included as a character in the film and all voices and music are produced by pupils/staff giving it a unique twist.'

GLENCOE

A PHOTOGRAPHY exhibition showing the sites of Canna has gone on display at the National Trust for Scotland visitor centre in Glencoe.

The travelling exhibition displays framed reproduction prints of the Hebridean island, including original shots from renowned landscape photographer Colin Prior.

The exhibition will be in the centre until the end of May, when it is then planned it will take the road to the isles, culminating in a display at the Mallaig Heritage Centre.

INVERLOCHY

THE JANUARY meeting of Inverloch Rural was held recently, where Betty Bruce and her husband John showed new slides of Old Fort William, bringing back happy and sometimes nostalgic memories of places nearly forgotten.

The couple also judged the competitions, giving first place to Cathie Stevenson for her piece of china. Elizabeth Murray took second place while Beatrice Gibson was third. Cathie Macdonald won first place for the Macaroon bar, with Cathie Stevenson in second.

DRUMNADROCHIT

GLENURQUHART Primary pupils will learn all about the environment and climate – and then put on a musical show about it for their parents and friends of the school.

P4 and P5 have started their class project about rainforests while the P6s will be studying the changing world climate for the next two months.

The children will then team up to put on a musical performance to show friends and family what they have learned. The show will be performed at the Craigmorie Centre in the town on Tuesday, March 29, and Wednesday, March 30.

FORT AUGUSTUS

PUPILS at Kilchuimen Primary are to take a trip to a Victorian school museum in Glasgow – after raising the funds for the trip themselves.

Children in P3, 4 and 5 at the Fort Augustus school recently held a classroom sale and managed to raise about £170. The children brought

in old toys and books to sell, as well as selling items they had made in class.

They will visit the Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed Scotland Street School museum in April.

CRIANLARICH

CRIANLARICH Primary School was under an exam of its own last week, when Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education paid a visit.

It is the school's first inspection since investigators last visited in October 2002.

LOCHEARNHEAD

THE King's House Hotel in Balquhiddier will host next week's meeting of the Balquhiddier, Lochearnhead and Strathyre community council.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday at 7.30pm.

ABERFELDY

TAY District Salmon Fisheries Board has announced plans to devolve responsibility for many elements of river management to a new group.

Provisionally to be called the Tay Western Catchments Partnership, the body will allow greater local input to management decisions and attract greater funding to the system.

KILLIN

KILLIN Golf Club Senior Gents Medal Play Off: Tom Crossan Alistair Robertson Trophy: George Smith. Willie Allan Trophy: George Smith. Ivor Noble Quaich: George Smith. John Hall Cup: Peter Venning. Senior Trophy: Peter Stalard. Super Senior Trophy: George Smith. Toddy Trophy: Peter Rinaldi. Mixed Adult and Junior: (mug and t-shirt): Andy Cousins and Georgie Third. Lochay Trophy: R.D.Lewis and J. Crossan. Dr Stevenson: D.McRobbie and C. Reid. Night Golf: A. Cousins and K. Cousins. Ladies Silver Medal (Shield and Badge): Laura Aitken. Bronze Medal (Shield and Badge): Sheila Aitken. McKay Cup: Laura Aitken. Chrissie France: Jackie Crossan. May Wilson: Kay Dowling and Susan McRobbie. SLGA Flag Brooch (Badge): Sheila Aitken. Cancer Relief (Spoon): Laura Aitken. Red Cross Eclectic (Scratch): (+keepsake): Laura Aitken. Eclectic (Handicap): (+keepsake): Sheila Aitken. Captain's Prize (+voucher): Laura Aitken. Breakthrough Brooch (brooch): Jackie Crossan. Mystery Competition: Liz Stevens. Birdie tree (+keepsake): Sheila Aitken. Par tree (+keepsake): Susan McRobbie. Flag Competition: Jackie Crossan. Gents Monthly Medal Winners: April: G. Aitken, May: J. Ronald, June: C. Woods, July: C. Fraser, August: J. Atkinson, September: A. Cousins.

Bronze - drive nearest the white line: Eileen Callander (Crieff).

Magic 2's: Eileen Watson (Blair Atholl). CSS: 70 RO

Killin Golf Club Junior Prize Winners 2010 Beginners: Emily Fraser. Category 4: Robbie Player Eclectic (Handicap) Sam Frost. Knockout (Junior Trophy): William Kerr. Category 3: Catherine Allan.

Knockout (Anniversary Trophy) Catherine Allan. Category 2: Adam Kyle Eclectic (Handicap) Adam Kyle. Knockout (McArthur Trophy): Calum Wylie. Best Beginner: William Kerr.

Most Improved Golfer: Euan Lang. Junior Club Champion: (Dochart Trophy) Adam Kyle.

APPIN

THE DATES for the 57th North Lorn Drama Festival have been announced.

Held over three evenings in Appin Village Hall, beginning on March 30, the festival attracts entries from a wide area. There are three classes - Adults, Youth and Primary Schools and entry forms are available by email from m.n.gregory@btinternet.com

KILMORE

WITH no December meeting in Kilmore Hall due to frozen pipes, Kilmore SWRI enjoyed a visit to Poppies, near Dunbeg, for lunch and Christmas market. The ladies enjoyed a lovely lunch in pleasant surroundings and thoroughly recommend the experience.

On Wednesday, January 12, president Isabel Smith welcomed 18 members and introduced retired veterinarian Max Bonniwell as the evening's guest speaker. Max gave an insight into treating large animals both at home and in Africa – including slides of their insides. It proved a very good talk on the daily life of as vet – not all James Herriot – there were sad moments – however, the excellent slides enhanced the talk.

Sona Campbell gave a vote of thanks – and there was a special vote of thanks to the tea ladies who brought flasks of hot water to ensure tea was provided. Competitions – Millionaire shortbread: 1 Isabel Smith; 2 Fiona Dickie. Sketch of animal: 1 Ann Sorley; 2 Fiona Dickie.

Mull Lines

THE terrible state of Mull roads is one of the hottest topics of discussion on the island.

Areas in the Ross of Mull are becoming impassable due to deep potholes now running into each other. Campaign group, Keep Mull Moving, is asking islanders to forward any information about pot holes to the council.

A recently released notice said: 'Vehicle Damage due to Mull roads?'

'If your vehicle has been damaged or if you have been injured due to the appalling state of Mull roads – you can make a claim for compensation against Argyll and Bute Council.'

'They require a written statement detailing why you hold the council responsible for your loss and in what way you might be negligent. The letter should then be sent to the Central Services Manager.'



POLICE officers in Tobermory were informed of two separate incidents of the theft of heating oil from outside storage tanks in the Tobermory area.

These thefts are suspected to have happened between December 24 and January 17.

Sergeant Mark Stephen said: 'The theft of the heating oil would almost certainly require the use of a van or similar type of vehicle.'

'We would ask residents to be vigilant in respect to their own oil tanks. To report any suspicious activity to the police as soon as possible if they see any persons at neighbours houses or unoccupied holiday homes.'

'Please call us at Tobermory Police office on 01688 302 016 or call Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.'



TOILET talk at Mull's Community Council highlighted the fact that Tobermory has no public conveniences in the town centre.

Despite a huge effort from Councillor Gordon Chalmers, islanders' town centre facilities had to be withdrawn last year when less than anticipated cash was raised from the venture. The Main Street conveniences were closed and have since fallen into disrepair.

Community councillors were keen to have some facilities in place for the up-and-coming Music festival in April to limit the number of people relieving themselves in the street.

During the discussion it was pointed out that Tobermory, the largest population centre on Mull is the only settlement on the island to not have toilets in the town centre.

Chairman James Heggie agreed to look into the matter further.



A RAPID decline in tree numbers in Tobermory is causing concern to community councillors.

Concerns expressed at a recent meeting said that as many healthy, mature trees should be kept, not just in Tobermory, but across the island.

The community council noted there were legal restrictions on the felling of mature healthy trees. Proposed felling should be subject to legal and planning and planning rules being met in full.



ISLANDERS wrote to the Special Affairs Select Committee on postal services highlighting issues from the island.

Jenny Reddaway, secretary to Mull Community Council, said: 'A more flexible approach as to who is customer and who is recipient, also the needs of communities such as Mull that decide they would rather have the bulk of their mail earlier had to be taken on board.'

Points made by islanders were considered by the select committee and a report will be made later in the year.

Normal service resumed

MULL Eagle Diary: While access to the Eagle Hide at Loch Frisa earlier this month was hit by the icy tracks and tricky driving conditions, Frisa and Skye will have been going about their usual early year activities away from public view.

Normal service and trips have now been resumed. Elsewhere, other white-tailed and golden eagles have given us a clue as to what Frisa and Skye will have been doing too.

This can be a busy time of year for eagle courtship, pair bonding and the first concerted efforts at nest repairing or new builds.

This week several other pairs have been noted carrying in big sticks to start the slow build up towards egg laying in the spring.

On fine, clear, frosty days, the birds seem prompted into nest building but may then take a break from it for a week or two if the weather turns wet and windy.

Recently *The Oban Times* carried news of the released young sea eagle back in his island home.

Catch up with his progress at www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/tracking/mulleagles or book a trip to catch up with what Frisa and Skye are really up to by calling 07920 817 362.

Is your group's news here? We welcome submissions for our new district pages. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk with the details

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Your Oban Times Bonnie Babies



Euan Dale, Oban,
aged eight months.



Alasdair Lindsay,
Eriskay, 21 months.



Sharon Murdoch,
Oban, 12 weeks.



Ciaran Beaton,
Lochgilphead, 12 weeks.



Eilidh Cameron,
Tobermory, 7½ months.



Dean Cotton, Oban,
aged 21 days.



Everyone's favourite competition is back and The Oban Times is looking to find the west coast's bonniest baby in 2011.

If you think your baby is the cutest in the West of Scotland then nominate them.

Our panel of judges will help us find our Bonnie Baby of 2011 and the top tot will be crowned Oban Times Bonnie Baby 2011 and his/her parent or guardian will receive a top prize with two runners up also receiving an award.

The deadline to enter your child is **Monday, February 28 at 5pm** and children must be two or under on **28/02/2011**.

Parent/Guardian must consent to publication of their child's photograph in our papers by signing the entry form.

Entries, including one photograph, **MUST** be accompanied by the official entry form which can only be obtained from The Oban Times. Photocopies will not be accepted.

If you wish your picture returned, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Normal Oban Times terms and conditions apply and the editor's decision is final.

Send your entry to:
The Oban Times Bonnie Baby Competition, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll

Name of parent/guardian:.....

Address:.....

Full name of child: Age at 24/01/2011:

Signature of parent/guardian:.....



Mánran was overwhelmed by the public's response to the song

Mánran miss out on taking Gaelic song to UK Top 40

'We sold around 5,000 copies of the song, so we weren't that far off'

GAELIC band Mánran failed in their bid to get into the UK Top 40, but they did hit number one in the UK Singer/Songwriter chart.

The group, which has its roots in Lochaber, also managed to hit number six in the Scottish charts and the same position in the BBC RadioOne Indie Chart with their song, Latha Math - more than making up for reaching 61 in the UK Top 100.

Their chart bid also resulted in some 54,000 views of their

Facebook page in just one day, giving them vital national exposure - something not many Gaelic language bands ever receive.

Mánran's accordionist, Gary Innes, from Spean Bridge, said the entire band was overwhelmed by the response to the song.

He said: 'We sold around 5,000 copies of the song, so we weren't that far off.'

'The single didn't really pay for itself, but that wasn't the point.



Gary Innes

'The position we reached in the charts is fantastic. We're just extremely grateful for the support we received from so many people.'

'From our point of view, the fact that so many people have looked at our page and heard our music can only be good for the band.'

The bid to have the first Gaelic language song in the UK Top 40 since Runrig did it in 1995 with An Ubhal As Airde has already resulted in more work for Mánran, and

they are now preparing to record a new album later this year.

Whether or not they make a new attempt to smash into the Top 40 with a Gaelic song is yet to be decided.

Gary said: 'We're looking at making a new album in the next three or four months, which will have both English language and Gaelic songs on it. How we launch that and whether or not we have another go at the top 40 we have to look at.'

Isle of Tiree woman is short-listed for national rural industry award

A YOUNG Tiree woman dedicated to helping Scotland's crofting communities is among five nominees from Oatridge College shortlisted for one of the country's top rural industries awards.

Morven MacInnes, 22, a former student at the specialist land-based college in West Lothian, now works for the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate on Skye and has reached the final stages of Lantra Scotland's Landbased and Aquaculture Learner of the Year for 2010 awards.

Brought up on her family's croft, Morven left school in 2005, and had already realised that her dream of owning a farm would never be fulfilled.

Distinction

So she worked for a year with the Crofters' Commission on Tiree and then enrolled at Oatridge College, where she gained a distinction for her Higher National Certificate course in Agriculture.

She said: 'I wanted to continue, but I couldn't afford to be a student for another year. Luckily I got my present job, so I'm now supporting people by helping them get grants and so on.'

'Farming in the islands is very hard and not very rewarding. It is already difficult to get people to stay, but without agriculture it would be impossible.'

Morven's manager, Higher Agricultural Officer Tom Palmer, supported Oatridge College's nomination.

'She knows crofting and the way it works. She is familiar with the Civil Service, understands the culture of the islands, is a Gaelic speaker and is very good with people,' said Tom.

Interviewed

As part of the awards, Morven was interviewed by a panel of Lantra judges this week and is waiting to hear if she will be invited to a glittering awards ceremony in Crieff on Thursday, March 3.

Oatridge principal, David James said: 'Oatridge students have done exceptionally well in the Lantra Awards over the years and it is very gratifying to see five making it on to the shortlist again this year.'

'Whether or not they go through to the finals, they should be proud that they've reached levels in their education and training which will allow them to make a valuable and valued contribution to the wellbeing of the rural economy.'



Morven MacInnes, who has been shortlisted for a top rural award.

Badenoch farm worker joins nominees for Leaner of Year award

A YOUNG Kingussie farm worker, who quit school when he was only 15, is another of the five nominees from Oatridge College who have been short-listed for Scotland's top rural industries awards.

William Mackenzie, 'an exceptionally hard working, determined and knowledgeable young man', according to his

boss, is in the final stages of the search for Lantra's Landbased and Aquaculture Learner of the Year for 2010.

Now 18, William was given permission to quit Kingussie High School early to go to work with his father, a handyman on a local estate, but his future was far from clear. It was the timely intervention of

Jane Williamson, who offered him an apprenticeship under an experienced stockman on Balnaspick Farm, which turned his life around. 'He simply blossomed in every way,' she said.

William has also found time to run his own businesses, cutting and selling firewood, breeding turkeys for Christmas

and in the summer months, cutting grass - but he has never lost sight of becoming a good farmer.

Joining Morven and William are agricultural engineer Scott Simpson from the Isle of Bute, former farriery student Rebecca McWilliams from Irvine and equine student Susan Torrance from Stirling.

Minimum delay promised for LFASS

FARMERS eligible for the Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (LFASS) have been told they will get the payments with the minimum of delay.

The announcement by rural affairs secretary, Richard Lochhead MSP, will be welcomed by Argyll and Bute MSP, Jim Mather, who said the payments were an absolute priority.

He said: 'After a spell of exceptionally severe weather conditions across Scotland I am pleased to hear that as part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme every effort is now being made to accelerate payment of the LFASS payments to our farmers who have had to contend with some of the harshest weather conditions that we have encountered in 50 years.'

Arran auction success

KILMORY Village Hall at the southend of Arran was packed to the rafters last Saturday afternoon with everything from children's bunk beds to wardrobes and bathroom sinks as the village held its annual auction.

Villagers had donated all the goods for the sale and there were some fantastic bargains up for grabs on the day.

Auctioneers for the day were Ian Adamson and David Thomas and both did all in their power to get the bids in to push the prices up.

The auction proved a great success overall raising £760 for hall and bunkhouse funds.

Kinlochleven Community Trust to build two new homes

KINLOCHLEVEN Community Trust (KCT) has been given permission to start building two new houses in the village. Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee approved the plan to erect the houses behind a car park near St Paul's Church on Wades Road. The councillors decided that although the site for the houses lies marginally outside the village's development area, the plans didn't receive any complaints from the public. Councillors were also informed KCT would use money from the house sales to make improvements to the car park.

Fort William hotel proposes major expansion

A FORT William hotel is to expand by building 42 new bedrooms and increasing the size of its car park. The Premier Inn at An Aird had its plans for expansion approved by Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee on Tuesday. The extension, which will increase the number of rooms in the hotel from 60 to 102, will be built behind the shinty pitch. The car park will also be expanded to 153 spaces. Councillor Brian Murphy voted in favour of the application, but said: 'I'm a bit unhappy with the design. It looks like an army barracks or something. I don't think it will add much to the architectural history of Fort William.'



Speakers William Cameron, Hector MacLean and Isabel Campbell line up with piper Raj Smith and trust volunteers at the Burns Supper. 10_104rural01

Ladies' Burns Supper voted 'a fantastic success'

LOCHABER Rural Education Trust's first ever ladies' Burns Supper is set to become an annual event after a hugely successful event at An Clachan, Torlundy, on Monday. The trust decided to turn its January ladies night into a celebration of Scotland's national bard and about 40

ladies enjoyed an evening of music, verse and speeches. Piper Raj Smith piped in the haggis before Hector MacLean delivered the Selkirk Grace and the Address to a Haggis. William Cameron gave the Toast to the Lassies, to which Isabel Campbell gave a hilarious reply in verse. Co-organiser

Linda Campbell said: 'We thought we would try something new and it proved a fantastic success. We have had great feedback and the view is that we should hold it annually.' All proceeds from the night will go to the trust to help fund its work with schools and the wider community.

