

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Microsoft puts 'Oban' on Xbox

COMPUTING giant, Microsoft, is understood to have named the architecture for its new Xbox console 'Oban.'

Details of the firm's new gaming device, which would replace the Xbox 360 hardware, are a closely guarded secret, but some information about the chip-set powering the device has been leaked online, including its 'Oban' code-name.

It is thought that Microsoft will launch the next Xbox in 2013.

Town's oldest man dies in 105th year

OBAN'S oldest resident, John Hoey, has died 14 weeks before his 105th birthday.

Born in Airds Crescent, the former factory worker with McCall's lemonade factory, was most recently a resident of North Argyll House, having moved there from his home at 5 Dalrigh, where he lived with his late wife Mary MacInnes, originally from Barra. Mary died aged 95 nearly nine years ago.

John Hoey's funeral will take place at St Columba's Cathedral Hall, on Saturday at 10am. Donations, if desired, will go towards the North Argyll House Residents' Fund.

Breakdown stalls train journey

A BROKEN down rail maintenance vehicle at Arrochar forced the 8.11am train from Oban to Glasgow to turn back last Saturday.

A spokesperson for Scotrail said: 'The Oban-Glasgow train was unable to continue past Arrochar, so we arranged replacement buses to transport customers to their destinations.'

Heating oil thefts on Isle of Mull

ISLANDERS on Mull have been warned to be on their guard after the theft of heating oil from a tank in Dervaig.

Police were contacted last week after a tank, filled up in December, was drained of some of its fuel. It is not known exactly when the theft occurred.

Anyone with information should contact Tormory police office.

Rockfield's school days are numbered?

Historic Scotland status may be removed

ONE of Oban's most charismatic buildings, Rockfield Primary School, could have its protected status removed, with the council confirming it is planning talks with Historic Scotland.

The move comes as attempts by Argyll and Bute Council to sell the Stevenson Street building, originally advertised for £475,000, continue to falter, despite two bids being lodged at the tail end of last year.

The main building, boundary wall and playground shelter are all Grade B listed, meaning potential developers would have to take cognisance of its character when redeveloping it.

De-listing, however, would remove this condition and open the door for substantial alterations to the school, built in 1894, or even demolition.

Proceeds from the sale would go into the authority's education budget.

Confirmation of the move comes days after a councillor contacted *The Oban Times* to say there was no truth to rumours circulating online that the building had already been de-listed.

"The sale was held up for a year and a half for the community council to get a business plan together. It didn't happen."

councillor Roddy McCuish

News of the possibility of de-listing has not been welcomed by Mairi Molloy, the chair of Oban Community Council.

Expressing her personal opinion, she said: 'I've got my own views on what it should be; I'd like to see it used for the community - I certainly wouldn't want it to be bought by a housing association, for example.'

'I understand the council has to do something because, if not, it will just be left there and it is an eyesore.'

'It would be a shame if the building had to come down.'

Martin Petrie of the Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society worries about the

town's identity if another of its instantly recognisable buildings is flattened.

He said: 'I wouldn't want to be in the way of progress but they've just knocked down one very old building in the Argyll Hotel. How many more before the character of the town changes?'

Both the community council and the historical society will discuss the proposals at their upcoming meetings.

Oban councillor and planning committee member, Roddy McCuish, said: 'De-listing is a very long process which will involve a large amount of consultation.'

'I'm quite happy to have a public meeting to debate the whole issue.'

However, any further delay to the sale to allow a community group to take the building into ownership would not be an option, he believes.

'The sale was held up for a year and a half for the community council to get a business plan together,' Mr McCuish said. 'It didn't happen. They've already had their chance and that opportunity was lost.'

MSP puts the brakes on planned A83 roadworks

FURTHER DISRUPTION on a vital main road will not go ahead after Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell intervened to have scheduled resurfacing works stalled on the A83 at Rest and Be Thankful.

Longer-term solution
The MSP has agreed with transport minister Keith Brown that the work will not go ahead as had been planned over the next few weeks.

Mr Russell pursued the case after many of his constituents

demanding that there should be no more road closures on the Rest and Be Thankful until a longer-term solution can be found for the trouble-prone road.

'Vitaly important'

Mr Russell told *The Oban Times*: 'Obviously the disruption in recent weeks has made it incredibly difficult for businesses and residents in Argyll to go about daily life. I thought it was vitaly important to limit the disruption and spoke to the

transport minister accordingly.

'Keith Brown agreed not to go ahead with the resurfacing works due for the end of this month. This is a sensible decision for all concerned. We need to limit the disruption until a long-term sustainable solution can be found.'

Mr Russell also confirmed he had signed the A83 Petition launched by political group Argyll First and fully backed their campaign for a review of the stretch of road.



Mull-based councillor, Gordon Chalmers, with Lorn Taxis' Michael Wardrop, who thinks an 18 month review period would be 'awful' for local drivers. 15_104tax2

Freeze on taxi rates causes concern

TAXI drivers across Argyll and Bute could be left counting the cost of a freeze on fare structure for at least the next 18 months.

At the local authority's planning, protective services and licensing committee last week, councillors voted to freeze fares and also opted to extend the current annual review period by six months, something that is causing concern for small businesses beset by tax and fuel price increases as well as a weakening economy in recent years.

Taxi operators have until March 1 to make their views on the proposals.

Gordon Chalmers, the Mull-based independent councillor for Oban south and the isles, who himself is a former taxi driver, believes the extension is an unwise step.

'There has been no increase in fares since the 2010/11 review, but this decision would mean no further review of fares until late 2013,' he said.

'I've spoken to some taxi drivers and they're quite unhappy about it. What happens if there is a big increase in fuel prices in the coming months?'

'The decision is not final and will be advertised for comment. I'd encourage everyone who

may be affected to have their say.'

Twelve drivers operate cabs for Lorn Taxis in Oban. Co-owner, Jean MacIntyre, said: 'Money is tight for everyone and increases aren't what our customers want just now.'

'However, 18 months is a long time to wait for a review of rates - a bit too long.'

Driver, Michael Wardrop, said: 'I think it's awful - 18 months seems a ridiculously long time.'

Jean MacIntyre said Lorn Taxis will be responding to the proposal.

Mull Taxi Service, agrees that the review period is too long, but is calling for a review of how island fares are calculated.

Not only was fuel more expensive on the islands, but the roads often take longer to navigate, dropping the driver's hourly earnings. He said: 'I'm not overly happy about the proposals. I did write a letter to the committee proposing that tariff two could be used for islands and rural communities. That was rejected, however.'