Councillors' 'yes' vote means end of Onich Hotel marquee saga is in sight

A PERMANENT replacement for the marquee outside the Onich Hotel moved a step closer this week when plans for an extension to the hotel's function room were given the go-ahead by councillors. The marquee was erected in May 2009 as a temporary function suite for the hotel. The hotel's owners applied to Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning

committee for permission to build a single storey, flat roofed extension at the rear of the building. Described by planners as a 'long term solution to the marquee problem', the plans received two letters in support from the public and no complaints, although councillors did voice concerns about noise from the hotel disturbing nearby residents. Building of the

extension is not expected to start until after the summer tourist season. Councillor Bren Gormley said: 'This could be the beginning of the end of the saga of the marquee. It should be welcomed by everyone.' Voicing his approval for the plan, Councillor Donald Cameron said: 'I would be very disappointed if building didn't start this year.'

Village home plan rejected by planners

A PLAN to build a new house on the north side of a Lochaber village has been turned down by councillors. Kinlochleven Community Trust applied to Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee for permission to build the house just off the B863 on a site currently used for the West Highland Way (WHW). The plan featured a rerouting of the WHW, but councillors ruled that move was unacceptable, and also said the development would compromise nearby ancient woodlands.

Green light for Revised Fasgadh scheme

A LOCHABER man's revised plan to build a new house outside his village has been given the go-ahead by councillors. Douglas MacKellaig's original idea for a house, garage, swimming pool/gym and hairdressing salon near Fasgadh, Morar, was turned down by Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee last year as it was too big and blocked seaward views. Councillors deemed the new plan for a smaller four-bedroom house and detached garage suitable for the site and granted him permission.

Ambitious move to relaunch marina plan

EFFORTS are being made to revive plans for a marina and watersports centre at the Corpach end of the Caledonian Canal, *The Oban Times* can reveal. Leading the ambitious move is Caol Regeneration Company (CRC), which has applied to LEADER for funding for an initial survey and feasibility study into whether the project would be a winner. It is understood CRC is looking for £9,000 towards the £20,000 cost from the local LEADER panel, which meets on February 21. The company has already contacted local politicians seeking their support for the application 'as a first step to securing a new and important asset for the area'.

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

Waterfront saga. He told *The Oban Times*: 'We decided to look at the possibility of revisiting this and the underdeveloped water-based resources at Loch Linnhe. Mountain biking and winter sports have been well developed over the past 20 years in Lochaber, but the same can't be said for watersports in the Fort William area. Boat launching facilities are very poor and there are not many facilities for people going through the canal. Important

Blar Mhor and this should be given all the support we can. 'It is definitely the right time. It's clearly a viable proposition and it's going to help so many people in Corpach.' Glenuig entrepreneur Simon MacDonald, a seasoned yachtsman and marina development consultant, also backed the move. The 59-year-old MacDonald's Smoked Produce owner, who has competed at national level and raced with the Dutch Olympic team in Majorca last year, was 'very keen' to see Corpach as a yachting centre. He told *The Oban Times*: 'When the boats come out they are faced with a 30-mile sail on to Oban or Dunstaffnage to get to the nearest marina. A yacht coming through has an average of five people on board. That's a lot of spending power and the Fort William area is missing out on a lot of extra income. 'Also, with the retail development coming to the Blar Mhor, a marina at Corpach looks like a more sensible idea. 'I would say it is more than that - it is almost essential.'

Mr Bean lends support to big screen campaign

A-LIST celebrity Rowan Atkinson has agreed to become a patron of the Phoenix Cinema as a local steering group take plans to re-open the complex forward. Mr Atkinson, also known for award winning appearances in the TV series *Blackadder*, said: 'I love local cinemas, not only because they provide, like a church or a football ground, a reason for a community to come together, but because they are invariably the best places to watch a film, compared to which a lonely viewing on a laptop is a miserable experience. My personal vested interest is that comedy

films, in particular, benefit from the shared excitement and communal laughter of a large audience in a proper cinema. I do wish the Oban Phoenix campaign the very best of luck.' Meanwhile, Hollywood star Dougray Scott is another A-lister who is backing the campaign to re-open Oban Phoenix Cinema. The star of *Mission Impossible II* and heart throb of *Desperate Housewives* and *Enigma* said: 'I strongly urge people to help in the fight to keep this cinema open. Cinemas are such an important part of our lives and it is essential people have the opportunity to view films in a cinema.'

Cake sale cooks up tasty £650 for Phoenix Cinema appeal



Staff at the Scottish Marine Institute raised £650 in aid of the Phoenix Cinema campaign at a cake sale at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) base in Dunbeg. The sale itself gathered £325, with the Scottish Marine Institute matching the sum raised. Pictured with the cheque are Jacqueline Cullen, left, and Angela Henderson, who arranged the sale, and Laurence Mee, director of SAMS. 15_103samschk1

Times Ticket appeal - p10

Minister to be quizzed over Coastguard cover

A DELEGATION of council representatives from across the Highlands and Islands will travel to London next month to protest at plans to decimate Scotland's Coastguard cover. Not only could cost cutting measures see the decommissioning of the *Anglian Prince* emergency tug, currently serving Scotland's coastline, but either Lerwick or Stornoway Coastguard station will be closed as part of a radical overhaul of the service. At the February 7 meeting, the council representatives will tell shipping minister Mike Penning that the plans were 'completely unacceptable'. A professional assessment of the risks faced by mariners off the UK's most remote coasts has been commissioned by the councils and will be

presented to the minister, and the delegation will show their support for coastguard staff by presenting Mr Penning with a petition, asking him once more to rethink his plans. Angus Campbell, leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, believes that not only will lives be put at risk if the proposals go ahead, but the west of Scotland's unique coastal environment could be jeopardised. He said: 'The minister has to realise that what they are proposing will put people's lives at risk across the whole of the west coast of Scotland. If we are left with no tug and no coastguard station there will be a significantly increased risk to lives and the environment. The withdrawal of one of these provisions would be bad enough, but to get rid of both is unacceptable.'

Modern apprenticeship accolade delight

LOCHABER Housing Association (LHA) has been named runner-up in the 'Small Employer of the Year' category at Scottish Modern Apprenticeship Awards finals. The accolade comes after LHA's in-house property services team took on four young apprentices last June after receiving 64 applications for the four-year posts. The apprenticeships followed the setting up of subsidiary company LHA Property Services in 2009 to provide an improved service for tenants and save a projected £500,000 over five years. LHA maintenance manager Sean Doherty said: 'We are delighted to have reached the finals of these prestigious awards, receiving recognition for our commitment to providing apprenticeships for local people. 'We ensured that staff from each trade - joinery, plumbing, painting and electrical - were involved with the apprentice recruitment and selection process, which is quite unusual in the building industry.' LHA chief executive Blair Allan said: 'When we established the property services team it was our intention to provide a number of apprenticeships across the trades, enabling LHA to contribute to the local community and economy while continuing to develop its service. It's wonderful these aims have been acknowledged in this way.'



LHA Chief executive Blair Allan, centre, with Sue Macfarlane of event sponsors Scottish Qualifications Authority and Skills Development Scotland's chief executive Damien Yeates.

Member's concerns over council budget

ARGYLL and Bute Council is holding back on publishing its budget to take into account the most up-to-date settlement from the Scottish government. But Oban SNP councillor Donald Macdonald is angry that full budget papers will not come before the full council until February 10, leaving only a short time to draw together a balanced budget. Councillor Macdonald said he had serious concerns about lack of involvement by councillors in the budget process. He said: 'We have a full council meeting today, January 27, and the agenda does not include a single item on the budget. The priorities are all wrong as we have a council meeting two weeks later on February 10 which is supposed to set a balanced budget

for the coming year. In addition there is an executive meeting on the same day and again there are no budget items on the agenda.' An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman said: 'The full council meeting on January 27 will consider the business previously scheduled for the meeting on January 20, which did not take place as a mark of respect to the Provost. The budget consultation process has been ongoing since last August and we have said from the outset that the budget would involve some very tough decisions. Those decisions recently became even more difficult when the severity of the cut in our settlement became apparent. We want to make the best use of the time we have available to come up with sensible options.'

Estate to have bigger say in deer management policy

A GLENCOE estate is to have a bigger say in the deer management policy of local landowners National Trust for Scotland. The trust met with representatives from neighbouring estate Black Corries last week at the visitor centre in Glencoe. Both sides agreed to work more closely

together on a number of land management issues, especially deer control. **Decision-making** The trust's Glencoe deer management plan is due to be renewed this year and they agreed to involve their neighbours in their decision making process.

Equally, the Black Corries workers will discuss any deer management plans they have with the trust. The meeting also saw both sides agree to work more closely on future deer counts and monitoring the deer's movement between estates throughout the year.

OT

Work starts on Invergarry water mains

WORK has started on renewing almost 2,000 metres of water mains in Invergarry. The existing cement pipes, which date from the 1950s, are being replaced by flexible plastic mains less prone to bursts. Scottish Water contractors will be visible during the next four months as they work on sections throughout the village. Supplies will have to be switched off occasionally to connect the new pipes, but customers will be given advance notice before this happens.

Project manager Neil Cowper said efforts would be made to keep any interruptions brief during the £200,000 project. 'We'll do our best to keep any disruption during the work to a minimum,' he said.

Lochaber groups' grant boost

TWO LOCHABER groups have been awarded grants for projects from local councillors' discretionary budgets.

Fort William Primary School parent council receives £500 for an eco-garden and the Knoydart Foundation £1,000 towards a water and sewerage consultancy.

Kyleakin panto finally makes it onto stage

KYLEAKIN Connections' much-awaited pantomime 'Snow White and the Eight Dwarfs' will be staged at Kyleakin Community Hall next Friday and Saturday, weather permitting.

Snow and ice forced the show's postponement before Christmas - much to the disappointment of cast and theatregoers.

Curtain up is 7.30pm and a raffle and refreshments will be available. Adults, £7, children/OAPs, £3.

New bid to reduce dog fouling

LOCHABER councillors have been briefed on a new Highland Council project designed to reduce dog fouling.

The 'Green Dog Walkers' scheme is a 'non-confrontational' way for dog owners to encourage others to 'pick up' after their pets.

Community councils and other groups will be encouraged to promote the initiative.

Community gets say in long-term emergency medical cover plans

WEST ARDNAMURCHAN Community Council (WACC) representatives are to take their place on a new working group to plan and implement long-term and sustainable emergency medical cover for the area.

Local GPs and district nurses, the Scottish Ambulance Service and NHS Highland will also sit on the group, which will be chaired by local councillor Michael Foxley.

REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

WACC met a contrite NHS Highland chairman Garry Coutts and Councillor Foxley in the Kilchoan Hotel last Friday. Councillor Foxley said NHS Highland and the Scottish Ambulance service would meet 'at chief executive level' to explore ways of delivering out-of-hours

medical cover in west Ardnamurchan. He said: 'There needs to be a sustainable long-term solution and until that is available the addition nursing support will be provided. That will be as long as it takes.'

'The local nurses' contracts will be extended and there will be additional nursing support from the NHS.'

'It is their responsibility to be there in half an hour from a call [from Kilchoan]

and they can't do it, which for Kilchoan they can't do. They have to put in either money or personnel.'

West Ardnamurchan chairwoman Rosie Curtis said she was 'delighted' at what Mr Coutts had to say.

She said: 'He obviously came down to build bridges because he realises that this issue has been handled badly - but from a community point of view it's a fantastic turnaround.'

'They have realised that you can't not have somebody on call down here. If only they had gone into this consultation at the beginning it would have saved everyone a load of hassle. The community is delighted and we are more than ready to sit down and negotiate in the future.'

NHS Highland chairman Garry Coutts, said: 'It was a good meeting and I am confident that we will be able to find a positive way forward.'



Kinlochleven Primary School litter pickers enjoyed their walk to help the local environment.

Kinlochleven litter pickers complete mission

KINLOCHLEVEN Primary School P3/4/5 pupils completed the latest of their walks round the village last Friday and collected bags of roadside rubbish on the way.

The class walked out to the first lay-by along the Fort William road and found lots of litter lying along the route.

And a special surprise was waiting after all their hard work - hot chocolate and biscuits in the Macdonald Hotel.

Teacher Mrs McSorland has been taking the class out regularly as part of their eco schools health and wellbeing topic.

Impact

She said: 'During the refreshments everyone talked about cleaning up the village and the impact that litter and fly-tipping had on the environment.'

'Everyone agreed to keep in touch and work together to keep our village

clean.' Two black dustbin bags of rubbish was picked up and returned to school to be recycled or disposed of.

'The children have benefited from being outdoors and have had enjoyed and learned from the experience.'

Community works officers Iain Bruce and Fiona Docherty, together with Moira Hartley of Kinlochleven Community Trust also took part.

Town centre boosted by new music venue

FORT WILLIAM town centre is in line for a boost with news a new music venue is to open in the old Masonic Lodge building.

Skipinnish, the company which owns Skipinnish Ceilidh House in Oban, has applied to Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee for permission to open a similar venue in Fort William, and hopes to open in

REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK fort@obantimes.co.uk

late spring. The Oban Ceilidh House opened in 2008, with a view to promoting traditional Scottish music, and was named venue of the year at the Traditional Music Awards last year.

The Lodge, on Middle Street, closed its doors for

the final time in September last year, not long after celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Andrew Stevenson, of Achnacarry, and Angus MacPhail, of Tiree, formed the Skipinnish Ceilidh band in 1997 and launched their own record label in 2003.

Mr Stevenson said they want to start promoting traditional music in Lochaber. He said: 'Opening a venue in Fort William was always a priority for us, we were just waiting for the right opportunity. We know from experience there are a good number of supporters of traditional music in the area and we hope they will enjoy our venue as much as the tourists who visit.'

'We are passionate about presenting real traditional music to visitors in a friendly and professional manner. There is so much stereotyped and cheesy 'Scottish' music being palmed off to tourists these days, we are out to prove that our music is as beautiful and accessible as the scenery that tourists travel so far to see. It's a challenge to set up a new venue, but we are really looking forward to opening.'

Presentation marks vet's three decades of service

A PRESENTATION is to be held for a Fort William vet to thank him for more than three decades of service.

Chris Evans MRCVS sold his Victoria Road practice CC Evans last month to Inverness-based Crown Vets, who will move the business to a new home in Glen Nevis Place this spring.

Now an organising committee comprising Bill Henderson of Traigh, Ian McColl of Blarmachfoldach, Sandy MacDonald of Ardslnish and Isabel Campbell of Dykelands, Camaghael has been set up to make arrangements

for the event and collect subscriptions.

Isabel said: 'Chris has been our local vet for over 30 years. He started work in Lochaber with Michael Carmichael in the 70s and took over his practice in 1980 and the community wishes to say 'thank you' to Chris for all his years of service.'

Subscription lists are available from local farmers, crofters and at Harbro and Direct Pet Supplies. Closing date is March 4.

The informal presentation will take place at a local venue on March 25.

Bus service hits the road

LOCHABER Action on Disability (LAD) has become only the second voluntary organisation in the Highlands to introduce registered bus services.

A Thursday return service between Roy Bridge and Fort William and a Friday service

between Caol/Corpach and Fort William Town Centre are now up and running.

Unlike a normal bus service, passengers can phone in and ask to be picked up slightly off the main route.

Similarly the bus can divert to places such as the medical

centre to drop off or pick up passengers.

Organisers say the enterprise is not designed to compete with commercial operators and is 'a godsend' for those who find it difficult to use conventional buses.

Set up

LAD manager Laura Cheatham said: 'LAD was originally set up to provide transport services for those with disabilities in and around the Fort William area.'

'Our prime consideration in registering the routes has been to enable our passengers to have access to free travel through the concessionary fares scheme, but running the services also

pays for overheads involved in running a bus and helps with our sustainability.'

Chairman of Lochaber Transport Forum, Councillor Brian Murphy, said: 'I congratulate LAD for developing this new service which enables people who have difficulty using conventional bus services to access suitable transport, and allows them to use their concessionary fares card to do so.'

'I hope other community transport groups in the Lochaber area will soon follow their example.'

The Bradbury Centre in Bonar Bridge set up registered bus routes last May.



Etta Campbell of Spean Bridge has her concessionary travel card checked by driver Caroline Watt to become one of the first people to use the new service.

Skye pair pledge to work together

TWO COMMUNITY organisations on south Skye look certain to be working more closely together in future.

At a meeting in the Isleornsay Hotel, directors of Sleat Community Trust and Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative (CDI) agreed in principle that closer collaboration would be beneficial in the quest for outside funding for local schemes. CDI director Graeme MacKenzie told *The Oban Times*

the 'fact finding' summit had been arranged to determine common ground between the two groups. He said: 'We held the meeting to find out if we could work together on various projects - particularly the shop/café we would like to set up. We do feel that would be of benefit to the whole of Sleat.'

'I would imagine we will be meeting on a regular basis to discuss projects and anything else we can help each other with.'

Save YOUR cinema

with the Oban Times Ticket appeal

Join one of the many A-list filmstars: Harry Potter's Hagrid, Robbie Coltrane, the White Witch from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Oscar winner Tilda Swinton, *Four Wedding and A Funeral's* John Hannah, Scottish film director Bill Forsyth and the inimitable Mr Bean, Rowan Atkinson and help re-open Oban's Cinema

The Oban Times Ticket appeal is simple: Buy a Gold, Silver or Bronze ticket and help raise the funds needed to re-open the cinema.

Your ticket will be printed out and proudly displayed on the wall of the newly refurbished cinema along with your name, so future visitors of the cinema can see who helped raise the "phoenix from the ashes"

How to pledge your cash.

There are three types of ticket - Gold at £50, Silver at £25 and Bronze at £5. every donation will be carefully invested in the future of the cinema. If for any reason the cinema doesn't get up and running all monies will be returned.