'I think 18 months is too long as well. They should review the rates after nine months. A lot can change in 18 months.'

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Oven Roasted Tomato and Basil Soup finished with a Chive Sour Cream (v)

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Passion Fruit Sorbet

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Saddle of Argyll Venison Char-grilled and encased in a Potato Rösti served with a Roast Vegetable Ratatouille and a Port Reduction

Darne of Scottish Salmon Fillet rested upon Sautéed Potatoes topped with an oven roasted Whole Langoustine and a fresh Prawn Butter Sauce

Green Pea and Wild Garlic Risotto (v)

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Continental market unlikely

OBAN is unlikely to welcome another Continental Market after the organisers withdrew a planning application to return to the town in the spring.

Traditional Markets Ltd had intended to visit in April and August, lodging an application for permission in November. However, it was withdrawn the evening before it was due to be considered by the authority on December 21.

Organiser, Olivier Simonin, said: 'Unfortunately, the roads department don't want our return, they apparently had claims from local shops that we take their trade.'

Oban councillor and planning committee member, Roddy McCuish, said he would be happy to host a public meeting for retailers and residents to discuss whether the markets would be welcomed back.

Defrauded company welcomes two year jail sentence after £150,000 theft

Benderloch-based company robbed over three year period

A DIRECTOR of the successful Benderloch company defrauded of more than £150,000 has welcomed the two year sentence handed down to the former employee responsible.

Admitted embezzlement
Kirsteen Fiona Johnston of 46 Pulpit Drive, Oban, appeared at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday, having previously admitted embezzling £150,918.35 from Owen Sails between February 9, 2005 and March 17, 2008.

The 34-year old was told her sentence would have been one of three years had it not been for her early guilty plea.

Owen Sails director, Diana

Shellcock, welcomed the sentence, but said she was anything but happy with the way events have unfolded.

'It has been a very emotionally draining four years,' she said. 'This is the end of a long hard period and I am glad it is over.'

'Justice has been done'
'It's not just the loss of the money, it's the betrayal that hurts.'

'I think the court has done the right thing. If she suffers for it, all I can say is it is self-inflicted.'

'However, I'm not pleased as such because she has children. 'All I can say is justice has been done. It shows people that you can't

get away with things like that.'

Johnston's criminal conviction comes some 18 months after a civil action by Owen Sails against her was settled out of court.

The Benderloch-based company employs 12 people, plus two directors, and has gone from strength to strength despite Johnston's deception.

Diana said: 'This has been hanging over us all. It had an impact on everyone that works at the business.'

'It's taken four years for us to recover from that, and we have, but it is good that we will finally be able to put this behind us.'

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Cowal games nominated as event of the year

A HIGHLAND gathering in Argyll has been nominated for the Scottish event of the year award at a prestigious outdoor events awards ceremony. The Cowal Gathering, the largest highland gathering in Scotland, has been named a finalist in the National Outdoor Events Association's (NOEA)

Scotland Awards. Described as the 'Oscars of the events industry', the NOEA Scotland Awards recognise the events and individuals in the event industry that have excelled in the previous year. The Cowal festival, which brings pipers, Highland dancers and athletes from all over

the world to the Cowal peninsula every summer, has been selected as one of two events to be shortlisted for the Scottish event of the year award. Malcolm Barclay, event manager of the Cowal gathering, said: 'I am delighted that the Cowal Highland Gathering has been recognised in this way by

our industry peers; it is amazing recognition of the outstanding work done by our small team of volunteers, conveners, suppliers, competitors, sponsors and the local council who are all so important to the success of the event. 'It is also recognition of the efforts Dunoon and its people

make to accommodate the event and the thousands of people who attend. To win the award would be an honour, but just reaching the final two against such tough competition feels amazing.' The winners of the national awards will be announced at a ceremony in Birmingham on March 22.



Beachd Ailein
Ailean Caimbeul

THA FACAL BITHEANTA ANN AM BEURLA a tha ag ràdh gum bheil an rud a tha mòr maiseach, ach aig an aon àm, tha facal ciallach eile ag ràdh nach eil an aon fhreagairt air a h-uile ceist!

Ach chan eil Coimisean nan Taghaidhean a' gabhail cus suim den chomhairle sin is iad a' feuchainn ri roinnean pàrlamaid a stèidheachadh às ùr air lethid de dhòigh is gum bi an aon àireamh sluaigh anna uile. Tha e follaiseach do neach sam bith aig am bheil tuigse air sgriean dùthchail mar a th'againn anns a' mhòr-chuid de dh'Alba, gum feum thu sgoilteach eagalach de lethid na Gàidhealtachd gus an aon àireamh sluaigh a lorg 's a bhiodh agad ann am beagan mhillean ceàrnagach de bhaile-mòr. Tha an Coimisean air an fheallsanachd seo a chur an sàs air Ghàidhealtachd agus anns a' Chumhachd a-nise dh'aindeoin gach gearain bho phartaichean poilitigeach agus muinntir na dùthcha. Chan eil, a rèir coltais, mothachadh sam bith air mar a tha muinntir sgriean dùthchail gu bhith air an cuingealachadh bho chothroman coinneachaidh le Ball Pàrlamaid neo oifigearan Riaghaltas neo eile, an coimeas ri sluaigh nam bailtean a tha taobh a-staigh beagan mhillean bho na riochdairean acasan.

Gun teagamh, caomhnaidh lethid seo de dh'atharrachadh airgead ach tha e cuideachd a' ciallachadh eadar-dhealachadh seirbheis a rèir 's càite bheil daoine a' fuireach.

Tha an fheallsanachd a' sgoileadh fo stiùireadh riaghaltas a tha a' cur barrachd is barrachd creideis ann an eifeachdas a dh'frithealadh an t-sluaigh tro chumhannan mòra. Seirbheisean slàinte gan cur còmhla; barrachd a' dol chun roinn phrìobhaidh; seirbheisean eigin gan cur còmhla. Càite an stad e? Bheil, mar eisimpleir, smachd air a h-uile dad ann an Alba dol a ghluasad gu ruige Dùn Èideann? Gun teagamh, chaomhnaidh airgead le cur às dha na Comhairlean is mar sin ach de seòrsa seirbheis, follaiseach agus deamocrasaidh a bhiodh air fhàgail. Agus ma tha mòr daonnan ceart, de tha sin a' ciallachadh dha na buidhnean beaga feadh na dùthcha a tha a' frithealadh an t-sluaigh agus a' cumail cosnadh ri millean dhaoine?