Name

Address

Email address

Pledge GOLD SILVER BRONZE (Tick as applicable)

I would like to pay an extra £17.75 for the framing of my ticket as a gift.

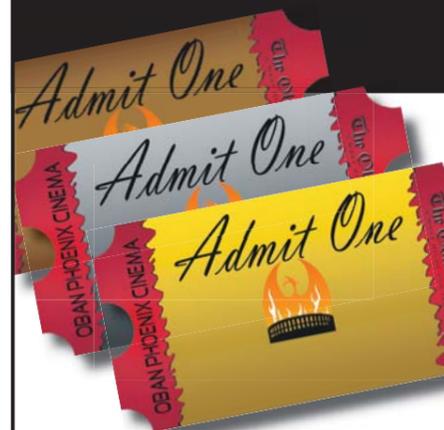
Post or hand in to The Oban Times Lochavulin Industrial Estate, Oban PA34 4HB
Cheques or Postal Orders made payable to Times Ticket.

A full list of donors can be viewed in the Oban Times until the cinema is opened.

Total amount paid..... Name you want to appear on the ticket.....

"I love local cinemas. Not only because they provide, like a church or a football ground, a reason for a community to come together but because they are invariably the best places to watch a film, compared to which a lonely viewing on a laptop is a miserable experience. My personal vested interest is that comedy films, in particular, benefit from the shared excitement and communal laughter of a large audience in a proper cinema. I do wish the Oban Phoenix campaign the very best of luck."

Rowan Atkinson





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Are you a fan of The Oban Times?

THIS is what has been talked about on Facebook in the last week or so. Find us at www.facebook.com/obantimes

Chris Curtis - look at Oban, it is counted as an epidemic on the world emergency and disasters information website.
Oban Times - That'll be the mumps then. OT January 13 page 3. But never mind THAT, what about the earthquake in Mallaig at 6 this morning - 3.5 on the Richter Scale!! Great website, Chris. Ta!!!

Oban Times - We are backing the community's bid to buy out the Oban cinema and asking readers to support the Oban Phoenix Cinema venture with our Times Ticket campaign. To find out more click http://www.obantimes.co.uk/news/view/support_oban_cinema_with_a_times_ticket/

Oban Times - OOOH 999 fans of this page! Who's going to be the thousandth??
Laura McVey - ME!!!

Carole Fitzgerald - I was showing a bride-to-be around Lunga House at the weekend. We had hailstones followed by clear blue skies followed by torrential rain. All in the space of about 15 minutes. Fortunately she was considering a summer wedding. Although...as I type this nothing to say that the weather wouldn't be exactly the same in the summer. Except warmer!!

Oban Times - What would you do to improve Oban?
Zak Hancock - McDonalds
Fiona Vick - Bypass, make the square back into a roundabout. More things for kids under 5. Fix the pot holed roads!
Duncan Campbell - Would hate to see another supermarket in the town. All the small shops would be shut within six months. Unless we get rid of Tesco first. Town could do with a male section in New Look. So annoying it aint there already! Maybe a fast food place for the tourists. Could also do with getting rid of some of the traffic lights in town. It's funny they can't think of ideas themselves though!
Pam Baker - A bypass would kill what's left of the commercial area of the town. Even more shops would close.

Secret uncovered

ARGYLL'S Secret Coast features in Channel 4's popular Relocation, Relocation programme. Presenters Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer head to Scotland with Christine and Keith Bettis in search of a hotel. The couple fall in love with the village of Tighnabruich on the Kyles of Bute. Christine and Keith look at two businesses before settling for The Royal an Lochan. The programme screens on Thursday January 27 at 8pm.

Bard's birthday celebrated

THE WATERFRONT Restaurant in Oban hosted a fundraising Burns Supper on Sunday in aid of Homestart Lorn.

This was the second annual supper, which raises funds for the family support charity.

Guests were treated to a unique menu made up of Scottish produce, right down to the Inn-Bru ice cream.

After twins Cameron and Andrew Scott piped in the haggis, young George Needham gave the Address to a Haggis.

Joyce Noble said the Selkirk Grace and followed Jack Degnan's Toast to the Lassies with the reply.

Ian Weir said the Immortal Memory and Ted Heath spoke of 'The Land We Live In'.

Janet Ferguson led the singing.

In giving the vote of thanks, Aileen Binner of Homestart Lorn praised chef Alex Needham and the staff from the Waterfront who gave up their time to support the event.



George Needham giving the Address to a Haggis at the Waterfront Restaurant on Sunday, during the Burns Supper in aid of Homestart Lorn. 15_104haggis2



Pictured at the SNP Burns Supper in Oban are, from left, councillors Donald 'Skye' McIntosh and Roddy McCuish; Mike Russell MSP, prospective parliamentary candidate for Argyll and Bute, Argyll and Bute MSP Jim Mather and Councillor Donald Macdonald. 15_104snp01

MSPs Mike Russell and Jim Mather were among the guests at a Burns Supper hosted by the Oban and Lorn branch of the SNP.

The evening, chaired by Councillor Roddy McCuish, was held at the Oban Lorne rugby clubhouse. Donald Melville began proceedings with the Address to a Haggis, which was followed by the Selkirk Grace from Councillor Donald 'Skye' McIntosh. Mr Russell gave the Immortal Memory, Ray Goodman made the Toast to the Lassies and Kathryn Wilkie made the Reply to the Lassies. There were songs from Iain Thomson and Fiona Jappy and Mike MacKenzie read a poem.



Top table guests at Lochaber Burns Club last Friday evening. 10_104burns04

LOCHABER Burns Club celebrated the birth of Scotland's national bard in fine style at the Alexandria Hotel, Fort William, last Friday evening.

Lochaber High School head teacher Jim Sutherland welcomed the company before Finlay Clark piped in the haggis, which was delivered by James Porter.

John Hutchison gave the 'Address to a Haggis' and Hector MacLean 'The

Selkirk Grace' before a fine meal was enjoyed.

Mr Sutherland gave the toast to Lochaber Burns Club, Mr Hutchison performed 'Scots Wha Hae' before Plockton High School rector Duncan Ferguson delivered 'The Immortal Memory'.

Donald MacLean gave 'The Land We Live In', John Hutchison his inimitable 'Tam o Shanter' before local dentist Gregor

Muir proposed the 'Toast to the Lassies' and recited 'Address to the Toothache'. Bill Strachan gave the 'Reply on Behalf of the Lassies'.

John MacLennan proposed the vote of thanks before the company joined in singing *Auld Lang Syne*. Robert Robertson's songs and Finlay Clark's piping selection added greatly to what was a highly enjoyable evening.

Celtic Connections audience goes wild for MOVE



A stunning performance - scenes from MOVE at Glasgow's O2 ABC.



WILD Biscuit's production MOVE was performed to an audience of more than 1,300 in Glasgow's O2 ABC, Sauchiehall Street, as part of this year's Celtic Connections Festival.

With a cast including Neil Primrose, of Travis, on drums and percussion, Salsa Celtica's Fraser Fifield on sax and Highland Pipes, John Saich, of Wild Biscuit, Scotland's number one Hip Hop crew Random Aspekts and a special line up of pipers and drummers from Argyll, this unique production rocked one of Glasgow's premier venues.

Highlights included compositions from some of the pipers in the cast fused with hip hop and funk with choreography by Tony Mills of Random Aspekts.

Home to Eilean Dearg, by Chris Cotes - opening the show with a passion akin to that of the late Martyn Bennett - Arthur's 50th Birthday Bash, by Ewan McCulloch, Urban Aspekts, by David Provan and Somerled's Legacy, by Rod Buchanan, all gave the Glasgow audience a taste of some amazing composition work coming from Argyll in the 21st century.

A special surprise was in store for the audience as tenor drummers Ashleigh Kilgour, Bethan Phillips and Maddy Ward showed that their skills go even beyond their unique style of flourishes,

setting their drums aside to perform a dance routine with Ashley Jack, of Random Aspekts, to a country blues setting of Pipers Cave.

A blistering rendition of The Hen's March followed, a five minute whirlwind played by David Provan with Colin Brown and Fraser Fifield, huge applause erupting as they were joined once again by the tenor drummers with their signature moves.

The show closed with a free-styling dance floor rework of piping standards including Lexie MacAskill, with a showcase of world class break dance and full ahead musicianship leaving the Celtic Connections audience wanting more.

The Cast of MOVE: Bill Halliday, George Hall, James Dunkley, Sally Hall, Ewan McCulloch, Maddy Ward, Rod Buchanan, Colin Brown, Chris Coates, David Provan, Bethan Phillips, Ashleigh Kilgour, Neil Primrose, Fraser Fifield, John Saich and Random Aspekts.

□ Pictures and details of the show will soon be posted on the Wild Biscuit website at www.wildbiscuit.com where you can also keep up to date with new developments in the next stage of MOVE.

Spotlight shines on classic musical

REPORT

by LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

SPOTLIGHT Theatre Company is putting on a spectacular show this March when it launches into the wonderful world of 1950s New York for the excellent production *Guys and Dolls*.

A directorial debut for Stephen Day, it is a show not to be missed, especially as it has some of the catchiest songs such as Luck Be a Lady, Guys and Dolls, I've Never Been in Love Before and Take Back Your Mink and most dramatic sequences in musical theatre, including a surprise scene from the lady cast members.

Stephen says it has been an ambition of his to put on the production, ever since he was involved in the show in 1994 in Lochaber.

He said: 'I always loved the show and I learned so much when we put it on in Fort William that I wanted to bring it to Oban.'

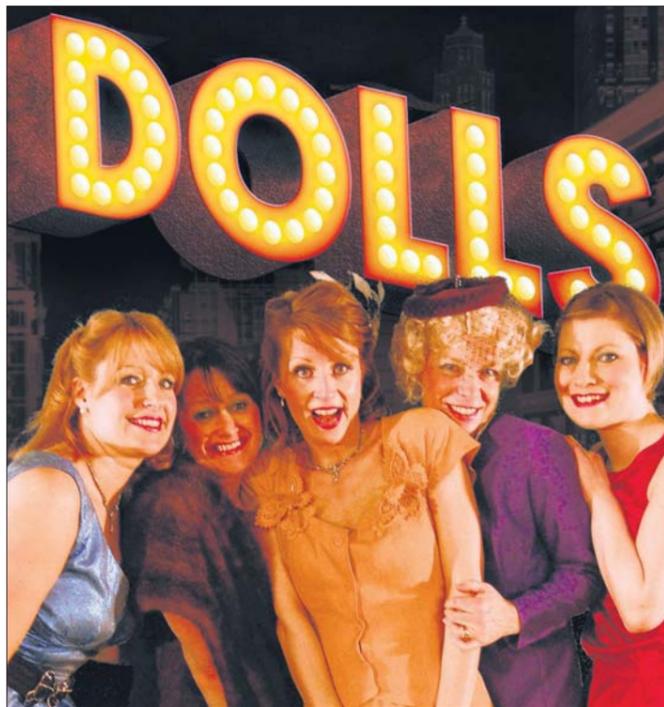
Something of a tall order for the cast as there are so many men in the show.

One cast member had an unusual audition for the show.

Stephen explains: 'Stevie Finlayson, a leisure attendant at the Corran Halls, was testing the sound on the stage last year - and we discovered he could sing. So this year we told him he had a part on stage as one of the Guys, and he didn't disagree.'

Stephen explains that the musical is lots of fun but it is really pushing the boundaries of what the theatre company has done before.

'There are a lot of people in the cast. At one point we have 34 people on stage.'



Here come the girls - the dolls from the cast of Guys and Dolls.

The show runs on March 3, 4 and 5 at 7.30pm with a matinee on the Saturday from 2pm. Tickets are on sale from the Corran Halls.

The Oban Times is offering the chance to win a pair of tickets for the matinee show on Saturday March 5.

To enter, simply tell us: Which city is Guys and Dolls set in?

Fill in the coupon and send it to: The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB. Closing date for entries is noon, Friday February 4.

Guys and Dolls is set in:

Name.....

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Gaelic dynasty on stage

NA Caimbeulaich, The Campbells of Greepe, Isle of Skye, rank amongst Gaelic music's leading dynasties.

All five family members who performed at last Thursday evening's Celtic Connections concert at St Andrew's in the Square, Glasgow, are well known Mod gold medallists.

This was an impressive feast of Gaelic singing and a real musical family reunion featuring siblings Kenna and Seumas Campbell, Kenna's daughters Wilma and Mary Ann Kennedy and niece Maggie MacDonald.

Although the Campbell clan were often accompanied throughout their selection of songs by top class musicians Alasdair Fraser (fiddle), Natalie Haas (cello), Lorne MacDougall (pipes and whistle), Finlay Wells (guitar) and James Lindsay (bass), their most moving pieces were undoubtedly those which were unaccompanied or where accompaniment was minimal.

Michigan step dancer Nick Gareiss was a huge favourite with the packed audience and his enthusiasm and boundless energy contributed to a most enjoyable evening. Wilma Kennedy, who proved to be a more than capable step dance partner, joined him on stage.

A taster recording entitled *The Mi'n Duil* (In Hope or Expectation) was on sale at the concert as a prelude to an album and family biography, both of which will be out later this year.

The 2010 Mod gold medallist Joy Dunlop, from Connel, a tireless ambassador for the Gaelic language as well as a superb singer, had earlier warned the audience up with a stunning selection of Gaelic songs, most of which appear on her debut album *Dusgadh* (Awakening). Joy's special guests for the evening were Paul Tracey (guitar), Susan Appelbe (cello) and Patsy Reid (fiddle).

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Argyllshire Gathering Halls
8pm - 1am
The Ceilidh Trail, Sequence Choir and more
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Families welcome

Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club
MONTHLY CLUB NIGHT
Thursday 3rd February 2011
Argyllshire Gathering Hall 7.30pm
Audience and Players Welcome
Special Guest Artist
Ross MacPherson Trio
Admission £3
Come Along and Enjoy the Music

OBAN U3A
Tuesday 1st February 2011
At 10.30am
Caledonian Hotel, Station Square, Oban
A warm welcome to members new and old for our Monthly coffee and chat

FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Musical Evening
on Tuesday 1st February, 2011 at 8pm
GUEST ARTISTS:
Ian Cameron Trio (Ballinluig)
Railway Club Inverlochy
All Welcome
Admission £4.00... Tea & Raffle Extra IN THE EVENT OF A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION BY ANY GUEST ARTIST THE COMMITTEE WILL FIND AN ALTERNATIVE ARTIST

Comunn Gaidhealach An Obain
Ceilidh
Masonic Hall, Albany Street, OBAN
Saturday 5th of February 2011 at 7.30pm
Admission £5
See Local Posters for Artists

GATEWAY
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender group
Sat 29 Jan, 2-4pm
Oban Fire Station, Soroba Road
Small, friendly, supportive group. New members welcome - please call Katrina
07760 701 308 / email katrina.mitchell@waverleycare.org

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The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Stamp out vandalism

'MINDLESS vandalism has become all too prevalent.' The words of Sheriff Eric Brown last week when considering the case of a teenager who admitted her part in vandalising a community garden in Bonawe. In Oban, there was more mindless vandalism, this time to a garden sculpture which had become something of a local landmark in Pulpit Hill during the past decade or so. Boredom, peer pressure, drink, drugs - there can be no excuse for such incidents and they should not be allowed to affect our quality of life.

GLASGOW LETTER

Celtic Connections and the Trossachs

TO GLASWEGIANS an important part of their enjoyment has always been the city's proximity to some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland - particularly the Loch Lomond and Trossachs region. This is the part of the country which inspired Sir Walter Scott and it was fitting that the 200th anniversary of his 'Lady of the Lake' should be celebrated at Celtic Connections with a specially commissioned work by Phil Cunningham and his co-director John McCusker. The music had five themes played by a house band which, along with Phil and John, included some of traditional music's best exponents such as Mike McGoldrick, John Doyle, Katherine Boyle and Charlie McKerrow. To provide backing there was a string ensemble and between each theme Bill Paterson provided appropriate narrations.

Those in the packed main auditorium of the concert hall were privileged to be treated to the premiere of this music and were then treated in the second half to songs from both Karen Matheson and Eddi Reader with backing from the band which also played stirring musical sets. This was music of the highest quality from start to finish, so well deserving of the huge attendance many of whom will not be able to wait for their next visit to the landscape it inspired. Celtic Connections has become a vehicle for themes of celebration and anniversaries and that was the origin of the concert Sideadh a Chuain (Atlantic Blast) which was first staged at last summer's 15th Hebridean Festival and the 25th anniversary of Stornoway's An Lanntair centre. The venue was the Tron Theatre and again it was a full house despite competing with other Gaelic events on the same evening.

With the word 'blast' in the title, it very much lived up to its name with the first set being piping based and the format of the evening was one of traditional Hebridean songs and tunes. Indeed, all but two of the tunes were from Lewis and we even had two sets based on the famous marag! Musicians for the evening were Alasdair Whyte, Calum Alex MacMillan, James MacKenzie, Norrie MacIver and DC MacMillan, each from a different band, or bands, but combining superbly to produce yet another Celtic Connections success.

With only a few days left there is still time to sample some of the delights of Celtic Connections 2011.

Oban High School Dinner Dance

THIS year's get together of the former pupils of Oban High School will take place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Saturday March 12. All former pupils and friends are encouraged to attend. Tickets, priced £30, are available by telephoning 0141 943 0281 or 0141 563 9728.

Stirling ceilidh

THERE was a good turnout at this month's ceilidh when the singers were Mairi MacArthur, Mary MacLean, Seumas Campbell and Eoghainn MacLeod. Dr Innes Smith was the piper and also played for the Cluaran Dancers. A particular highlight of the evening, which was chaired by Mary MacColl, was the fiddle playing, individual and as a group, of Siobhan Anderson and her pupils.

Diary dates

Thursday January 27: Sutherland Association Burns Night, Buffs Club, 937 Dumbarton Road, 7pm.

Friday January 28: Uist and Barra Association New Year Dance, Glasgow University Union, 9pm to 1am.

Saturday January 29: Tise Association Burns Supper, Ralston Community Hall, 7.30pm.

Saturday February 5: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Marag Supper, Partick Burgh Hall, 7.45pm. Clann Gaidhlig Bardic Supper, Greenock Westburn Church, 7.30pm - Margaret MacLeod. Last date for entries for the National Piping Centre Junior Piping Competition.

Pub scene

MUSIC in the Islay Inn this weekend will be provided by *Pneumatic Drills* on Friday and the *Clachies* on Saturday. Congratulations to Margaret Dunn who won the recent piping competition in the Islay Inn.

The main focus in the Park Bar this weekend will be a celebration of Rabbe Burns which will start at 4pm on Saturday. Calum Campbell will address the haggis and other entertainment will include Highland dancing from pupils of the Gaelic School and others, Thoir An Aire' folk group from the school, songs from members of the GG Choir, music from Don and Ailain and the *Monach Isles*.

Friday's music will be *Ballochmyle* with Sunday still to be confirmed.

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



Fort Augustus Gala Queen - 1992

This week's flashback photograph comes from the files of *The Oban Times* and features the 1992 Fort Augustus Gala Queen. We invite readers to send in flashback photographs. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB
email: editor@obantimes.co.uk

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Councillors should be working on new proposals

Sir, I am writing in response to the letter from Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, which was printed on the letters page in *The Oban Times*, January 13, 2011.

I am amazed the councillor has taken the time to comment on Ardochattan Primary School's article in *The Oban Times* considering the proposals have all been shelved until March, when new proposals will be produced.

At this stage I would have liked to have seen the councillors working on the new and accurate proposals.

I also think if someone is going to 'correct facts' that are printed in *The Oban Times*, the least they can do is make sure they are factually correct. The receiving school for Ardochattan was going to be Lochnell Primary, not Barcaldine Primary.

Susan Bland, Ardochattan Parent Council Chair.

Setting the record straight

Sir, The SNP used last week's letters page to spread misinformation about the Liberal Democrats.

The following sets the record straight. I never criticised Education Minister Mike Russell for trying to save rural schools. What I did criticise him for was secretly handing Argyll and Bute Council a list of eight to nine schools to close, whilst saying publicly he would have nothing to do with the school closure process.

During the Parliamentary debate Mr Russell was asked several times to name these schools, but he wouldn't. What does he have to hide?

The UK Government cut Scotland's grant by less than any other part of the UK. The SNP Government at Holyrood has cut Argyll and Bute Council's grant by £5.5 million more than the Scottish average. This obviously means far more cuts in services here than in any other part of Scotland.

It is complete nonsense for the SNP to say that Liberal Democrat Councillor Alison Hay agreed to these cuts. This is simply not true.

I urge the SNP Government to change its mind and give Argyll and Bute our £5.5 million back.

The recent fuel duty increases were part of the previous Labour Government's Budget. I

voted against these increases and am trying to persuade the new Government not to put up fuel duty whilst the price is so high. The Government has asked the EU for permission to implement a pilot scheme on the Atlantic islands which will see fuel duty cut by 5 pence a litre. If this pilot scheme proves successful I will campaign for the scheme to be extended to the Clyde islands and remote parts of the mainland.

Alan Reid MP, 95 Alexandra Parade, Dunoon.

Message to mothers

Sir, I was surprised to read the letter last week from Mrs Fallon regarding her quest for council run activities for her two-year-old grandson.

Can parents do nothing for themselves these days? Why can't the mothers of small children get together in each other's houses if they want their children to 'meet and have fun with other children'.

It is much healthier for small children to be in a home environment rather than some public hall where they are exposed to all sorts of germs.

Come on mothers, don't wait for everything to be done for you.

Brenda MacFarlane, Dervaig, Isle of Mull.

Support Gaelic and its place in Scottish history

Sir, It seems strange to be putting forward a case for supporting Gaelic and its place in Scottish history in the heartland of the Gaidhealtachd.

When we are not interested in a particular culture, a particular sport or a particular recreation, people invariably claim that when it comes down to monetary input from Highland Council, their own interests have been disadvantaged.

Some people believe Highland Council should not spend money on Gaelic bilingual signs costing a total of £35,681 from a budget of £600million, yet we rightly spend £1.25million from Highland Council's discretionary budgets alone on many diverse groups and organisation in order that they can improve their standing.

Many non-Gaelic speakers support Gaelic culture and support Highland Council's effort to encourage awareness of the language and its place in the Highlands.

Of course, I am not taking into account the amount of monies ring fenced by the Scottish Government and spent on other aspects of Gaelic outwith local control.

However, that is another issue and none of that particular Gaelic debate should impinge upon teaching our children to respect our country's history and culture in which Gaelic plays a major part or deny children the opportunity to be taught Gaelic.

To do so would be like saying 'we should not be spending money on something I am not interested in or have a negative view of'.

Arguing against Gaelic road signs on cost or road safety grounds is one thing, but disrespecting our culture and history due to lack of interest or knowledge is something else which should be discouraged - as it would be in any other self-respecting country.

Councillor Bill Clark, Caol and Mallaig ward.

Thank you Oban hospital

Sir, May I, through your columns, offer a sincere thank you to Lorn and Islands Hospital.

It is true to say I would not be writing this were it not for the expert care, support and attention that I and numerous others have received.

The ambulance and patient transport drivers work conscientiously in the background and are a necessary and essential part of the team. Some even come up from Lochgilhead. During the recent inclement weather this professionalism shone through.

The hospice staff and assistants on a Monday are very much appreciated and it means that we can keep in touch. They all do sterling work.

I have friends in the Central Belt where the circumstances are very much inferior to Oban. It makes me appreciate just how fortunate we are to live where we do and be cared for the way we are.

Cyril Scott, North Connel.

Truth behind the Christmas story

Sir, In response to Colin Nevins' interesting comment on the nativity, *The Oban Times*, January 20, one would in all honesty have to apply the same scrutiny to most of our traditional Christmas. The tree, holly wreath,

candles, even carols have sprung from the ancient festival of Yule which was 'Christianised' many centuries ago.

Most people do not separate myth from Biblical truth until Biblical truth matters to them. Most people do not appreciate that Jesus or His real name in Hebrew, Yeshua, was Jewish and wore the traditional tallit and tefillin of a Rabbi - hence being recognised as such.

Most believe He invented the parables when in fact He used old Jewish tales well known to His audience to explain the character of His Father God. Many say He never said He was God - but an understanding of Jewish symbolism regarding the budding of leaves and the reading of Isaiah as fulfilled in their hearing, was a clear statement to them of His divinity - hence their rush to stone Him.

We are not called Biblically to celebrate Christmas but we are called to repent or turn away from a life which is not in fellowship with that small baby, who came to shed His blood in order that we might follow Him in obedience and thus be saved.

If there is any truth worth pointing out in the Christmas story it is that.

Rosie Robinson, Barvas Cottage, North Connel.

Drivers should always use their handbrake

Sir, I was interested in an article involving a bus and a pedestrian in Fort William.

This occurrence, irrespective of cause, raises a safety issue to which virtual total disregard is paid by the motoring public.

Only a small majority of car and van drivers properly secure their vehicles when they are stationary.

Everyone else is content to sit for however long with their vehicle held only by the footbrake.

This happens in all manner of traffic situations in a town, in a traffic queue or at traffic lights.

People often squeeze between vehicles to cross a road, so the scope for injury is always there, all because drivers are too lazy to properly secure their vehicle when stationary.

I hope that bringing this matter into focus will be beneficial and will prompt drivers to consider the importance of safety in every shape and form when out and about.

Lawrence Macduff, Kilmarnock.

A view from the tower
by McCaig

The silly season extended

TIME there was when 'the silly season' was that which happened after parliament had risen for the summer recess, when there were lots of social events, a Royal Garden Party or two and the Tory grandees went grouse shooting and discussed what should be the party's programme to stay in government.

It seems 'this silly season' has been extended to almost the whole year since the so-called coalition got into power. No-one will deny we have a major economic crisis and rising unemployment with little prospect of it decreasing as more national and local government departments are forced to sack staff to try to balance budgets.

Yet along comes our Prime Minister who is quite happy to pay hundreds of thousands of pounds in fines to the European Union as he won't implement its instruction to offer the opportunity for prisoners in our jails, if their sentence is four years or less, to be able to claim the right to cast a vote in elections.

He is quoted as saying he is 'sick to his stomach' at the thought that anyone in prison should be allowed what is their democratic right - what has happened to the 'universal franchise'?

In any case, serving a jail sentence has many purposes, not just that of depriving culprits of their liberty as a way of punishing them for their crimes. Their time 'in stir' is also meant to get them back on the straight and narrow as can be seen in so many ways not the least of which is returning to their families for weekends and doing jobs outside to acclimatise them to the world of work.

Surely, allowing them to apply for a postal vote, if they so wish, should be part of that rehabilitation process. They don't get the right automatically - they have to apply for it.

Research has shown that even if a majority of prisoners did get their postal votes they would not affect the election result in any constituency.

I'm astonished that David Cameron has not got the guts to lead his party to accept the EU instruction and save the necessity to pay out vast fines.

All he is doing is pandering to 'the hanging and flogging lobby' that still has a substantial following in many of their constituencies.

Another crazy proposal

TIME there was when a couple got married and in due course started a family.

The old-fashioned way to bring up their off spring was for the wife to cease to work, or if her income was essential, for her mother or

other relative to bring up the baby or babies.

It may not have been the perfect solution but there are many thousands of people, some now mothers themselves, who are perfectly normal and didn't begrudge their mother not being with them all the time.

'Not good enough', say the Liberal-Democrats, 'we must provide many months, maybe a year, of maternity and paternity leave so that they can be with their child. Of course, this leave has to be paid for.'

How generous of party leader Nick Clegg to land employers with yet another tax as that is what it will be.

At a time when he, along with his pal David Cameron, are supposed to be trying to sort out the financial mess left by Gordon Brown and his chief adviser Ed Balls, along comes Mr Clegg with his utopian proposal that the employer, or the state, should hand out months of maternity pay to every happy couple who have become parents. Note: this, if enacted, would apply to not just the first child but to subsequent children.

Similarly, if the country is to tolerate the Clegg nonsense without being reigned in we, too, will be an even more difficult financial position than we are in currently.

Grace Powell

GRACE Powell's death has come to those of us who had known her for almost 40 years as a great shock.

She seemed impervious to serious illness as she was still playing tennis and singing in Oban Bach Choir in her late 70s.

Grace and Harry, her scientist husband, came to the new home of the Scottish Association for Biological Science (now SAMS) at Dunstaffnage but, although Grace was a scientist she did a number of jobs while bringing up son David and daughter Anne.

Her leisure activities were numerous but her tennis playing was frequent and enthusiastic. Many a mixed doubles I enjoyed as her partner.

Music was also a passion. She helped restart Oban Operatic Society and sang in a number of choirs.

She, I reckon, must have been the senior singer in the Bach Choir and took part in their recent concert just a few weeks ago.

She died quite suddenly from a stroke and has bequeathed her body to medical science.

There will be no funeral as such but a memorial service will be held next month.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Harry, David and Anne.

McCaig

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WEATTheObanTimesdouroutmosttomakesurethatallour 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.

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YOUR LETTERS

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Store cattle trade rises at Stirling

UNITED Auctions sold 787 store cattle and young bulls and 215 cows, plus 1328 store sheep, at Stirling last Wednesday when trade for both bullocks and heifers showed a slight rise.

Bullocks averaged 158.14p (+1.94p) and sold to 221.5p per kg for a 158kg Limousin cross from Bankhead and £1110 for a 714kg Charolais cross from Hazleyshaw.

Heifers averaged 155.35p (+1.02p) and sold to 176p per kg for a 341kg Charolais cross from Laight and £970 for a 576kg Limousin cross from Shielhill.

Cast cows averaged 93.72p and sold to 146.4p for a Limousin cross from Pitlochrie and £1035 for a Limousin from Sketewan.

Suffolk cross hogs from Outerston sold to £73 and to £71 from Victoria and Balhaldie, with Blackface hogs from Glenkiln fetching £60.

Bullocks sell to 200p per kilo at Lochmaddy

DINGWALL Highland Marts Ltd sold 218 store cattle and 15 Over 30 Month cattle at Lochmaddy last Thursday when a good show of cattle resulted in all kinds selling extremely well.

Bullocks averaged 168.9p and sold to 200.0p per kg for a pen of 270kg Limousin crosses from Hastain, Bayhead and £780 for a 440kg Limousin cross also from Hastain.

Heifers averaged 162.1p and sold to 185.7p per kg for a 280kg Limousin cross from 1 Stilligarry, Lochboisdale, and £660 for a pen of 370kg Limousin crosses also from 1 Stilligarry.

OTM cattle sold to 104.1p per kg for a 730kg Simmental cross from Druim Torrach, Lochmaddy, and £760 for a 780kg Simmental cross and a 730kg Simmental cross also from Druim Torrach.

Stirling prime sale

UNITED Auctions sold 5159 prime sheep at Stirling last Thursday.

Texel lambs from Kinloch sold to £93 and 210p per kilo with Beltex from Luckenburn to £88. Blackfaces from Blackhope sold to £80 and 179p per kilo.

Texel ewes sold to £95 from Wester Highgate with Luss Estates selling Bluefaced Leicesters to £83.50.

UA to link with farmers via Facebook and video reports

LIVESTOCK auctioneers, United Auctions, are hoping to revolutionise the way farmers think about their business by revamping its online content.

Website revamp

From next week, the company is launching a new website and is set to start its own Facebook and Flickr accounts, complete with information on the

company's heritage and recent sales. And with four documentary clips posted on the video-sharing website YouTube last week already attracting hundreds of viewers - with no promotion at all - it seems the unusual move is paying off.

Administration manager for United Auctions, Chris Forsharp, admits that the move is a gamble, but is

hopeful that the approach will prove popular.

He said: 'It came about when we had a look at our website and decided it needed a revamp.'

'As with any social medium, we'll have to see how it goes.'

'What we want to do is provide historic information and our customers would also like to see current

events. For example we could have videos of the Dalmlaly sale or whatever event we have.'

Farming isn't a profession you'd automatically associate with the internet or online social networking, so how did the company come up with the idea?

Chris said: 'We had a huge debate about this. In the end we said to ourselves; if

you ask a farmer if he'd like to see more pictures from an auction, he'd say yes. If you asked him if he'd like to see some videos, he'd say: "Oh, I'd quite like to see that."

'We've also got to think about younger farmers; probably 99 per cent of those guys are probably already on Facebook. While they may not be the decision makers now, they may be

one day in the near future.'

One avenue United Auctions are not keen to go down is conducting sales online.

Chris said: 'It's very much our preference to have people at the auctions; the atmosphere is a very big part of the sales.'

Breeding cattle in demand at Lochboisdale

UNITED Auctions held their annual sale of all classes of cattle at Lochboisdale Auction Mart last Thursday when 218 head were sold.

Cattle sold at favourable comparisons to current mainland values when the 142 bullocks averaged £525 and 169p per kilo (£597 and 181p in 2010) and the 86 heifers averaged at £484 and 161p per kilo (£514 and 169p per kilo in 2010).

Breeding and feeding cows were in keen demand.

Top priced bullocks came from 136 Stilligarry at £700 and heifers sold to £670 from the same home.

The top priced bullock per kilo came from 5 Dunganachy at 208pence and 1 Drimisdale led the heifers at 197pence.

Breeding cows from 9 Uachdar sold to £950.

Limousin bullock sells to 244.8p per kilo at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 655 stores, 76 breeding cattle and 112 Over 30 Month cattle at Dingwall last Wednesday when a good show of forward and grazing cattle met an extremely firm enquiry while plainer types proved more hesitant.

Bullocks averaged 168.6p and sold to 244.8p per kg for a 290kg Limousin cross from Dunmaglass Mains, Inverness, and £1,010 for a pen of 688kg Charolais crosses from Hilton, Tain.

Heifers averaged 160.9p and sold to 209.4p per kg for a 320kg Limousin cross from Wester Moy, Urray, and £900 for a 580kg Charolais cross and a 600kg Charolais cross from The Cloy, Fortrose.

Cow with heifer calves at foot sold to £1,220 for a Shorthorn cross from Craggiemore, Daviot, while cows with bull calves at foot sold to £1,450 for a Saler cross from Bogburn, Dingwall. In-calf cows sold to £1,320 for a Shorthorn cross from Craggiemore.

Heifers with heifer calves at foot sold to £1,080 for a Limousin cross from Birchwood, Dornoch and in-calf heifers sold to £1,000 for a Limousin cross from Bogburn.

Back of Keppoch Simmental heifers to 189p per kilo at Oban

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd sold 1,008 store hoggets and feeding ewes, plus 45 cattle at Oban Livestock Centre on Tuesday.

Bullock calves sold to £440 and 187p per kilo for a pen of Limousins from lochadar.

Heifer calves sold to £400 and 189p per kilo for a pen of Simmentals from Back of Keppoch.

Over 30 Month cows proved in demand and sold to £740 for a 725kg Simmental from Tumault while a Highland bull from Balure sold to £650.

Store hoggets sold to £69 for Suffolk crosses from Poltalloch, Kilmartin.

Ballmackillichan, Lismore sold Suffolks to £68 and

Mules to £65, with Auch Estates, Bridge of Orchy selling Blackfaces to £65. Swales from Glenoe Farms sold to £56, with Cheviots from Callart to £51.

Feeding ewes sold to £70 for Texels from lochdar while riggs from Lochawe also fetched £70.

Blackface ewes from Stroneskar sold to £52, as did Cheviots from Mangary. Texels from Barcardine sold to £68 with Mules from Ederline Estate to £63.