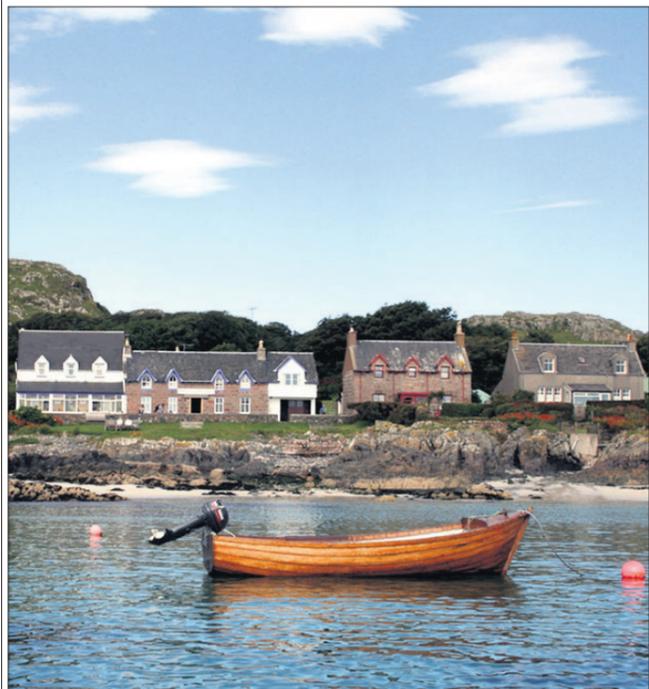
Tha an fheallsanachd a thaobh ceannachd as a' roinn phoblach na dearbhadh math den amaidachd le, mar eisimpleir, stuthan de gach seòrsa gan slaodadh ceudan mhillean feadh na dùthcha leis gum bheil cumhannan aig companaidh nàiseanta agus nach fhaodar ceannach bho chompanaidh ionadail.

BIG IS BEAUTIFUL AND ONE SIZE FITS ALL!
Whether it is the formation of new parliamentary constituencies or the merging of public service authorities there appears to be a growing trend towards larger structures and smaller administrations. While this can save on management costs experience has frequently demonstrated that as distance between supplier and client grows, service efficiency decreases.

Procurement regulation in the public sector is a classic example, where nationally negotiated supply contracts often mean that materials are hauled hundreds of miles into rural areas while local suppliers are by-passed. Policies damaging to roads, the environment, and to the future of many rural SMEs!

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
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Sacred isle hotel sale sparks world-wide bids



Iona's Argyle Hotel, which has sold for more than its £645,000 asking price to two couples with close links to the island.

THE prestigious Argyle Hotel on Iona is under new ownership after world-wide interest took the selling price well over its £645,000 asking price.

Global hotel agents, Knight Frank, who conducted the sale, said the property was one of its most sought after in the British Isles, with interest in the property registered across the globe.

Taking over the business from Claire Ballacherie and Daniel Morgan, who have owned the hotel for 14 years, are two couples; the MacManaways of Kent and the Russons from Glasgow. Both already have close links to the island.

David Reid, partner at Knight Frank, said: 'The Argyle Hotel is wonderfully situated overlooking white sandy beaches and the ferry to the Isle of Mull, where this delightful hotel has 16 en-suite rooms, a one bedroom owner's suite, licensed restaurant and public areas.

'Unsurprisingly, there were strong levels of interest in the sale and, without exaggerating, from all over the world.

'Whilst there is much comment about the market for the sale of hotels being depressed, we sold the Argyle Hotel for above our asking price and it just shows that quality will always sell.'

Rob MacManaway has been coming to Iona for holidays all of his life and introduced his wife Wendy to the island, they

"... it just goes to show that quality will always sell"

David Reid
Partner at selling agents Knight Frank

both share a love of its special atmosphere. The couple, who have both worked in hospitality for many years, will be joined by their black Labrador Molly. Rob, originally from Fife, will be managing the hotel alongside several of the long term staff who are keen to continue to offer the same warm welcome to guests.

They will be joined by Katie Russon, who was born and raised on Iona, and her husband Dafydd.

Currently living in Glasgow, Katie and Dafydd plan over the next few years to join up with the MacManaways by taking on an active role in the day to day running of the hotel.

Katie again has plenty of experience having worked summers in Iona's other hotel - The St Columba, where she took on a number of roles, including duty manager.

The new owners plan to continue the green ethos of the hotel, supporting local and organic produce as much as possible.

Police appeal for help after Skye heating oil theft

BETWEEN 700 and 800 litres of heating oil was taken from an address in Upper Breakish, Isle of Skye between December 15 and 18.

Police are appealing for anyone who witnessed anything suspicious in the area around this time to contact Kyle Police Station on 01599 534222.

Arnish yard joins enterprise areas

ARNISH near Stornoway and its manufacturing yard is to become part of one of four new enterprise areas announced by the Scottish Government.

The Renewable Energy North Area is being set up to create employment opportunities, stimulate private investment and boost economic growth.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar leader Angus Campbell said the council looked forward to hearing what incentives will be put in place to attract investment.

Work to re-clad a huge fabrication building at Arnish was completed in November at a cost of £3million.

Strontian drink driver banned for 18 months

A STRONTIAN pensioner who drove through the village while nearly twice the legal alcohol limit has been banned from driving for 18 months and fined £300.

James Cameron, of 12 Dalmbor, admitted drink driving on the A861 outside Strontian post office and other local roads at around 5pm on October 22.

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose told Fort William Sheriff Court the 70-year-old had been drinking earlier in the day, but 'felt fine' before going to the post office.

Students urged to enter food and drink logo comp

HIGHLANDS and Islands students with an eye for design are being urged to submit entries for the National Food and Drink Conference logo competition ahead of the February 10 deadline.

Anyone studying part or full-time at school, college or university can enter.

The winner will receive £300 and two runners-up £100 each. The conference is at Perth Concert Hall on March 7.

Fined Mull sea eagle pair to contest Oban conviction

WILDLIFE photographers who disturbed sea eagle nests on a trip to Mull are to appeal their conviction, claiming they didn't have a fair trial.

Yuli Panayotov, 32, from London, and 36 year old Ivalyo Takev, from Norwich, were fined £1,100 at Oban Sheriff Court last year after being found guilty of disturbing the nests of the rare white-tailed eagles.

At the Juciciary Appeal court in Edinburgh last week, the pair

argued that they didn't have a fair trial because their defence team did not call in expert witnesses to counter Crown evidence.

However, appeal papers were lodged late and Lord Carloway will have final say as to whether or not the motion will proceed.

His decision is expected this week. Panayotov and Takev had established a hide less than 100 metres from a sea eagle nest at

Killiechroan, Mull, on May 1, 2010.

They had ignored warnings from a local officer of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) who told them they were too close to nesting sites of the protected white-tailed eagles.

A spokesperson for the RSPB said: 'This is now a matter for the Juciciary Appeal Court in Edinburgh and we must await the decision by Lord Carloway.'



Catriona McAllister, Lochaber area cleaning officer, centre, collects the national category award for St. Bride's Primary from catering and cleaning manager Norma Murray and ECS committee chairman, Councillor Bill Fernie.

Lochaber schools gain five-star loo award

HIGHLAND Council cleaning staff are flushed with success after scooping a host of prizes at the Loo of the Year awards, including eight National Category and three National awards.

Five-star grading
In total, 43 of the education, culture and sport (ECS) service's 47 toilets received the top five-star grading.

National Category winners

included St Bride's Primary in Lochaber, while Acharacle Primary won the national eco-friendly toilet award.

ECS chairman Bill Fernie presented the winners with certificates at the committee's January meeting in Inverness.

He said: 'It is particularly rewarding that we have won so many of the national awards against some stiff competi-

tion and the people doing the work are recognised for their professionalism. I would like to congratulate everyone involved and thank them for their dedication and hard work.'

Among those receiving a five-star rating were Acharacle, Ballachulish, Elgol, Glenelg, Isle of Eigg and St. Brides primaries, and Tigh-na-Sgìre, Portree.

Revised ferry timetable for Isle of Gigha agreed

A REVISED timetable for ferry sailings between Tayinloan and Gigha during February and March has been agreed following consultation with the islands' residents.

Partnership
The new timetable will be in operation on all Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays between Monday, February 6 and Friday, March 29 inclusive, when the winter timetable ends.

However, it will not be in operation on March 14, 15 and 17 to accommodate increased ferry traffic expected as a result of the celebrations for the 10th anniversary of the buyout of the island.

Argyll and Bute's spokesperson for rural and island affairs, housing and Gaelic, Robin Currie, said the amendments were just the latest decision to

be made in partnership with the community.

'We have done everything we can to minimise the inconvenience to those who rely on this ferry, and that has been done through trying to ensure that they are involved as much as possible in the alternative arrangements,' he said.

'I am grateful to the community for their ongoing co-operation during these works. The reward at the end of it will be the smoother operation of what is a lifeline ferry service for the people of Gigha.'

A weekend closure has already been agreed for January 28 and 29, when a service to Kennacraig will operate. However, if the weather prevents sheet piling works from being undertaken, the closure will take place the following weekend, February 4 and 5.

'Aye Spy' CD from Plockton centre

A DOUBLE CD produced by students at the National Centre for Excellence in Traditional Music has become the Plockton-based school's first to go on worldwide sale through iTunes and Amazon.

'Aye Spy', according to NCETM director Dougie Pincock, is 'an annual acoustic year book' of what pupils have done in groupwork classes over the year.

He told The Oban Times: 'They selected all their own material and did all their own arrangements. It's brilliant - it is without doubt some of the best stuff we have ever done.'

'The sixth years were very creative and cotemporary for their CD and came up with some really complex and interesting arrangements - so for those who like that kind of thing, it's great. 'On the other hand, the younger students' CD is quite traditional, so I suppose between the two we have covered all the bases.'

New guide to aid community planning

A GUIDE aimed at making planning for community developments easier has been launched online.

Challenges
Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) say their Planning for Community Developments handbook makes it far easier for groups to pre-empt what challenges they could face, and guide them through the procedures to get around them.

The guide is particularly aimed at development trusts,

social enterprises, hall associations and community councils.

It is the end result of an 18 month mentoring project, the Planning Mentoring Scheme, which launched in April 2010.

Petra Biberbach, chief executive of PAS said: 'The guide helps people to navigate their way through the planning process and demonstrates that the planning system can be a positive enabler for communities looking to improve their lot.'

Top climber is stalled by west's wet and windy winter weather

LOCHABER top-rated climber Dave MacLeod has been one of many suffering from the wild, wet winter.

Two months or rain
The Letterfinlay-based ace needs dry rock - or solid ice - to allow him to safely execute his daredevil moves, but both have been at a premium so far.

He wrote on his blog: 'I can't believe two months had passed without climbing outdoors on rock in Scotland. I can't

remember the weather being so unhelpful during the winter for several years.

'Lochaber has just been hammered with rain and gales and it seems my options for getting on projects have been basically nil.'

Dave will be running daytime climbing technique masterclasses at the Ice Factor in Kinlochleven as part of the Fort William Mountain Festival on February 17.

Walker dies on Argyll hillside

A 72-year old man missing on Binnean an Fhithleir above Butterbridge at the Rest-and-be-Thankful in Argyll at the beginning of last week died from injuries.

The man had set off the day before to climb the hill but had been reported missing by his family when he had not called home at the end of the day. Rescue teams had been searching through the night but had failed to find any trace of him.

Oban Mountain Rescue team joined Arrochar and Strathclyde Police teams at daylight and were lifted onto the hill by the Rescue 177 helicopter. The helicopter then located the missing man but could not land and directed the Oban team to the location.

The team administered treatment to the injured man but he was later found to have died from his injuries.

No further details have been released.

TV documentary to highlight ME

A LEWIS woman with Lochaber links will feature in a BBC ALBA documentary on the chronic fatigue illness ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) next Monday night.

Allison MacColl, wife of Rev Allan MacColl, originally from Fort William, has had ME for several years and allowed her battle to beat the illness through a controversial 'talking' therapy to be filmed. The treatment was developed by Glasgow doctor David Mickel, who believes it represents a 'cure' for the condition.

Fort William-born trainee minister Sean Ankers, an ex-sufferer, also features in 'Trusadh - ME: An Sgiths Nimheil/The Toxic Tiredness' at 9pm.

Threatened to burn down house in Onich

AN ONICH man has admitted threatening to burn down his mother's house during the festive period.

James Maclean, aged 44, made the threats at Foresters Cottage, Inchree where he lived with his mother, on December 28. Maclean, now of Levante, Inchree, also pled guilty to resisting arrest by two police officers.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard Maclean further admitted breaching a bail order by staying in Inchree rather than at the address in Acharacle he had given to the court.