Cast rams sold to £72 for a Texel from Frakersaig, Lismore and to £70 for Texels from lochdar.

Border Leicesters from Lochawe and Cheviots from Knock fetched £69, with Bluefaced Leicesters from Glenshellach selling to £67.

Prime sheep trade eases at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 85 prime cattle and 741 prime sheep at Dingwall on Tuesday.

Prime bullocks averaged 166.2p (+0.2p) and sold to 176p per kg for a 630kg Charolais cross from Alanaha, Nairn, and £1,201.20 for a 715kg Charolais cross from Alanaha.

Prime heifers averaged 164.0p (-2.7p) and sold to 177.0p per kg for a 550kg Limousin cross from Castlecraig Farms, Nigg, and £1,167.60 for a 695kg Limousin cross from Cullaird Farm, Scaniport.

Lambs averaged 172.2p (-2.5p) and sold to 202.5p per kg and £81 for a 40kg Beltex cross from Woodside, Muir of Ord.

Caledonian prime rates rise on week

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd sold 240 prime cattle, 1724 prime lambs and 394 cast ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday.

Bullocks averaged 160p per kg and sold to 193.5p per kg (twice) for a Limousin from Blairgreen Farm, Saline and from Easter Auchtermuthill Farm, Muthill. A 705kg Limousin from Salinshaw Farm, Saline sold to £1252.

Heifers averaged 164.5p per kg and sold to 195.5p per

kg, for a 550kg British Blue, from Wester Thomaston Farm, Banknock and to £1145 for a 645kg Charolais from Wellhead Farm, Livingston.

Prime lambs averaged 183.44p (+4.13p on the week), selling to 220p for 40kg Beltex from DS and RC Taylor, Easter Ochtermuthill.

Ewes sold to £100 twice for Texels from Hallbeath Farms and High Auchensale.



The Highland cows' ability to produce a commercially viable first-cross calf has seen renewed interest in the breed as livestock producers review input costs 17_104COO01

International breeders bid to give Highland spring sale added lift

REPRESENTATIVES from Finland, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland have confirmed that they, and their cheque books, aim to boost the ringside buzz when the Highland Cattle Society host their 120th Annual Spring Show and Sale at Oban in two weeks time.

The Oban event comes at a time of encouraging trends for the breed, with 77 cattle, including seven young bulls, recently exported to Estonia.

This export project comes as a result of Kairo Pylviste's visit to the Oban sale two years ago when he purchased two bulls, including the reserve overall champion. Pleased with the success of the breed in Eastern Europe, the Estonians are keen to buy more Highlanders.

Overseas interest

Yearling and two-year old heifers from various well-known folds including Woodneuk, Ardbhan, Achnaoloch, Druimdearg, Pollock and Ashieburn

have joined bulls from Craigowmill, Ardbhan, Woodneuk, Pollock and Killochries in Estonia.

Society breed secretary Hazel Baxter said: 'It's great to see the interest from countries such as Estonia, the Czech Republic and France establishing links with the society and building on the already great contacts we have with Germany and Denmark.'

Society past president Andrew Kirkpatrick from Glengarnock, Ayrshire has

been appointed as judge for this year's Sunday show and he will have more than 160 head in front of him, including 47 pedigree bulls.

There will also three Oban show debuts for breeders from south of the border. The annual event kicks off a busy year for the breed society with two open days planned north and south of the border to maintain renewed interest in using Highland cows for first-cross calves using native or continental sires.

Market reports

LOCHMADDY Dingwall and Highland Marts

Bullocks up to 250kg 7 Nunton, Benbecula, 184.0p; 251-300kg Hastain, £580, 196.6p; 301-350kg Burnbank, Lochmaddy, £660, 191.3p; 351-400kg 4 Tigharry, Lochmaddy, £660, 180.8p; 401-450kg 7 Balranald, Lochmaddy, £730, 178.1p; 451-500kg 19 Baleshare, Lochmaddy £685, 1 Grenitote, Sollas, 163.4p.

Heifers up to 250kg - Hastain, £435, 13 Balmore, Lochmaddy, 180.0p; 251-300kg 1 Stilligarry, £520, 2/3 Clachan Sands, Lochmaddy, 176.9p; 301-350kg 7 Balranald, £610, 25 Balmore, Bayhead, 184.6p; 351-400kg 7 Balranald, £620, 1 Stilligarry, 178.4p

LOCHBOISDALE United Auctions

Bullocks Aberdeen Angus X: £625 (2) 301 Kilphedar £580 and £550 299 Kilphedar £545 15 Ormiclate £520 2 Drimisdale. Limousin X: £700, £690, £685 and £670(2) 136 Stilligarry £670 18 West Gerinish £650 136 Stilligarry £645, £635(2) and £605 18 West Gerinish £590 136 Stilligarry £575 18 West Gerinish £570 356 South Boisdale and 21 Griminish £560 MacSweens Dunganichy and 356 South

Boisdale £555 439/1 North Lochboisdale £550 MacSween Dunganichy (7) and 136 Stilligarry (2) £545 18 West Gerinish and 7 Eoligarry, Barra. Shorthorn X: £565 4 Kildonan £555 224 Stoneybridge. Simmental X: £665 and £630 344 North Boisdale £605 11 Howmore and 325 North Boisdale £585 438 North Lochboisdale £565 15 Bornish £560 325 North Boisdale £555 15 Bornish £540 328 North Boisdale, 91 Bualadubb and 8 Milton.

Heifers Aberdeen Angus X: £580 299 Kilphedar £570 44 Linique £560 299 Kilphedar £555 44 Linique £540 299 Kilphedar £505 15 Ormiclate. Limousin X: £670, £650 and £640 136 Stilligarry £630 8 Milton £600 356 South Boisdale and 7 Eoligarry, Barra £570 136 Stilligarry £565 8 Milton £560 136 Stilligarry £550 5 West Kilbride £550, £545 and £540 136 Stilligarry £530 5 Dunganichy and 136 Stilligarry £520 356 South Boisdale.

Simmental X: £610 348 North Boisdale and 8 Milton £590 1 Drimisdale £570 328 North Boisdale £560 1 Drimisdale £550 328 North Boisdale and 1 Drimisdale. 174.8p; 451-500kgs Hazleyshaw £835, 178.4p; 501-550kgs hallmyre Mains £880, Hazleyshaw 165.1p; 551-600kgs Shielhill £990, 166p; 601-650kgs Holehouse

Breeding cattle In calf cows: £950(2) and £800 9 Uachdar, Benbecula £710 202 Stoneybridge £700 15 Ormiclate. **Prices per kilo** **Bullocks**

Aberdeen Angus X: 198p and 187p 3 Milton. Limousin X: 208p(2) 5 Dunganichy 204p MacSweens Dunganichy and 7 Eoligarry, Barra 200p and 196p MacSweens Dunganichy 191p 18 West Gerinish 190p(3) MacSweens Dunganichy. Shorthorn X: 196p 202 Stoneybridge. Simmental X: 196p 253 Daliburgh 192p 15 Borinish.

Heifers Aberdeen Angus X: 176p 299 Kilphedar Limousin X: 196p 1 Airdhmuillinn 189p 5 Dunganichy 188p 5A Balla 187p 253 Daliburgh 185p 8 Milton. Simmental X: 197p and 193p 1 Drimisdale 189p 344 North Boisdale 187p 1 Drimisdale.

STIRLING United Auctions

Bullocks Up to 250kg Bankhead £350, 221.5p; 251-300kgs Bankhead £605, 202p; 301-350kgs Sorn Mains £645, Laight 188p; 351-400kgs Laight £705, 180.8p; 401-450kgs Hilltown of Ballindean £765, Bogside 174.8p; 451-500kgs Hazleyshaw £835, 178.4p; 501-550kgs hallmyre Mains £880, Hazleyshaw 165.1p; 551-600kgs Shielhill £990, 166p; 601-650kgs Holehouse

£1060, 166.7p; 651-700kgs Shielhill £1080, 157p; 701kgs + Hazleyshaw £1110, 155.5p.

Heifers Up to 250kgs Meikle hareshaw £505, Bankhead 163.4p; 251-300kgs Littleport £440, Bankhead 159.8p; 301-350kgs Laight £600, 176;

351-400kgs Chapelton £615, Laight £615, 137.1p; East Bangour (BF) £335, 106p, 185.2p; 301-350kg Shewglie Farm, Glenurquhart, 180.7p, 351-400kg Forsie, Thurso, £740, 192.2p; 401-450kg Wester Moy, £820, 189.8p; 451-500kg Glebe Farm, Kiltarilly, £880, Torgormack, Kirkhill, 189.1p; 501-550kg Forsie, £910, 178.4p; 551-600kg The Cloy, £995, Dunlichity Farm, 198.2p; over 601kg Hilton Farm, Tain, £1,000.

Heifers up to 250kg Dunmaglass, £450, 183.7p 251-300kg Dunmaglass, £510, Dunlichity Farm, 185.2p; 301-350kg Glebe Farm, £615, Dunmaglass, 177.8p; 351-400kg Torgormack, £770, 202.1p; 401-450kg Lyne of Urchany, Nairn, £790, Glebe Farm, 187.8p; 451-500kg Forsie, £850, 176.4p; 501-550kg Forsie, £840, 165.0p; 551-600kg The Cloy, 155.2p.

Sheep Store hoggets; Outerston (SuffX) £73; Victoria and Balhaldie (SuffX) £71; Harperstone (Mul), Victoria (TexX), Cruachan, Fullarton (SuffX) and £70; Tullochcan (TexX) £69; Belstruther (TexX) £68.50; East Shawtonhill

(TexX) £67; Place (Mul) £66; Dullator (Mul) £65; Glenkiln (BF) £60; Dullator (BF) £58.50; Place (BF) £57.50; Tullochcan (BF) £56.

DINGWALL

Dingwall and Highland Marts

Bullocks up to 250kg Dunlichity Farm, Farr, 189.2p; 251-300kg Dunlichity Farm, 198.2p; 301-350kg Shewglie Farm, Glenurquhart, 180.7p, 351-400kg Forsie, Thurso, £740, 192.2p; 401-450kg Wester Moy, £820, 189.8p; 451-500kg Glebe Farm, Kiltarilly, £880, Torgormack, Kirkhill, 189.1p; 501-550kg Forsie, £910, 178.4p; 551-600kg The Cloy, £995, Dunlichity Farm, 198.2p; over 601kg Hilton Farm, Tain, £1,000.

Heifers up to 250kg Dunmaglass, £450, 183.7p 251-300kg Dunmaglass, £510, Dunlichity Farm, 185.2p; 301-350kg Glebe Farm, £615, Dunmaglass, 177.8p; 351-400kg Torgormack, £770, 202.1p; 401-450kg Lyne of Urchany, Nairn, £790, Glebe Farm, 187.8p; 451-500kg Forsie, £850, 176.4p; 501-550kg Forsie, £840, 165.0p; 551-600kg The Cloy, 155.2p. Cows with heifer calf at

foot: ShorthornX: Bogburn, £1,200; HerefordX: Bogburn, £980; LimousinX: Distillery Houses, Carbost, Isle of Skye, £620.

Cows with male calf at foot: SimmentalX: Bogburn, £1,400; ShorthornX: Craggiemore, £1,200.

In-calf cows: ShorthornX: Bogburn, £1,250; SimmentalX: Bogburn, £1,220; ShorthornX: Craggiemore, £1,000.

In-calf heifers: SimmentalX: Ladystone Farmhouse, Crieff, £850.

Oban Caledonian Marts

Hoggets: SuffolkX: £69 Poltalloch, Kilmartin. Suffolk: £68 Ballmackillichan; Mule: £65 Ballmackillichan; Blackface: £65 Auch Estates; Swale: £56 Glenoe Farms; Cheviot: £51 Callart;

Ewes Texel: £70 lochdar. £68 Barcardine Blackface: £52 Stroneskair; Cheviot: £52 Mingary; Mules: £63 Ederline Estate; Riggs: £70 Lochawe.

Rams Texel: £72 Frakersaig. £70 Lochdar Blueface Leicester £67 Glenshellach; Border Leicester - £69 Loch Awe; Cheviot - £69 Knock;

LUING BULL, 7 years old, used to hill ground. Telephone 01301 704210.

PIGS FOR SALE Tamworth X, Old Spot 2 1/2 year old Sow, £200, 8 week old Weaners, £50 each, Also Boar for Hire. Tel 07771 588688 (Appin)

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The shape of things to come?



MUCH has been written and spoken about what the future might hold for Oban - and among those who have been considering the way forward is an award-winning student from the north-east of England. Paul Milner chose Oban as the study for his thesis on coastal town regeneration - and his efforts earned him top marks. He spoke to reporter STUART LAUNDY about his work.

AN award-winning student from the north east of England has drawn up a blueprint for what he considers to be the ideal Oban town centre of the future.

Paul Milner chose Oban for his thesis on urban design for coastal town regeneration.

His efforts earned him the only distinction when he graduated from Newcastle

University with a Masters in Urban Design.

Explaining why he chose Oban for his thesis, Paul, aged 25, explained: 'Having spent the last 20 years visiting and holidaying in Oban - throughout all seasons - this is an area I feel passionately for, and its decline over the years concerns me.'

He said the much publicised CHORD programme added

'a sense of realism' to his work to improve Oban town centre, although Argyll and Bute Council showed no interest in his project during its early stages.

Under Paul's plan, a series of 'poor quality' two-storey 1960s buildings - formerly Woolworths - on George Street would be torn down, along with the 1980s retail building at the South Pier. Other buildings on

Shore Street would also be demolished.

In their place, Paul envisages an Oban food court and indoor market, cafés and restaurants similar to those on the North Pier, a fish and meat market and small business units housed under one roof to encourage entrepreneurship.

The Esplanade would be expanded, as would the South Pier, to provide further development space, while the town centre would become more pedestrian-friendly.

'All buildings preserve key views to Kerrera, Mull and other landmarks, such as McCaig's tower,' he said.

The Black Lynn River also plays an important part in Paul's thesis.

The culvert would be removed, the river cleaned and a hidden a barrage installed at the sea entry point to control depth, which, he says would allow wildlife to flourish.



The shape of things to come? Student Paul Milner chose Oban as the subject for his thesis on 'urban design for coastal town regeneration'.

'As a result, public access and new routes would be introduced along the river,' he explained. 'There is no denying that parts of Oban have become 'tired'. My

thesis explored the reasons behind this. Obviously, elements of my regeneration framework for Oban may be deemed too ambitious. My proposal is purely

suggestive, outlining the attributes of Oban which are currently not being exploited to their full potential - or even at all.'

Paul, who lives in Whickham, Gateshead, said he hoped his ideas would spark discussion on the potential improvements that could be made to Oban town centre.



A revamped railway station forms part of Paul's thesis with buildings designed to both serve and lure passing commuters.

Black Lynn burn clean-up proposed

A PLAN is in place to improve the state of the Black Lynn.

The channel of water running down Oban's Stevenson Street is in line for a makeover thanks to the determination of town removals expert Graham MacQueen.

Graham said: 'The state of the Black Lynn is something that has bothered me for some time. The potential for these waters to be a feature of Oban that draws people to spend time in the town centre is immense.'

'I plan to work in conjunction with volunteers and with the permission of Argyll and Bute Council and owners to clean up the Black Lynn.'

'We will start by removing the Sycamore trees and other self-seeded trees that are



Plans are being drawn up to clean up the Black Lynn burn - which would play a more prominent role under student Paul Milner's plans for Oban.

damaging the walls. After that we imagine there will be repairs to do to the walls.

'We will then remove all the rubbish from the burn using a digger to clean out the floor of the burn.'

'At present we are seeking the appropriate permission of authorities to do all the work. But as we are willing

to do it for free and to a high standard, then I am sure there will be no problem.'

'I have had discussion with Scottish Natural Heritage and with Technical Tree Services who are willing to show their support.'

'So far estimates for the actual costs are in the hundreds rather than the

thousands and I think it is a job well worth doing.'

In the long run Graham envisages a walkway along the Black Lynn with a footbridge linking up the two sides of the street.

Volunteers to clean up the Black Lynn should contact Graham MacQueen on 01631 564848.

What do you think?

Email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk or leave your comments on Facebook.



A view of the South Pier esplanade, offering plenty of space for people to sit and enjoy the surroundings.



The main public space offering something for everyone, from those out for a lunchtime stroll to providing a stage for major events.

15 Years Ago

Those Were The Days

The Oban Times

Thursday, January 25, 1996

'Never on Sunday' says Camanachd Association

THE CAMANACHD Association has reminded shinty teams at all levels they cannot play on Sundays by ordering two junior South teams to replay two cup matches.

However, there is nothing in the rule-book that states as such.

Oban Camanachd is aggrieved it has been told to replay the semi-final of the Kenneth MacMaster Cup after both games had to be rescheduled for Sundays.

The semi-final games had to be rescheduled for different reasons and both teams contacted South Area Fixtures Secretary Alastair Campbell who told *The Oban Times*: 'They were scheduled for Saturdays and the teams asked me "when can we play, would it be alright on the Sunday?"

'I said, as long as I got a result it was alright by me.'

Referring to the executive's ruling, Mr Campbell said: 'It is a very strange decision. I think, like every other sport, it is time the

executive came into the 1990s, rather than staying in the 1920s or 1930s.

Investigation into high fuel costs

A MAJOR investigation into the social and economic impact on communities of historically high fuel prices in the Highlands and Islands has been commissioned by a broad-based alliance of local authorities and the area's development agency.

The survey is being funded by the Highlands and Islands Action Group on Fuel Prices, a new joint body representing all of the district and island councils in the area and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. HIE has committed £5,000 towards the £13,000 study, with the remaining costs to be divided among the local authorities.

Action group chairman, councillor Donald Nicholson of Western Isles Island Council, said he hoped the survey would assist an ongoing campaign to secure fair fuel prices in the Highlands and Islands.

He said petrol prices were on average

six pence a litre higher than elsewhere in Scotland.

Crofting row splitting communities

MOVES are afoot on Barra to address crofting land issues which are claimed to be splitting communities and families.

'We have a real problem here and we want it to be recognised in order that we can do something about it,' said Donald Manford, secretary of Castlebay Community Council and chairman of the Barra branch of the Crofters' Union.

One of the main problems is seen to be the release of crofting land for commercial developments.

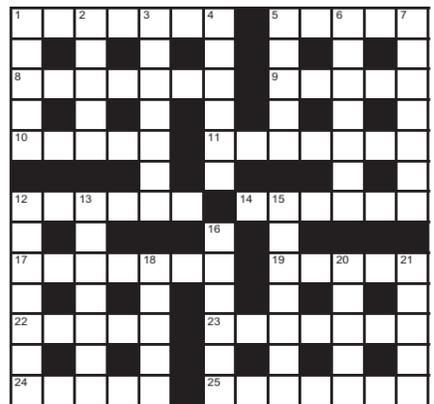
'In the past crofters have released land for developments but if it went wrong we lost both jobs and the land,' said Mr Manford.

Now the community council and members of the crofters' union on the island want to join forces with Comhairle Nan Eilean to set up a working group to look at crofting land issues.

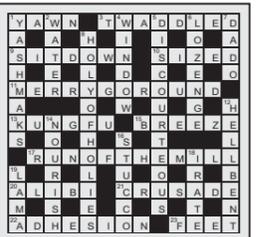
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- Across
- Taxi (7)
 - Groom carefully (5)
 - Posy (7)
 - Use to make photos look older (5)
 - Soul (5)
 - A linked group (7)
 - Vent (6)
 - Further than (6)
 - To rid of (6)
 - Dangerous waves (7)
 - Bouquet (5)
 - Relating to manner (5)
 - Severe (7)
 - Commendable quality (5)
 - Patella (7)

- Down
- Craze (5)
 - Japanese-American (5)
 - Related by birth (7)
 - Further than (6)
 - Place (5)
 - Better (7)
 - Gap for removal (7)
 - Ideal (7)
 - Crashing sound (7)
 - Long-ago period (4,3)
 - Antelope (3-3)
 - Divide between (5)
 - About sight (5)
 - Go over (5)



Last Week's Solution



Administration Assistant

Craobh Marina has a fulltime vacancy for an administration assistant. The duties include:

- Reception - dealing with boat owners, handling telephone calls and taking and recording payments
- Chandlery - assisting customers with purchases
- Administration - control of banking and petty cash maintenance of the sales ledger and credit control

Applicants with suitable clerical experience would be preferred but this is not essential as full training will be given.

Please send your CV to Jim Berry, Craobh Marina, Craobh Haven, By Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8UD

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£18,152 - £21,798 per annum

37.5 hours per week

Campbeltown Hospital

The Maintenance Craftsperson will be required to assist, through the Estates Operational Officer, in the provision of a reliable, responsive and cost effective maintenance program for the Hospitals and Healthcare Premises owned and operated by NHS Highland Argyll & Bute CHP. The post is based at Campbeltown Hospital and covers the Kintyre & Islay area. You will have completed a full term apprenticeship in an appropriate mechanical engineering or plumbing trade. Ideally you should possess a City & Guilds certificate or approved equivalent with appropriate experience in estates maintenance and installations. Experience of all types of mechanical and plumbing works with experience of multi skilled working is desirable as well as the proven ability to work as part of a small team. An ability to communicate with all levels of hospital operations staff is required. A working knowledge of Office Systems and Computerised Maintenance Management Systems is desirable. A current clean drivers licence is essential. You must live within 30 minutes of Campbeltown to participate with the Estates Emergency On-call rota. Informal enquiries to: Mr Kevin Willan, Estates Officer, Tel: 01546 605604. Application packs are available from HR Department, NHS Highland, Argyll & Bute CHP, Aros, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8LB - Tel: 01546 606788 (24 hour answering service) or Email: recruitment.lab@nhs.net Please quote the appropriate job reference. The closing date: 11 February 2011.

www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk

The Scottish Government

Loan Collection Supervisor

Tiree

£17,632 - £20,405

We currently have a vacancy for a Loan Collection Supervisor in the Crofters Commission office based in Crossapol, Tiree. A reserve list of successful applicants will be kept for additional A3 Casework Officer posts that may arise in the next 12 months. The role involves co-ordinating and overseeing the re-payment of loans made under the Crofter Building Grants and Loans Scheme. You will lead a team in the administration of all loan repayments and loan repayment plans whilst liaising with staff in Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate offices throughout the Highlands and Islands. You will be required to deal with a wide range of clients both out-with and within the Crofters Commission either by phone or via email. You will need to apply sound judgement skills in assessing loan repayment offers in accordance with procedures.

Casework Officer

Tiree

£15,792 - £17,632

We currently have a vacancy for a Casework Officer based in the Crofters Commission Office in Crossapol, Tiree. A reserve list of successful applicants will be kept for additional A3 Casework Officer posts that may arise in the next 12 months. The work will involve the receipt and processing of applications under the Crofter Housing Grant Scheme and liaising with staff in Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate offices throughout the Highlands and Islands. You will be required to deal with a wide range of clients both out-with and within the Crofters Commission either by phone or via email. You will need to apply sound judgement skills in assessing claims in accordance with procedures. Applicants, for either post, who do not meet the following minimum educational requirement, but who meet the remaining essential criteria will be invited to sit an administrative selection test. You must hold 5 Standard grades or GCSE (or equivalent) including English and a subject which clearly demonstrates numeracy. Passes must be at grades 1-3 or A-C. You will need to have good communication skills as well as the ability to plan and organise your work to meet deadlines. In addition, you will need to be able to build good working relationships with team members. You will have computer skills, including experience of Microsoft applications but as the scheme has its own dedicated software, training will be provided. These posts contribute to the Scottish Government National Outcome Environment. For information on Scottish Government National Outcomes visit: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/outcomes>. These are permanent and pensionable appointments. New entrants will normally start on the minimum of the pay range. Please note these posts attract an annual Scottish Distant Island Allowance which varies depending on marital status. Candidates with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for the appointments will be invited to interview. For further information and to apply online please visit <http://www.work-for-scotland.org>. Completed applications must be submitted by Thursday 10 February 2011. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified people and aim to employ a diverse workforce which reflects the people of Scotland. If you experience any difficulties accessing the Work for Scotland website, please contact HR Central Resourcing Unit on 0131 244 4073 or alternatively, write to Scottish Government, Central Resourcing Unit, S1 Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD. An Equal Opportunities Employer

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Deck Hand

Required for our 'Multicat' and based in Oban, this opportunity will suit an enthusiastic, hard worker with proven workboat or fish farming experience who is keen to develop their skills supporting a range of marine projects. Regular, short stays away from home will be required. Current sea crane, sea survival and first aid certificates would be beneficial as would a clean driving licence. Salary commensurate with experience. If interested please send your CV to The Business Services Manager, North West Marine Ltd, 7e Glengallan Road, Oban, Argyll. PA34 4HG or email to enquiries@northwestmarine.co.uk or call 01631 565740.

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Campbeltown

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We are seeking a highly motivated, enthusiastic professional person, with a flexible approach to work. We require the successful applicant to possess a pleasant, helpful and approachable manner. The successful applicant will be dealing directly with the general public and trade suppliers. In addition, we require the successful applicant to have the minimum skill set -

- Fully competent with all Microsoft office packages. [Excel/Word/Outlook.]
- Knowledge and clear understanding in accountancy and the process/procedures associated with such.
- Awareness of the SAGE 50 accounts programme.
- Good communication and planning skills for routing commercial vehicles.
- Awareness and willingness of Health and Safety requirements; implementing and maintaining RAMS and assisting with bespoke projects that periodically arise.
- Dealing directly with HMRC. [Involving duty rebates and RDCO forms.]
- Being able to think quickly and effectively to a changing situation, whilst remaining calm.
- Awareness and understanding of the fuel industry would also be advantageous.

This post brings a significant amount of responsibility and demands on the successful applicant. You will require to be flexible in terms of hours worked. Weekend work is also requested and required. It is also a requirement of the position that the successful applicant would be an effective deputy in the absence of the owner from time to time. In short, we are looking for an excellent 'all rounder'. If you feel that you have these qualities and would like to work in a Campbeltown business, we would naturally welcome your application. T&C will be discussed at interview stage only. Please apply to - alan.shaw@dmcnairshipping.com, attaching your CV to email. Or via regular mail to - Mr. Alan G. Shaw, D.McNair & Son, Kinloch Road, CAMPBELTOWN. PA28 6EG.

CKD Galbraith

HEAD GARDENER

Required for coastal Estate on Isle of Islay. Responsibility for new garden development and maintenance of Estate grounds. All round horticultural experience essential. Accommodation available in Estate cottage plus competitive salary and benefits. Please send CV and covering letter by e-mail, fax or post to Debra Maclean, CKD Galbraith, Reay House, 17 Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness, IV2 3HF fax: 01463 243234 debra.maclean@ckdgalbraith.co.uk

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Closing date: 11 February 2011.

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Qualified/part qualified accountant and experienced bookkeeper required

Jean Ainsley & Co has clients from all over the west coast including all the islands. We are currently seeking suitable candidates to work in our team as the practice grows. Experience in an accountancy practice would be an advantage for the accountant and experience of line 50 SAGE and working to deadlines would be essential for both posts.

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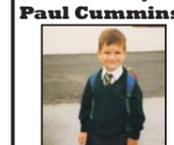


Love Mum, Neil, Martin, Ruairaidh and Liam.x

ROSIE MCGILLIVRAY

I would like to thank all my family and friends for all the lovely presents and for making my 40th birthday weekend a memorable weekend. A special thanks to Crooked Reel, Dodgy Ground and Ballochmyle for all the fabulous music.

Happy 18th Birthday Paul Cummins.



Lots of Love Mum, Dad, Thomas and Emma

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BIRTHS

KENNEDY - Lorne and Louise are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Lucy Joan, born January 7, 2011, a wee sister for Cailin and Fraser.

ORR - Stewart and Heather (née Muir) are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Daisy Erin at RAH Paisley on January 14, 2011. A little sister for Rowan and beautiful second grand-daughter for Johnny and Janet and Denis and Jeanette. Sincere thanks to Oban midwives.

DEATHS

DAVIE - Peacefully at Belford Hospital on January 17, 2011, Margaret Davie of 46 Glenkingie Street, Caol, loving mum, granma and great granma. Sadly missed.

FRASER - Peacefully at home in Braes, Isle of Skye on January 19, 2011, Laura, beloved wife of Simon and mother of Donald and Alice. Thanks are due to the many friends and medical professionals who helped during Laura's long illness. Cremation held at Inverness crematorium on Wednesday January 26, 2011. Donations if desired to Macmillan Cancer Support, Ground Floor, Unit 4, Scotstown Road, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen AB23 8HD.

GILLESPIE - Alex McLellan, peacefully surrounded by his loving family, at St Margaret of Scotland Hospice, on Monday, January 24, 2011, Alex, a beloved husband to Nancy, dearly loved dad to Alex and Donald, granda to Ethan and father-in-law to Tracy. Funeral Service at Glasgow Crematorium, Maryhill, on Saturday, January 29, at 11:30am.

HITE - on January 17, 2011 at Ashkam House, Doddington, Cambridgeshire Catherine Elspeth Agnes (previously Tovell, nee Ross) Formerly of Wimblington, Cambridgeshire born Helmsdale, Scotland, June 6 1913, daughter of Rev A M and Mrs M Ross, later of Free High Manse, Oban, aged 97years. Dearly loved wife of William (Bill), loving mother of Peter Tovell, Philip Tovell (deceased), and William and Margaret Hite, devoted grandmother of Georgina, Wendy, Victoria, and Ruth, Great grandmother of Philip, Isabella and Gabriella. Funeral service at St Peter's Church Wimblington today Thursday January 27, 2011 at 12.30pm followed by interment in St Mary's Churchyard Doddington. No Flowers Please. Donations for St Peter's Church Wimblington Fabric Fund May be made at the service or sent to Turner and Son, Independent Funeral Directors City Road, March, Cambs, PE15 9LS.

KAHANE - Peacefully at Rivendell Care Home, Brinam on January 21, 2011, Anne Merrilees, aged 87 years (née Robieson) MBE, MA, FSA Scot (formerly of Kilmartin and Lochgilphead) widow of Jacques, mother of Mathew and Clare, grandmother of Victoria, Sarah, Jane, Sofia and Shahzoda, step-granmother of Muhammad. Funeral service has taken place.

MACCORMICK - Jill Margaret, much loved wife and friend of Coll, loved daughter in law of Dugie and Dorothy (Campbeltown, Scotland). Loved sister in law of Neil and Maureen (Prestwick, Scotland), Euan and Margo (Perth, Scotland). Loved Auntie Jill of Duncan and Marie. Messages to Etal Creek, 1 RD, Otatau 9689, Macdonald and Weston Funeral Home.

MACDONALD - Peacefully at Belford Hospital on January 7, Jane (Jean), 86years, wife of Alex MacDonald, 25 Nevis Road, Inverlochty. The family would like to thank Glen Mor Surgery, staff of Belford Hospital, friends and neighbours for all their kindness and professional help throughout Jean's long illness. Donations at the church raised £459 in aid of Heart Start.

MACMILLAN - (Effie), Peacefully at Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow, on Wednesday January 19, 2011, beloved wife to the late Alasdair MacMillan, much missed mother of Mairi, Angus, Marion, Donald, Kenneth, much loving Grandmother and Great Grandmother and dear sister to Isabel. Our lady of Lourdes pray for her

MACDONALD - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on January 20, 2011, aged 91 years, Robert McDonald "Bob" of Minard, Argyll. Funeral will take place at Lochfyneside Parish Church, Minard on Friday January 28 at 11am. No flowers please. Donations if desired for Oxfam, c/o Hamish Hoey & Son Funeral Directors, 37-39 Stevenson Street, Oban, Argyll PA34 5NA

McKERRELL - Peacefully at Islay Hospital on Thursday, January 20, 2011, Mary (née MacLachlan) aged 77 years, of Ronnachmore Farm, beloved wife of Donald, loving mother and mother-in-law of Nigel and Sylvia. A dear sister, sister-in-law and aunt. Sorely missed by all the family. Interred in Bowmore Cemetery, Islay, on Tuesday, January 25, 2011.

POWELL - Grace (née Kerr) of 'Cumbrae', Grosvenor Crescent, Connel, died peacefully, following a major heart attack, at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, Clydebank, on Monday, January 17, 2011, aged 79. Helen Grace Powell, beloved wife of Harry (married in 1956), much loved mother of Anne and David, daughter-in-law Janet and a dear grandmother to Jenny, James and Maxwell, is sadly missed by these and other relatives and very many friends. Grace was a science graduate of Glasgow University and had arranged that her body would go to the Faculty of Medical and Life Sciences there, for teaching and research purposes; this has been done. A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Grace will be held in St Oran's Church, Connel, on Thursday evening February 17 at 6.30pm. Refreshments available afterwards in Connel Village Hall. There will be a retiring collection at the church for Cancer Research Scotland and Macmillan Nurses if you wish to contribute. All friends are invited to attend.

SHELDRIK - Peacefully at Kintyre Care Centre on January 19, 2011, Joan Sheldrick in her 83rd year, Port Ban, Kilberry, by Tarbert. Dearly beloved wife of the late David Sheldrick and loving mother of Jonathan, Peter, Mark, Nigel, Vrecka, Cheryl, Morar, Fiona, Jeanette, Timothy and Elenor. Sadly missed. Celebration Service was held at Church of Scotland, Lochgilphead on Saturday, January 22nd followed by interment at Achnabreac Cemetery. "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHALMERS - The family of the late Mrs Olive Chalmers would like to thank all family and friends for their messages of condolences and floral tributes and to all those who attended the church and graveside. Thanks to the Rev Catherine Knott for her support and comforting service and to D and A Munn for their excellent and dignified funeral arrangements. Finally a very special thank you to Dr Wilson and the Lorn Medical Practice, the staff at the North Argyll Home and the Doctors and Nurses at Lorn and Islands Hospital, all of whose care, support and attention over many years has been most appreciated. The retiring collection was donated to the North Argyll Home.

DAVIE - Billy and family would like to thank all who attended the service and graveside at his mum's funeral. Special thanks to Ewen at MacLellan & Co for help and comfort, Rev Chris MacRae for a lovely service, also to Mr Sedgewick and the wonderful staff at the Belford Hospital for their loving care and attention to Margaret. The sum of £396 was collected at the church and was donated to the Step Down Unit at Belford Hospital.

FERGUSON - the family of the late Jessie Ferguson wish to express their sincere gratitude to all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many expressions of sympathy extended to them by way of cards, letters, calls, floral tributes and all those from near and far who paid their last respects at the church and graveside. Sincere thanks to Dr Bickle, Karen MacLean, Mairi Wilson for their support and assistance. A special thank you to Rev Jackie Petrie for her comforting service, church elders, all those who contributed to the funeral arrangements and to the ladies who provided the refreshments at the church annexe.