Sentencing was deferred until February 15 for reports.



Dave MacLeod: stormbound this winter so far

Winter festival boosts Oban's economy by almost £1 million

OBAN'S inaugural Winter Festival, held at a cost of around £10,000, helped boost the local economy by nearly £1 million.

Figures released by the committee behind November's week-long celebrations show that approximately £938,000 extra cash was brought into the town last November, with

thousands of people turning out to take in the numerous events and activities on offer.

Some of the more popular events include Santa's Reindeer Parade from the Corran Halls to Station Road, a synthetic ice-rink at Atlantis Leisure, the Victorian Market and the much anticipated and spectacular

'O-bang' fireworks display, arranged by Pyrol in the way of apology for the now infamous failed November 4 display.

Confirmation that the event gave the town such a boost has re-energised organisers, who are pressing ahead to make year two even more spectacular.

One of the festival's organisers, Pamela Lockhart, said: 'We were so shocked and happy - delighted in fact - with the figure.'

'It's great news for the town and it certainly gives us more reason to press ahead again for this year.'

Local businesses and organisations have been quick to

realise the benefit of the festive extravaganza, with most who took part last year already confirming their participation in 2012's Winter Festival.

This year's programme is scheduled to commence on November 17 with the ever-popular Reindeer Parade.

While there will be some

changes to the events being lined up, some of the more popular attractions will return.

'Hopefully, we will have the fireworks back. We're also hoping to have some different things on the programme this year, so it's not just a carbon copy.'

The not-for-profit committee

is now the process of submitting applications for funding.

To aid planning, the committee aims to build a bank of volunteers to call upon for fundraising events, or to lend a hand during the festival itself.

Information can be found at obanwinterfestival.com or on the group's Facebook page.

Fresh start for Lismore couple who lost dog

A LISMORE farming couple whose beloved collie was killed on an Aberdeenshire road have found another dog to take her place.

John and Dorothy Livingstone were left devastated when Grampian Police confirmed a collie found dead near Oldmeldrum was their Jenny.

The grey-whiskered pet had gone missing during a walk on Christmas Eve with the couple's son Andrew, of Cross Stone Farm, Ellon, who immediately began a search with the aid of police and volunteers.

Two days later a dog matching Jenny's description was found lying on the grass verge, killed, it is believed, by a passing car.

The dog's identity remained unconfirmed and public appeals for information on Jenny's whereabouts continued, until the tragic news came through last week.

Despite their grief, John and Dorothy felt they needed another working collie for their island farm at Balure, as Jenny, aged 11, had been a big help to John, 72, with his 150 Blackface and Cross ewes.

And this week the couple found a new collie, five year-old bitch Flash. Early signs are that the new arrival will do a job - but Jenny will never be forgotten.

Dorothy, 74, told *The Oban Times*: 'It's early days yet and we are just getting to know her, but I think Flash is going to be okay because she has been a working collie.'

'Jenny was a member of the family. She was a working dog - that's what we got her for. But she was also a pet, more so in the last couple of years.'

'When you went out the door and she wasn't there it made the place feel dead. She knew the roads on Lismore, but not the faster roads up in Aberdeenshire. At least we know she was hit by a car and not caught on a fence somewhere and left hanging.'

'We both want to say we are so appreciative of the efforts everybody made to try to find her. It was amazing the calls our son got.'

Broadcasting from Barra for RNLI

A GROUP of licensed radio amateurs will broadcast from Barra Lifeboat station throughout the week to help raise funds for the RNLI.

Taking part in SOS Radio Week, the broadcasters will be taking sponsorship for their efforts across the nine day event.

It is hoped that the profile of the RNLI will be raised throughout the world, as well as giving ex-pats the opportunity to make contact with Barra in either English or Gaelic.

For more information about the nationwide event, log on to sorsadioweb.org.uk.

Eight-minute council meeting sparks 'cynical' blame game

A ROW has broken out over last week's full meeting of Argyll and Bute Council, which 31 members attended - for just eight minutes.

Waste of taxpayers money

New Oban north and Lorn councillor, Louise Glen-Lee of the SNP, criticised the administration for holding the meeting, saying it was a waste of taxpayers money, with members able to claim travel expenses of 45p per mile for the journey to Kilmory. Island councillors could also claim accommodation expenses for the meeting if required to stay overnight.

'Ill-informed'

However, the deputy leader of the authority, Ellen Morton, was quick to return fire on Mrs Glen-Lee, claiming the new councillor is 'ill-informed' and 'factually inaccurate.'

Councillor Morton also said many of the councillors who attended wouldn't be claiming expenses.

Only eight items were on the agenda for last week's meeting. However, one item was withdrawn before the meeting started, while councillor James Robb demanded a motion appear on the agenda, despite being advised in advance that it was incompetent.

Oban north and Lorn councillor, Mrs Glen-Lee, said: 'It was a total waste of time and money bringing us all here. The council has to find another way of doing things.'

'There's a number of things we could have talked about - CHORD, the budget, anything?'

'It is terrible this was allowed to go ahead.'

That sentiment was echoed by Bute councillor, Robert Macintyre. He said: 'Some of the

administration thought it was a bit of a joke - but I didn't see anything funny about it at all.'

However, Helensburgh and Lomond south councillor, Ellen Morton, said the brevity of the meeting was as much the responsibility of the SNP opposition for not asking questions about any item on the agenda, including a report summarising the council's borrowing, investment and economic forecasts.

Letter

Furthermore, she says a number of meetings were held after the full council meeting, including one originally scheduled for the following day - saving unnecessary travel.

In a lengthy letter to *The Oban Times*, Mrs Morton said: 'Louise Glen-Lee is a recently elected member of Argyll and Bute Council and so it may be that, despite her years as a journalist attending council meetings, she is unaware of the rules.'

She added: 'If I were a suspicious, cynical person I might think that the motions were submitted and then withdrawn and that no questions were asked to deliberately make the meeting brief, just so that this attack on the council administration could be launched.'

'However no responsible group of councillors would dream of wasting taxpayers' money like this so that cannot possibly be the reason. Can it?'

The leader of the council, Dick Walsh, added: 'If councillor Glen-Lee and her colleagues in the SNP, or other groups, had no issues or concerns with what was proposed in the agenda, then it was open to them to approach us to consider a delegated way of dealing with the business. No such approach was made.'

Burst pipe floods pensioner's newly refurbished home

'Call centre help line told me 'we don't just sit around all day waiting for your call.''