MACMILLAN - The family of the late Effie MacMillan (née Campbell) would like to thank the medical and nursing staff of the Western Isles and Greater Glasgow and Clyde hospitals, including hospital Chaplaincy, for their unfailing kindness and professional care during her short illness. We would also like to give special thanks to our neighbours in Dalburgh West and relatives and friends who travelled from near and far. Also thanks for messages of condolences, cards, donations and floral arrangements, following the family's recent sad loss. We wish to extend particular thanks to Fr. Brendan Murdtagh and for

all who attended the Rosary Service at the Chapel of Rest, Cockburn Funeral Directors, Glasgow. Special thanks, to Fr. Roddy McAuley, Fr. Wilhelm Kursawa and Paul McCallum, who presided at the Reception of the Remains at St. Peters, Dalburgh, South Uist; Fr. Roddy Mc Auley, Fr. Calum Mac Lellan, Fr. Michael MacDonald and Fr. John Paul Mac Kinnon who concelbrated the Gaidhlig requiem Mass and Deacon Martin Matheson; Fr. Ross Crichton and Canon Angus Mac Queen for their spiritual support; the organist, choir, soloists Mrs. Peggy Campbell and Mrs. Catriona Garbutt, altar servers, passkeepers and sacristians. Also thanks to Alex and Neil Mac Intyre of Mac Intyre Memorials, Glasgow and Uist, Archie Walker and his staff at Hallan Cemetery, Heartfelt thanks to Ragnhall and Raonaid Mac Kinnon and assistants for their remarkable and efficient organisation, catering for many people at the South End Community Hall, a true reflection of the Uist community generosity. The Holy Sacrifice of Mass will be offered for the intentions of all. Fois shiorruidh their dhi, a Thighearna.

ROBERTSON - The family of the late George Robertson would like to thank family, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy, flowers, cards, phone calls and prayers at this very sad time. A special thanks to all doctors at the Lorn Medical Centre, especially Doctor Muguguruswamy, also to Hilary Brown, Sonaoid, Carol and all the nurses who attended George. Sincere thanks to Canon McKay for a comforting service and to all those who attended the service and graveside from near and far. To Catriona Hoey for her professional services and to the staff of Soroba House, we send our thanks. The generous sum of £344 was collected for Cancer Research and a family donation was made to Macmillan Nurses.

SIMPSON - Fiona would like to thank all friends for their support, letters, cards and floral tributes following her sad loss of John. Sincere thanks to the Doctors and staff at the Lorn & Islands Hospital A&E, a special thanks to Alan Reilly, John MacAlister and Colin Johnston. Thanks to Rev. Ken Ross for his prayers and his comforting service. Thanks also to Ian MacInnes of D and A Munn for his kindness and support to me when arranging the funeral for John my husband, friend and soulmate. Forever remembered.

MEMORIALS

BIRCH - Betty Strang (née Henry) at rest January 30, 1998, the perfect wife of Peter. Always in my thoughts. **KELLY** - In loving memory of my dear daughter and our sister, Flora Elizabeth, who died on January 31, 1988. R.I.P. Time wont heal the heartache Nor stop a silent tear Nor dim the treasured memories Of one we loved so dear Our Lady of the Isles pray for her. - Mother and Brothers, 118 Kilmallie Road, Caol. **KIRKPATRICK** - In loving memory of a dear wife and loving mother, Rachel McInnes, who died on January 21, 1974. Also sons Billy, died September 11, 1990 and John, died on July 1, 1996. Treasured memories. - From all the family. **KIRSOP** - With much love we remember John, who died January 25, 2007. - Mary and family. **LIVINGSTONE** - In memory of my dear husband John who died January 25, 2001. Fondly remembered. - Helen. **MACBAIN** - In loving memory of a dear mother, mother-in-law and granny, Morag (née MacDonald), who passed away on January 30, 2010. Loved and remembered always. - John, Donald, Sine and families. **MACDONALD** - Precious memories of David Hepburn (Davie), who passed away on January 26, 2001. Miss you and love you always. - Margaret, Elspeth, David, Roslyn and Ewan. Gentle Jesus up above Please give Grandpa all our love. - Kyle, Emma and Ally. **MACDONALD** - In loving memory of our dear mother, mother-in-law and devoted granny, Kate who passed away January 27, 2009. Close in our hearts you will always stay Loved and remembered everyday. - Morag, John and families. **MACDONALD** - Annie Kate (née MacLennan), darling wife and mother, sadly taken from us one year ago today. We will love and cherish you forever. - Bobby, Kristina and Etta. **MACINNES** - In loving memory of our dear parents Effie who died January 31, 2007 and John Lachlan who died April 2, 1988. Loved and remembered always. - Hugh, Mary Ellen Christine and families.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of our dear dad and grandpa Neil, who passed away January 29, 2007. Loved and remembered always. - Catherine, Billy and Andrew, Kilmacollm and Alison and Scott, Johnstone. **McLACHLAN** - In loving memory my dear husband, Ian, passed away January 29, 2005. Forever in my thoughts Always in my heart - Christine xx. Simply the best dad and grandad. - Colin, Angela, Julie, and Billy.xx **POULTON** - Treasured memories of my dad Chris who died on January 30, 2006. Never more than a thought away Loved and remembered every day. - From Hannah, Bunessan, Isle of Mull. **POULTON** - In memory of my friend, Chris, who died January 30, 2006. Remembered always and sadly missed. - Catriona. **RUSSELL** - Mary, remembering with much love, our dear mum and nana who died January 29, 2010. Though absent you are very near Still loved, still missed and very dear. - Mhairi, Ian, Katy, Fiona and Morven xx

RUSSELL - In loving memory of our dear sister Mary, who passed away January 29, 2010. Loved and remembered always. - Margaret, Catriona and families. **RUSSELL** - Everlasting precious memories of our lovely mum and nana, Mary, passed away January 29, 2010. There may come a time, we'll see, with no more tears When love will not break out hearts, but set us free Our heavy hearts uplifted, for you've cleared the road ahead And you walk life's journey with us in gentle loving tread. Love you always. - Kirsty, Rebecca, Scottie and Callan xx

WILMER - In loving memory of Bert Wilmer I think of you every day mate and the gap you left never gets any smaller. God bless mate. - Lee.

GRADUATIONS

Kirsty Anne McNiven graduated from the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, with the degree of Bachelor of Nursing (Adult Nursing) Kirsty is a former pupil of Bowmore Primary School and Islay High School, Bowmore. She is the daughter of proud parents John and Sheila, sister to John and Grand daughter to Bill and Cathie Crookes, Strontian and of the late Flora McNiven Bowmore, Islay. Prior to Kirsty's graduation she took up a post in the Neuro Surgical Ward at the Kings College Hospital, London.

Graduated from Stirling University with a BSc in adult nursing. Amanda Louise Kerr - Daughter of John and Morag, North Connel and granddaughter of Willie and the late Flora Kerr North Connel and Gillian and the late Stewart McKenzie formerly of Furnace.

Mairi Morag Stewart, daughter of Morag A Stewart, Scotstown, Strontian and Donald Stewart, graduated from the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, in December, 2010, with a Bachelor of Nursing Degree. She is currently working in Lewisham Hospital, London.

WEDDINGS

MCCALLUM - MACLAUCHLAN Kirsteen, only daughter of William and Colleen, Maudsalc, to Alasdair, elder son of Donald and Margaret, Strachur, on April 10, 2010 in Tarbert Loch Fyne Village Hall by Humanist Celebrant Annie Loughlin. A lovely sunny day enjoyed by everyone.

MEMORIALS

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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



Pictured at Glenforsa Airstrip are John MacLean an elder at Mull Free Church with flying preacher Murdo Murchison before he flew back home via Cumbernauld.

Preacher's flying visits!

THE FREE Church on Mull has found a novel way of getting a preacher for its bi-weekly services - they fly him in. John MacLean, an elder at Mull Free Church, said: 'Mr Murchison has been in a couple of times recently giving pulpit supply to Lochdon Free Church and hopes to come in again, weather permitting. He has his own business selling cars and petrol at Doune. Flying is one of his hobbies.'

Science and sailing key to future of Loch Etive

THE final reports on the proposed Loch Etive Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZM) have been published. Now available on the Argyll and Bute Council website, the consultation report compiles all the responses and comments made during the consultation process and the council's response to those, including whether or not there have been any changes to the plan.

The proposed final Loch Etive ICZM Plan has also been presented so that the changes made can be viewed as 'tracked' changes. Among the more notable alterations is the recognition of the importance of marine science both locally at Dunstaffnage and across Argyll and Bute. **Growth potential** The report states that there is 'significant growth potential' for recreational sailing and marine leisure tourism at Dunstaffnage Bay. It states: 'Any proposed increase in the number of pontoon berths available at Dunstaffnage Marina would need to ensure that safe navigation in and out of Dunstaffnage Bay and the use of existing private moorings is not compromised.'

Cultural importance There is also increased recognition of any sites of cultural importance that would be sensitive to any potential developments in their vicinity. The plan and consultation report will now be taken to the Oban, Lorn and Isles Area Committee Business day on February 9 and to Argyll and Bute Council on March 3, where both will be considered for adoption as supplementary guidance to the authority's Local Plan. Both the proposed final plan and the consultation report can be viewed online at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/lochetic

Awards presented to yacht cadets

THE Western Isles Yacht Club cadets held their prize giving for the 2010 season on Friday, January 21, at Tigh Solas, Tobermory. Lucy MacKenzie, from Ballygowan, presented the trophies. Best girl cadet was Emma Hall; best boy cadet was Liam Bryce. Most improved cadet was William Howard and best novice cadet was Murdo MacLennan. Francis Sykes donated a new trophy in memory of his late father, Major Bryce Edwards. This was presented to the most promising cadet, Mairi Nonhebel. The commodore, Neil MacInnes, gave grateful thanks to John Howard their instructor, the helpers throughout the season and the Tobermory Harbour Association for use of facilities and the second safety boat.



Mairi Nonhebel, William Howard, Murdo MacLennan were among the prize winners.

ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION Sunday 30 January 2011 Epiphany 4 St John's Cathedral, Oban *Candlemas* Holy Communion.....08.00 Choral Mattins.....10.15 Sunday School and Creche Parish Eucharist.....11.30 Loop System Large Print Hymn Books All Welcome Norman MacCallum, Provost. (01631) 562323 St Columba, Gruline, Mull Mattins.....11.00 St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona Holy Eucharist.....10.00

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN Campbell Street Church Sunday 30 January 2011 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Phone-In 'Worship Link' available Rev. Archie McPhail MA, MTh (01631) 567076 All welcome

LORN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP Sunday Oban High School Main Hall 10:30am All Welcome Telephone 07836 342 622 www.lorncf.org.uk

CHARITY DONATIONS

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 Scotland Suite 1/1, Unit 4 Blair Court Clydebank Business Park Clydebank, G81 2LA

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Warriors and Oban Saints Boys sit joint top of winter league

Development continues for P1s and P2s at Oban High School

ON SUNDAY the Oban Express Primary Football League continued with its winter programme and had all formats playing on an enjoyable day.

The P1 and P2s carried on with their development in the indoor arena playing their frantic Fun Fours with the junior P3 and P4 outside with their 7 a side league along with the seniors.

Stablemates

Over in the senior league the team of the day had to be Lochgilhead Wolves who opened their fixtures with a match against their older stablemates the Warriors but found themselves one down through a Ciaran McPhie effort. However the

Wolves rallied and scored a deserved equaliser from a corner which Warriors failed to clear and the ball bobbed into the net.

After that excellent result against the league leaders Wolves marched to a three goal lead against Lochnell with Brody Kalache and Kian Francis scoring before a terrific Angus Lewis free kick. Two late goals from Lochnell's Stewart McAllister ensured a nervous finish but the Wolves held on.

A further three points were secured with a single goal from Kian Francis just before half time in their match with Thistle to cap a fine day. Stoddarts kept up their

FOOTBALL

challenge at the top, scoring nine without reply in their two matches against Lochnell and Tralee with Danny MacViccar and Lomond MacPherson amongst their scorers.

Challenge

Saints Boys (under 11's) also kept up their challenge with Daniel McCuish and Lewis Buchanan finding the net against Tralee who then scored a late goal through Lewis Reeves to ensure a nervous finish but the Saints held on.

The Saints Boys picked up three points against Thistle with Bepe Lopez scoring the



Action from the junior league match between Pumas (black and white) and Saints. 15_104prim01



Spartak had an enjoyable day at the Fun Fours in the Oban High School games hall. 15_104prim02

Portsmouth competition

ARCHERY

OBAN and Lorn Archers are again holding their annual Open Portsmouth competition at Atlantis Leisure on Sunday January 30 with entries coming from throughout Scotland.

The competitors range from beginners to experienced international archers including Kyle Dods who represented Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in India last year.

The competition is run over two sessions, the morning one at 10am and the afternoon one at 1.30pm.



Lorn Volleyball Club held an open day at Atlantis Leisure last Saturday. The club is open to beginners as well as experienced players and meets at the leisure centre every Thursday between 6pm and 8pm. 15_104volley01

only goal of the match in a tight encounter.

The Warriors had started the day as league leaders and after their earlier draw found themselves up against both Saints teams and recorded an important victory over their nearest challengers Saints Boys. But in the game of the day Saints Under 12's opened the scoring through Duncan MacDougall but the Warriors showed their battling spirit and equalised through Ciaran McPhie.

The game swung from end to end with both teams looking for the winner and with time running out Saints Zander Kilmurray pounced to stroke the ball into the net and inflict the Warriors first defeat of the season.

Lochnell secured an important victory over Stoddy Boys thanks to a solo effort from Micheal Strathern but Stoddy's got themselves back on track with a win at Tralee.

At the half way stage of the senior winter league, the Warriors and Saints Boys sit joint top on 19 points with both Stoddarts and the Wolves three points behind.

Oban Saints have brought themselves back into contention with that important win over the Warriors and sit a further three points behind with all to play for in the coming weeks.

The next meeting is Sunday January 30 once again at the Community Pitch.

Rockfield reach regional finals

FOOTBALL

ROCKFIELD Primary School have reached the regional finals of the Scottish Schools Football Association Junior Seven-a-side competition.

The Oban youngsters cruised through the area finals at Ferguslie Sports Centre in Paisley last Friday, winning all four games and losing only one goal in the process.

In the first game Rockfield defeated Barsail Primary

School from Erskine 1-0 thanks to a goal from Beppe Lopez.

The next game was against Gourcock side Moorfoot with the Oban lads winning 3-1 with Daniel MacCuish (2) and Lewis Buchanan netting for Rockfield.

Opposition

St Joseph's Primary School from Greenock were the next opposition for the Oban boys with the local lads winning 3-0. Again Daniel MacCuish

with a double and Lewis Buchanan were the scorers.

The last game of the day saw a Beppe Lopez goal good enough to defeat Arthurlie Primary School from Barrhead 1-0.

The Rockfield boys topped their group and now go forward to the regional finals which will be held in March.



The successful Rockfield team pictured with coaches John Scott and Scott Buchanan. Also in the picture is mascot Ruairidh Buchanan.

Reasonable conditions at Lochaber winter sports resorts

WINTER SPORTS

LOCHABER'S two winter sports resorts are still reporting reasonable conditions despite a lack of recent snowfall.

At Glencoe, Main Basin and Happy Valley have an excellent cover of soft snow, while Spring Run is open also with lovely cover.

Plateau Poma Uprack is complete as is Mugs Alley, which is thin, narrow and icy at the burn hole, which is for access only. All other lower slopes are patchy and broken.

Rannoch Glades is open with icy patches on entry but good cover once in. The

Wall, top and middle sections are nice with soft snow, but lower down is a bit thin and tricky.

Soft Snow

Nevis Range reports very good skiing on soft snow with Goose, Summit and Warrens runs complete. For snowboarders, the summit terrain park has a table top, two rails and a medium kicker in place.

Lower runs thin and narrow, but beginners can use the artificial slope which has small patches of snow.

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North Connel win back the Holland Memorial Cup

NORTH Connel Bowling Team won back the Robert and Gary Holland Memorial Cup at the rinks in North Connel Hall recently.

The winning team is pictured with finalists Kilmore who braved difficult weather conditions to take part in the competition, along with seven other teams, that made it through the snow that night.

The North Connel Open Pairs are being held this Saturday in North Connel Hall and the club would be delighted to see as many taking part as possible.

If you would like to enter please telephone 01631 720506.



First shinty back on the ball

SHINTY

THE third round of First Shinty took place recently at Atlantis Leisure. Below are the scores from all three leagues and the tables.

0; Salen 1, Taynuilt 0; Rock Rockets 0; Ben Lora 4; Salen 0, Park Sparkies 2; St Columba 1, Rockfield Rovers 4; Taynuilt 1, Ben Lora 1; Rock Rockets 0, Park Sparkies 2; Ben Lora 5, St Columba 0.

The next session will take place on February 13.

'A' League	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Columba Park	18	8	7	3	31	20	41
Achadh Na Creige Rockfield	18	7	5	6	29	29	37
'B' League	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Columba	12	8	0	4	16	10	28
Taynuilt	12	7	0	5	18	10	26
Lochnell	12	3	0	9	7	21	18
'C' League	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ben Lora	18	13	5	0	28	8	49
Rockfield Rovers	18	12	3	3	29	7	45
Park Sparkies	18	9	4	5	24	13	40
St Columba	18	7	4	7	19	22	36
Taynuilt	18	4	6	8	15	15	32
Salen	18	4	1	13	10	28	27
Rockfield Rockets	18	2	1	15	3	35	23

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Lochaber up for clash with Reds

'I don't think we need much incentive to play Highland'

Lochaber 60 Inverness Craig Dunain 0
LOCHABER are up to third in the Caledonia League 2 North West after a fine 60-0 win over Inverness Craig Dunain on Saturday – but coach Charlie Donaldson says his team must improve to have any hope of upsetting league leaders and rivals Highland Reds at Inverness on Saturday.

The fixture is arguably Lochaber's most important of the season and is the return leg of Banavie clash in October when Lochaber scored a memorable victory, but at the cost of a career-ending injury to captain Blair McRaid.

'I don't think we need a lot of incentive to play Highland,' Donaldson told The Oban Times.

'But if we don't put the structure back into our play that we had before the prolonged break I think we will be found wanting at times.'

'The game is definitely winnable, but we will have to be at the top of our game to beat Highland because they will be out for revenge after their last outing down here.'

Recycle
'Our defence will have to be sound and we will have to recycle the ball much quicker at the breakdown point than what we were doing against Craig Dunain.'

'We will have to be a bit more streetwise in attack and take it up the middle of the park a bit more. If we keep working and winning the hard yards, the breaks will

RUGBY

come. They should on paper be the better team, but if we can frustrate them enough and we bring out best game we can win.'

Against Craig Dunain, Lochaber ran in four tries before the break to lead 29-0 and stepped up the pace in the second half to score five more.

Stand off Kenny Turnbull was again outstanding, while 16 year-olds Chris Simpson, who scored the first try, and Jocky McCook look fine prospects for the future.

Biggest cheer of the day came late in the first half when a Kenny Turnbull break saw veteran forward Iain Smith pick up and dive over for his first competitive



Rory MacKay takes on the Craig Dunain defence. 10. fo4rugby04

try, he told The Oban Times, in over 20 years. Kenny Turnbull and Kiwi Tristan Sanders also added tries.

In the second half Lochaber gave others squad members a run out but for the first 20 minutes they struggled

to find any rhythm. Further changes seemed to do the trick and Sanders went on to score three more tries whilst young Jack Baxter, brother of scrum half Tom, scored two for the forwards. Man of the match was hooker Rory

MacKay for good solid work all game, and winning a few against the head.

Team: I. Smith, R. MacKay, W. Stuart, A. Reviett, P. Fronczek, C. MacPherson, C. Simpson, B. Thomas, T. Baxter, K. Turnbull, T.

Sanders, S. Traill, K. Garrick, J. McCook, R. Wallace, C. Moorehouse, J. Baxter, I. Ireland, D. Maclean

Tries: T. Sanders (4), J. Baxter (2), K. Turnbull + 1 pen, 6 conversions, C. Simpson, I. Smith.

Fort drawn at home to Strathspey

FOOTBALL

FORT WILLIAM have drawn Strathspey Thistle at home in the first round of the Foster's Highland League Cup on March 19.

Should Fort overcome the Jags, a tough away quarter-final tie awaits at either Cove Rangers or Deveronvale on April 2.

Livercaol back in pole position

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LIVERCAOL have moved back to the top of the Ali Young Winter League after beating second-bottom Crazy Crofter 3-1 at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

Goon Squad were dethroned following their 1-1 draw with an improving Caley Jags side.

Lochaber Leisure still head the pack chasing the top two after their 3-3 draw with Caol who stay in fifth.

All Trades managed a 2-1 win over Achintore FC, whilst Funky Five warmed up for their match against Livercaol this weekend by beating HW Energy 2-1. NGTW, meanwhile, narrowly lost 2-1 to Ballachulish.

Underdogs are now the 'top dogs'

TEN-PIN BOWLING

UNDERDOGS have leap-frogged Alleycats to become the new leaders of the scratch division of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten-pin bowling league at the Nevis Centre.

They now have 44 points after defeating British Legion 5-0. Alleycats are one point behind after their 3-2 victory over Council, who sit in third.

Underdogs are still two points ahead of Alleycats at the top of the handicap division after both teams won their matches 3-2. Likely Lads moved into third, but are 15 points behind the leaders.

Top team games of the week went to Council with 593 scratch, 815 handicap.

Council's Colin Pinkett got the best scratch game with 172, while best handicap game was the Will-O-Bees' James Chiverton with 239 (167 scratch). Top scratch series went to Tony Whitelocke of Alleycats with 300.

Alleycats' Pam Weller still holds the top scratch average with 142.7 with team-mate Tony Whitelocke just behind on 142.1.

Gary aims to win Six Days Trial

KINLOCHLEVEN trials ace Gary MacDonald has taken his place alongside other top riders lining up in this year's Scottish Six Days

Trial from May 2 to May 7. The motorbike spectacular is celebrating its 100th year and will see riders take on 30 stages each day – 180 in all

– over some of Lochaber's wildest terrain in a gruelling test of skill and endurance.

MacDonald, already a veteran of the competition at 27, is desperate to reclaim the coveted trophy for Scotland – but to do that he will have to outperform the world's best in the sport.

The Lochaber man, Scottish champion and British Expert 'A' champion, was always in contention in 2010 and just missed out on a podium place after running third at one stage.

His ongoing success guaranteed him automatic entry to this year's trial – and now MacDonald says he will do all he can to ensure home fans are celebrating at the finish in Fort William on the Saturday.

'I was fifth overall, only 10 marks off the winner last year and best Gas Gas rider last year,' MacDonald told The Oban Times.

'If you get the roll of the rocks and everything goes for you and I can ride well I will be in with a chance – but

SIX DAYS TRIAL

one mistake and that's it.'

Some 270 competitors have had their entries confirmed for the event after a ballot of riders hoping to take part in Scotland's top trials event.

Lochaber and District MC entrants include Michael Fothergill and Neil MacNiven, while Frank Mackle and David Moffat of Inverness and District MC also figure in the lineup.

Other local riders include Fort William's Gary MacLennan and brothers Duncan and Alan MacDonald, who are formerly from Lochaber but are now based in Glasgow.

Triple FIM Trial World Champion and trials legend Eddy Lejeune will be joined by his well-known brothers Eric and Jean-Marie as the Belgian trio are set to be reunited with the Highlands after an extended absence.

The return of the Lejeunes to the parc ferme in the West End car park will be an added bonus for many trials fans.



Gary MacDonald: aiming to win the Scottish Six Days Trial in its centenary year.

Wheelers try out new route

A DRY, clear day saw West Highland Wheelers try out a new route at Inchree in round four of the winter league on Sunday. Mixing forest roads with some signature singletrack carefully crafted by Roddy Wells, the course was well received by those who took part.

Ben Miller blew away the field, finishing over two minutes ahead of Ben Thompson. Gavin Maclean took a close third whereas the Skye sensation Danny Macaskill swapped his trials bike over to finish well up in fourth.

Despite being outridden on the technical rooty section, Fos just managed to overhaul Hannah but couldn't catch Spook Munro.

Andy Rogers, pressured by Steve Bradley

CYCLING

who had suffered an earlier mechanical, decided to do a forward roll over the bars in sight of the finish but managed to pick his bike up and take line honours.

Thanks to Roddy for a sublime run through the trees and to Colleen and Anita for timing. Next event is at Kinlochell on Feb 6.

Results: 1, Ben Miller 49:46; 2, Ben Thompson 52:10; 3, Gavin MacLean 52:26; 4, Danny MacAskill 53:32; 5, Fergus Lamb 54:53; 6, Alastair MacLennan 56:21; 7, John Shirley 59:48; 8, Spook Munro 59:24; 9, Fos 59:28; 10, Hannah Barnes 61:10; 11, Davy Gunn 63:10; 12, Gavin Linfield 65:04; 13, Lachlan Blair 66:12; 14, Andy Rogers 68:37; 15, Steve Bradley 68:45; 16, 70:45; 17, 76:05; 18, Brian Barbour 82:45; 19, Kim Cameron 89:41; 20, Marian Austin 91:48; 21, Nigel Miller 94:05. Short Course: Fiona Gunn, 62:06.

First home game for four months

FORT WILLIAM will have two players back in the first team squad for their first game in front of their home fans for nearly four months.

Fort take on Forres Mechanics on Saturday, their first game at Claggan Park since a 1-0 defeat to Lossiemouth on October 9.

Manager Calum Maclean expects to have key player Sean Ellis back for the match, and Sean Grant is also likely to be involved.

Depending on other results, a win could move Fort off the bottom of the league, but Calum told The Oban Times he was expecting a tough match against sixth-placed Forres. He said: 'Forres are one of the harder teams to play in the Highland League. They are big and strong, and if you look at our team, we are all quite small.'

With Fort's match against Strathspey United called off at the weekend due to a

FOOTBALL

frozen pitch at Grantown, a number of first team players took part in the reserve side's game against Golspie Sutherland to get some valuable competitive action.

The game ended 1-1, with Michael Ellis scoring the Lochaber side's goal and Chris McLeod receiving a red card. Calum said: 'We took a few players up there, and they did well.'

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

SPONSORED BY **RS Recovery** 24 HOURS GLASGOW & ARGYLL
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All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. Prizes will be shared between those submitting correct entries.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to reach 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

I enclose £1 (note) for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules.

How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____

Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

WIN £550

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
Helen Geddes, Nant Drive, Oban & Carole MacFadyen, Connel

Corporate stationery
Business cards, letterheads, envelopes, comp slips

Personal stationery
Matching paper & envelopes,
postcards, address labels

krisp print

Contact us at: Krisp Print & Stationery,
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Campbeltown, Argyll PA28 6JD
Tel: 01586 554975 Email: staff@krispprint.co.uk
www.krispprint.co.uk

Argyll rugby players selected for district teams

'To have five players in the Glasgow squad is fantastic'

FIVE Argyll youth rugby players have been selected for the Glasgow district teams at two different age groups

Angus MacCallum and Magnus Bradbury, of Oban Lorne, and Patrick Carmichael, of Mull Rugby Club, have been chosen in the 22-man under-17 squad and Mull's Ciaran Whyte and Mid Argyll's Ruairidh Aitken will turn out for the under-16s.

Selectors

The boys will represent



Angus MacCallum.



Ruairidh Aitken.

the district teams in an inter-district tournament in March, where Scotland selectors will be in attendance.

All have come through Argyll's Pathways Programme, led by Argyll and Bute rugby development officer Billy Thomson.

Impressed

And having impressed while playing for the Argyll teams, all five have since been involved in a lengthy selection process for places in the district set-up.

Outside centre Angus,

RUGBY

who is from Fionnphort, Mull, but attends Oban High School, said: 'There were a lot of boys trying to get into the squad and they kept whittling it down after each training session.'

'I was so glad to make it in the final 22 and we will have weekly training sessions until March.'

Angus' team-mate Magnus is eligible for the under-16 team but has been promoted to the under-17 set-up a year early to aid his development.

Fantastic

Argyll coach Murray Hamilton said: 'To have five players in the district squad is fantastic; I don't think there are many clubs in the country that can say they have that.'

'We have one of the largest geographical areas but one of the smallest pools of players so it can be difficult for these guys to get spotted. To have five representatives at district level is a credit to the Pathway Programme.'



OBAN Saints Under 14s and Seafar Villa served up a cracking match in the second round of the Regional Cup played on the 3G community pitch at Oban High School last Saturday. The Oban lads found themselves 2-0 down, but came back to level the score at 2-2 thanks to goals from Douglas Tyrell-Bunge and Jamie Easton. The match went into extra time and a penalty in the first period gave the Cumbernauld side a narrow 3-2 victory in a superb game of football. Above: Seafar Villa captain Marc McGarahan was sent tumbling in the box by a mistimed tackle from Daniel MacMillan which left referee David Paterson no option but to award a penalty kick. The Cumbernauld side scored from the spot which proved to be the winning goal. 15_104saints02

Saints seniors back on dup duty

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints senior team hope to get back into action this weekend after last Saturday's premier division league game against Aikenhead was called off on the Friday afternoon when a pitch inspection found Temple Recreation Park to be frozen.

This Saturday the Oban side travel away to take on Thorn Athletic in the first round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy.

Saints youth results and fixtures

FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results: Torrance Thistle v Under 13s, postponed; Under 14s 2, Seafar Villa 3 (after extra time). Saints goalscorers were Douglas Tyrell-Bunge and Jamie Easton. Under 15s v Riverside, postponed; Under 16s 0, Dumbarton Rock 5.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Ardencaple; EDFC v Under 14s; Under 15s v Argyll Athletic; Under 16s v Largs Colts.

The Under 14s will also play a friendly against Campbeltown on Sunday on the community pitch.

Islay golf

GOLF

WINTER League Played on Sunday, January 23:
1st John Ferguson 40pts;
2nd Graeme Hamilton 36pts; 3rd Neil Carmichael 36pts; Css 69 (38 Stableford points).

Third time lucky for Oban Lorne?

RUGBY

THIS Saturday the men's team are playing Lanark at home in the Regional Bowl. This is the third attempt to play this match due to weather. Kick off 2pm.

Last Saturday's league match away to Strathendrick was called off due to a frozen pitch

Argyll games survive the frost

FOOTBALL

LAST Saturday's Scottish Amateur Football League programme was badly hit by the hard frost with only five games taking place.

Two of the five games took place in Argyll with Campbeltown Pupils losing 5-3 at home to Kilbowie Union and Lochgilphead Red Star defeating Duncanrig B 5-0

Celtic defeat Glenorchy in pre-season friendly

Pre-season Friendly Oban Celtic 3 Glenorchy 1

OBAN Celtic and Glenorchy got their pre-season preparations underway on Saturday, meeting at a Mossfield Stadium that was fortunately clear of the early morning mist.

The early exchanges only went to highlight that both squads were understandably rusty and desperately in need of match practice.

Dominated

Glenorchy dominated most of the first half possession, while Celtic struggled to find a rhythm to their game.

Oban's keeper Allan 'Spider' Duncan was kept busier than his opposite number and was to produce the save of the match as he tipped away a raking angled shot from Kieran MacKay that may well have given the visitors a half time lead.

Muscle

Coming into the second period on even terms, Oban

Celtic began to exert some muscle and were rewarded early on when Alan Duffy bundled the ball across the line after a goalmouth melee.

Powerful

Ten minutes later, Daniel Madej's powerful strike from the right saw their lead doubled.

While Glenorchy might have been stung, Oban Celtic still pushed forward and David Hill's speculative strike from his position on the left wing seemed to seal victory for the home squad.

With 15 minutes remaining, Oban Celtic eased off the pressure and the visitors snapped at the chance to push forward and quickly pulled a goal back when MacKay's close range lob just eluded Duncan's effort to tip the ball over the bar.

Comeback

Time however beat any chance of a Glenorchy comeback and the score finished at 3-1.

Sensibly refereed by Billy Witherspoon, this was an enjoyable game for the crowd of spectators with both squads improving as the minutes ticked past.

SHINTY

With more friendlies scheduled, the teams will have the opportunity to hone skills and tactics before this year's campaign begins in earnest.



No way through the Celtic defence for Glenorchy's Kieran MacKay on this occasion but he would provide his team's consolation goal. 15_104shinty01

Shinty cup draws announced

SHINTY

THE DRAWS for several shinty cup competitions were made in Inverness by Archie Robertson, president-elect and Inverness Caledonian Thistle chairman, and former Camanachd Association director, George Fraser.

The draw for the Co-operative MacTavish Cup, the Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup and the first round of the Scottish Hydro Camanachd Cup are to take place on a date yet to be announced.

Balliemore Cup

1st Round - April 9
Caberfeidh v Oban Celtic
Ballachulish v GMA
Taynuilt v Lochcarron
Strathglass v Skye
Kilmory v Kinlochshiel
Inverness v Lochaber
Byes: Bute, Beaully

Glasgow Celtic Society Cup

1st Round - March 26
Inveraray v Bute
GMA v Oban Celtic
Byes - Kilmory, Kyles, Ballachulish, Glenorchy, Taynuilt, Oban Camanachd

Quarter Final April 23
GMA/Oban Celtic v Kyles

Taynuilt v Kilmory
Ballachulish v Inveraray/Bute
Oban Camanachd v Glenorchy

Strathdearn Cup

1st Round April 23
Strathglass v Fort William
Lochaber v Kilmallie
Byes: Boleskine, Glenurquhart, Lovat, Lochbroom, Kingussie, Glengarry, Aberdeen Uni, Beaully, Kinlochshiel, Inverness, Caberfeidh, Lochcarron, Skye, Newtonmore.

2nd Round May 21
Strthglass/FtWilliam v Kinlochshiel
Lovat v Lochcarron
Newtonmore v Inverness

Lochaber/Kilmallie v Caberfeidh
Boleskine v Skye
Glengarry v Beaully
Lochbroom v Kingussie
Glenurquhart v Aberdeen Uni

Bullough Cup

1st Round May 21
The Scots v Ballachulish
Bute v Strachur
Aberdour v GMA
Lochside Rovers v Kilmory
Kyles v Inveraray
Byes: Col Glen, Taynuilt, Tayforth

Quarter Final June 11
Col Glen v The Scots/Ballachulish
Lochside/Kilmory Bute / Strachur
Taynuilt v Tayforth
Aberdour/GMA v Kyles /Inveraray

Weather
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Telephone: 01631 562550

Thursday
Cloudy.
Winds light, north, north easterly.
Temperatures 2°C to 4°C

Friday
Cloudy.
Winds light, south easterly.
Temperatures 1°C to 3°C.

Weekend Outlook
Cloudy.
Winds light, easterly.
Temperatures 3°C to 4°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree - As above
Kennacraig to Islay - As above

FRIDAY

Tides
Sponsored by
NANCY BLACK Ships' Chandler
Telephone: 01631 562550

Tide tables for Oban during the week from
Thursday, January 27, 2011
are listed below with differences
for major ports listed beneath.
All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 05.09	1.2 11.04 3.1 17.56 1.6 23.55 3.0	
Fri 06.18	1.5 12.53 2.9 19.15 1.8 *** **	
Sat 01.45	3.0 07.38 1.6 15.02 2.9 20.45 1.7	
Sun 03.12	3.1 09.11 1.6 16.20 3.1 21.53 1.5	
Mon 04.07	3.4 10.20 1.5 15.53 3.3 22.41 1.3	
Tues 04.45	3.6 11.08 1.3 17.14 3.5 23.21 1.1	
Wed 05.20	3.8 11.47 1.2 17.41 3.6 23.58 1.0	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardershaig	-5.35	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Campbeltown	-5.30	Mallaig	+0.25
Crinan	-0.47	Portree	+0.55
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Tobermory	+0.16
		Dover	+5.30

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