SCOTTISH Water has been criticised for not acting quickly enough after receiving a call that an elderly Oban woman's newly refurbished home was being flooded.

Anne Lennox, who turned 79 this week, was in tears after discovering a burst water pipe in her kitchen last Tuesday at 2pm, causing gallons of water to pump into her kitchen every minute.

With the internal stop-cock useless - as the leak preceded it - the family and a local plumber hunted for the main stop-cock to the property. Unfortunately, it couldn't be found so Anne's daughter, Fiona Fraser, contacted Scottish Water to ask for assistance at 2.45pm.

Half an hour passed with no sign of an engineer so Fiona phoned again. Eventually, with no engineer in sight, she was forced to phone a third time just before 4pm. By this time, the kitchen was completely flooded and water pouring out of the visibly sodden foundations.

A Scottish Water engineer eventually arrived just before 4.20pm, but told Fiona he was only made aware of the problem at 4pm.

Water supply to the street was eventually switched off at around 5.20pm, allowing the offending pipe to be capped.

By then though, the newly refurbished living room was soaked and the kitchen destroyed. Anne had to be evacuated from the property and is in the meantime staying with her daughter.

Fiona has been quick to criticise the response of Scottish Water's contact centre.

She said: 'I kept saying to them that it was an emergency and that they didn't realise the seriousness of the situation.'

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by STEVEN FLANAGAN
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

'At one point, one of the call handlers actually told me 'we don't just sit around all day waiting for your call.'

'I couldn't believe the attitude. They didn't even advise us to switch off the electricity in the house.'

'There was a total breakdown in communications. When the engineer arrived he did everything he could - the call centre just didn't bother doing their job.'

Anne, who has lived in the cottage for more than 13 years and shares her home with grandson, Lamont McGillivray, said: 'I hope nobody has to go through this. It's my home and I love it. Now it's just ruined.'

A spokesperson for Scottish Water said: 'Scottish Water fully understands the inconvenience that flooding can cause and we attended as quickly as possible after we were contacted about this.'

'We established this was a burst on an internal private pipe and, although this is not our responsibility, we helped the customer by locating the toby, or valve, and turned it off to stop the flooding.'

'We clamped the customer's service pipe under the kitchen sink and we put in a temporary stopcock on her internal pipe to allow her to turn her water supply back on without causing any flooding.'

'We will look into any issues related to the customer's telephone contact with us.'



Fiona Fraser, Lamont McGillivray and Anne Lennox clean up the 15_t04annelelnox1

Barra campsite improves facilities as TV boosts tourism

A BARRA campsite is hoping to attract even more visitors to the island with a major upgrade of its facilities.

Donald MacLean has lodged a planning application to build a toilet and shower block on his Borve Caravan and Camping site, a development that could cost in the region of £25-50,000.

The proposal to improve the island camp site, only opened last year, comes as a response to the continued increase in tourism to the island thanks to the BBC documentary, *The Island Parish* and the reduction in ferry fares brought in by the RET.

In addition to toilet facilities, the building would allow caravans on the mixed-use 18 berth side hook up to the electricity supply.

Donald MacLean, said: 'Barra has probably become one of the most popular destinations in the Western Isles, so more people are always coming here.'

'Pending planning permission, I'd hope to have the new building ready by May.'

Injured Spanish fisherman airlifted

THE STORNOWAY-based coastguard helicopter rescued a severely injured fisherman from a vessel 230 miles offshore, amid storm force winds and 10 metre high seas, at the weekend.

Long-range rescue

The long-range mission was launched after the Spanish coastguard agency asked for help

to bring a crewman from the UK registered *Mar Blanco*, who fell and suffered head injuries, to safety. The *Mar Blanco* had to sail towards Stornoway to bring it within the helicopter's range.

The injured man was winched aboard the helicopter and was flown to hospital in Stornoway. Stornoway Coastguard watch

manager Murdo Macaulay said: 'In this weather and at this range it was vital that the helicopter was able to rendezvous with the vessel and evacuate the injured crewman with as little delay as possible.'

'This operation has required close co-operation by many different partners in the search and rescue framework.'

Argyll and Bute introduce new 'golden number' to planning

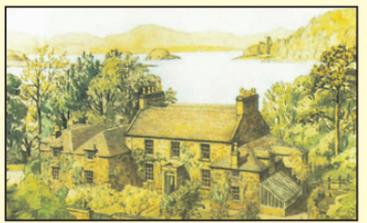
A NEW hotline to streamline the system for making planning enquiries was introduced this week.

Argyll and Bute Council's 'Golden Number,' 01546 605518, was activated on Tuesday, replacing planning services' previous reception numbers in the various council areas. Anyone dialling the old numbers will hear a message telling them the new number before automatically transferring the call.

Daniel Kelly, chair of the planning, protective services and licensing committee, believes the new number makes the service more customer friendly.

He said: 'We wanted to ensure that the system for handling initial customer enquiries regarding planning made the best use of our significant investment in the Customer Service Centre and Customer Service Points.'

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COLL

THE group building a state-of-the-art community hall on the Isle of Coll will host a ceilidh in Glasgow's Oran Mor as it makes its last fundraising push. The An Cridhe project have secured the ever-popular Trail West to provide music for the February 25 ceilidh, which will also include a special fundraising auction. Tickets for the event includes a light supper and a full strip of raffle tickets. While the building itself has mostly been paid for, the subsidiary of Development Coll still needs to raise money to meet the cost of the bridging loan, essential as much of the funding is paid retrospectively. The cost of this has been brought down from an anticipated £26,000 to £15,000.

However the group would like to raise even more money to help pay for facilities that would further enhance the hall's capabilities, such as stage lighting, a PA system, picnic benches and bike racks.

It's hoped that extra funds could also help pay for a bespoke reception desk to give the hall its own unique identity.

Building work is progressing well though and the An Cridhe project board are hoping to hold an opening festival in July.

A spokesperson for An Cridhe said: 'This is the last push, so please give your support. The next dance after Glasgow will be in An Cridhe itself.'

Tickets are available from ancidhe.co.uk.

COLONSAY

COLONSAY Coastguard Rescue Team were asked by Clyde Coastguard to prepare an emergency helicopter landing site to allow the evacuation of an NHS patient by air to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley last Tuesday.

BARRA

PLANS have been submitted to establish two new tourist caravan bays in Castlebay, Isle of Barra. Donald John Currie, of Fluran Cottage, wants to establish the zones on his own land for the caravans together with two parking spaces. The caravan plots would measure 120sqm, while the parking area 56sqm.

LUING

CULLIPOOL hall on the Island of Luing was packed with pre-Hogmanay revelers on December 30.

Morag Watson, with her band of helpers had organised a fundraising ceilidh for the British Heart Foundation.

Ceilidh dancers set to the sounds of the CD with some dances led with accordion playing by Alastair Fothergill and Rachel Cruickshanks.

There was also singing by Fiona Cruickshanks, and lots of family games expertly organised by the MC for the evening, Kay Ben.

Innes MacQueen filled the hall with some fantastic tunes on the bagpipes.

There was a splendid raffle, with lots of lucky winners in the hall. Morag raised £420 for British Heart Foundation, and with the £80 that she and her team collected before Christmas with their Christmas card delivery service, it made the incredible sum of £500!

An amazing total from a wee ceilidh in the hall - it brings



Ballachulish and Kinlochleven primary schools' eco committees are joining forces to organise a joint eco project over the coming months. The venture, backed by a £500 grant from Education Scotland, will culminate in a showcase event at Kinlochleven PS at the end of term.

the total fundraising for different charities over the months of November and December 2011 from the island of Luing to more than £1000.

BALLACHULISH

BALLACHULISH Visitor Centre will hold its annual fundraiser in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) tomorrow - the charity's 'SOS' day.

Events arranged so far include 'have a brew for the crew', SOS sweepstake and 'solve our sudoku', while Michael MacGregor Photography has again donated a signed print for the silent auction.

Centre manager Stewart Borland said: 'Our first full charity event was in 2008, when we raise £450 for the RNLI. We have taken part every year since and the amount raised has gone up each year too.'

'Back in May Karl and Pamela Griffin took over the centre - now 'The Quarry Centre'. They are both as keen to keep supporting the day as before - not least because Karl's brother is a member of Mallaig lifeboat crew!'

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

BALLACHULISH Community Council will hold its first meeting of 2012 in the Jubilee Pavilion on Tuesday, February 7.

Members will gather following last November's first meeting of the newly-elected community council, at which Mel MacAskill, Trish Whyte and Stewart Borland were elected as chairman, secretary and treasurer, respectively. Shirley Grant was elected as vice-chairman.

Selected items from the November 21 meeting: Witch's Slate - Cllr Gormley to e-mail conservation architect to inform her of our plans for a perspex cover for the Witch's Slate and ask if she has any other ideas.

An application to the ward discretionary budget to be made for cost of perspex cover.

Lighting - The community council paid a significant amount of money to Highland Council for the lights at the Slate Monument at the entrance to the village and

it is disappointing the council has not responded to requests to fix two of the lights.

Cllr Gormley to raise this issue and issue of lights at underpass with the lighting dept.

Vandalism - Concerns were raised again about the state of the children's playpark on Sunday mornings.

It was suggested that we work with the Parent Teacher Associations for both Ballachulish Primary School and Kinlochleven High School to look at solutions.

Tech Services can provide equipment eg grabbers and bags, for a clean-up.

Bus timetables - K Small has reported there are still issues.

It was proposed that she continue to follow up the issues.

Concerns were also raised about buses stopping on the carriageway at the south side of the Ballachulish Bridge.

Planters - all bulbs have now been planted.

Many thanks to Ballachulish Primary School for all their hard work.

Road surface in village - Concerns were raised about drains sinking.

Chairman to contact Highland Council.

The chairman proposed, seconded by the vice-chairman, to appoint two associate members to the community council at the next meeting.

The appointments were proposed because of their expertise in the running of the community council and involvement in various community projects.

AOCB: Concerns were raised about the sewer blocking and overflowing into the burns between the children's playpark and the croft and across the road.

Should this happen during heavy rainfall there is the potential for the sewage to flood into the playpark.

Secretary to contact Scottish Water.

There was a discussion about the possibility of have a multi-use games area in the village.

Correspondence was circulated.

INVERLOCHY

MRS MARGARET Bellwood saved the day when the speaker booked for Inverloch SWRI's November meeting had to cancel.

The cold, wet, windy, weather was forgotten as Margaret, dressed in an exquisitely embroidered Japanese jacket produced six beautiful floral arrangements.

She spoke of her recent exotic holiday cruise around China, Thailand and Japan. She walked on the Great Wall of China, attended a Chinese tea ceremony and visited many other wonderful places.

To the delight of the ladies the flowers were raffled. Mrs Muriel MacLellan gave the vote of thanks.

Winners of the fruit flan competition were: 1: Mrs Cathie MacDonald; 2: Mrs Christine MacLellan.

KILLIN

HOUSEHOLDERS and property owners in the Killin and Loch Tay areas are being urged to ensure their vehicles and sheds are secure after a shed was broken into at Easterlix last week.

Sometime between 6.30pm on Wednesday, January 16 and 8.30am the following day, someone forced their way into a shed, causing damage.

A van parked in the drive was also entered and damage caused.

Nothing appears to have been taken, however.

A spokesperson for Central Scotland Police said: 'Owners and occupiers of properties, particularly those in secluded and isolated locations, please be on your guard.'

'Secure your property and vehicles, think about your security measures and how they could be improved.'

Anyone who may have been in the Easterlix area, between Killin and Lix Toll, at the time and may have information is being urged to contact police or Crimestoppers.

KILLIN policeman, Andy Fleming, was this month recognised for over 20 years of service with Central Scotland Police at the Awards Ceremony at Police HQ in Stirling

THE BIG SHED, the new community building at Tombreak, has been busy with a number of events and classes.

Eighteen local piano and violin pupils gave a concert to a capacity audience. He performance was well received by the

audience. The performers also enjoyed the experience.

The performance began with two Chopin preludes and ended with a jazz piece.

Afterwards refreshments were served.

There was also an evening in which the climber James Ogilvie from Edinburgh gave a personal account of his ascent of Mount Everest which was illustrated with his amazing photographs.

He has climbed six of the seven highest peaks in the world's seven continents and plans to return when he has climbed the last remaining peak Mount Vinson in Antarctica. The event raised money for Tree Aid which is a forestry focused charity.

Killin Youth Group had another visit to The Big Shed where they made soda bread and tiffin cake in the bakery workshop and they also took part in a music workshop with professional musicians from Scottish Opera.

There was also a 'Baking for Christmas' day when Justin Tunstall demonstrated Christmas puddings, cakes, gingerbread and mincepies.

There is a classical concert on January 27 with Edinburgh String Quartet and Scottish Reed Trio will perform in February.

SKYE

TROTTERNISH-born Gaelic singer Anne Martin is to perform at Celtic Connections next Thursday night.

Anne and friends will headline at Ceol's Craic in the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) on Sauchiehall Street.

WRITER-in-residence at Skye's Gaelic college Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Rody Gorman, is requiring new poems in Irish or Scottish Gaelic for his annual poetry anthology, An Guth.

Dublin-born Mr Gorman, who is now based in Sleat, asks poems to be considered for publication to be sent to anguth@btinternet.com. Mr Gorman, who edits the anthology, is collecting works for An Guth 7.

RAASAY

ARNISH near Stornoway and its manufacturing yard is to become part of one of four new enterprise areas announced by the Scottish Government.

The Renewable Energy North Area is being set up to create employment opportunities, stimulate private investment and boost economic growth.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar leader Angus Campbell said the council looked forward to hearing what incentives will be put in place to attract investment.

Work to re-claim a huge fabrication building at Arnish was completed in November at a cost of £3million.

THE DEADLINE for postal votes for the Raasay Community Council election is 4pm today (Thursday).

Some 131 eligible voters will whittle down 10 nominees to eight councillors, with the count to take place tomorrow. Raasay failed to attract sufficient nominations for the first round of elections in November.

KILMORE

100 Club winners for December were £100 M Cruickshank, £300 D Morrison, £500 K Whyte and the January winner of £100 was D MacKinnon.

TYNDRUM

FRIDAY the 13th was certainly unlucky for some motorists, with one driver at Tyndrum reported for having tyres so worn the wires were showing through due to lack of tread.

The discovery was during spot checks at the village, during which 30 cars were stopped and inspected for road-worthiness and driver safety.

The joint operation was organised between Killin officers and officers from Strathclyde Police.

Police have stressed that it is important to make sure your vehicles are roadworthy, even more so at this time of year due to the adverse weather conditions.

More than 30 cars were stopped during the operation at Tyndrum and various defects highlighted to the drivers.

In addition to the vehicle with faulty front tyres, one person was charged with driving with no insurance.

Further to this one person was found to have an active means enquiry warrant for him.

KILCHRENAN

THE B845 Glen Nant road (Kilchrenan) was blocked last Friday when a wide load became stuck on an uphill sharp bend.

The lorry experienced a fault in its hydraulic system and the delay lasted for approximately three hours.

Some local residents had doctor's appointments which had to be cancelled. The school bus transporting pupils home from Oban High School to Kilchrenan, Dalavich and Inverinan was unable to complete the journey and parents were called to collect them and then ferry them home.

Residents in Kilchrenan and surrounding area are not surprised that this latest incident has happened, as they suffer heavy traffic daily due to the building of a new haulage route for timber traffic and also the building of the Carraig Gheal windfarm.

RESIDENTS in the Avich and Kilchrenan area were shocked to learn that the weekly school bus service has been cut back to only one run in the morning and one in the afternoon.

This has come as the a great shock to those without cars who depend on public transport.

The school bus, operated by West Highland Motors, leaves Dalavich for Oban High School at around 7.30am, travelling through Inverinan, Kilchrenan and Taynuilt. It currently returns to Dalavich in the afternoon to pick up passengers who wish to travel into Oban, do some shopping and return with the school pupils.

The Thursday bus to Taynuilt has been replaced by Awe Service Station instead of West Coast Motors.

SWRI

Taynuilt PRESIDENT Jessie Servant welcomed 20 members and three visitors to the meeting of Taynuilt SWRI held on January 11th in Taynuilt Village Hall.

The demonstrator for the evening was Judith Day, a Taynuilt member, showing how

to make sugar flowers for use in cake decorating. A wonderful evening was had by all watching the patience and skill, and listening to very interesting tales of many of Judith's experiences in this craft.

A vote of thanks was given and the hostesses for the evening were Jane Gillies and Stella Huntingford who provided a lovely tea.

Competitions: Knitted Christmas Tree Decoration: 1 Tracey Sage 2 Alice Campbell 3 Doreen Penswick. Three Wheaten Scones: 1 Doreen Penswick

Mull and Tiree THE MULL and Tiree Federation AGM was held in Craignure.

Outgoing chairman Linda Paterson presented For Services Rendered badges to Cathie MacLean and Olive Brown, and welcomed new chairman Cynthia MacFadyen.

Dervaig DERVAIG SWRI's December meeting was most definitely a sweet success with Margaret Broad's Christmas baking demonstration was a real treat.

As an expert demonstrator, she never mentioned the word 'calorie' once so no-one felt guilty about trying the samples offered! Indeed, who could do anything but praise a cook who says "be generous with the rum" when making delicious sweetmeats.

In a relatively short time she showed us how to make colletes (that's where the rum comes in!), brandy cups, almond truffles, tutti-frutti truffles, walnut logs, marzipan fruits and mini christmas puddings made of crushed digestive biscuits, chocolate and condensed milk. Her skill made it look deceptively easy, and she very kindly handed out copies of her recipes to encourage us to try for ourselves.

She also donated most of what she made as raffle prizes, and although she told us the chocolates would keep until Christmas the winners will need strong will-power to wait that long!

Thank you, Margaret, for a most enjoyable afternoon.

Tobermory CHRISTMAS night out at Café Fish with everyone wearing the fascinators they had made at the November meeting.

Salen ON DECEMBER 7 President Eileen Slorach, welcomed everyone to our December Meeting.

Speakers were Stewart and Sophie from the Isle of Mull Soap Company. They began by showing us how to make Lip Balm - Strawberry, followed by Bath Bombs - Rose Ylang, this was followed by Soap - Lemon Grass and Ginger. In each case they told us the recipes and method of each product. Some members got involved with the bath bombs with much success.

The room was heavy with lovely smells. Later they showed us some of their products which were quickly snapped up by the Members. A very informative and fragrant talk. After tea we had a short business meeting, which included a presentation of a gift to Kerry Wilde for her successful cycle ride in Kenya, which was much applauded.

Fionnphort At the meeting we first settled outstanding business, then had a demonstration of card box making from Valerie Fielding.

We were then let loose with coloured and patterned card, templates, scissors, glue and clothes pegs, and everyone managed to make one or two attractive boxes for Christmas gifts. Janis Allen and Marilyn Granger provided refreshments, with an extra gift of stolen from Julia Schoenleber. The evening's competition for a knitted toy was jointly won by Lorna Davies and Jenny Wright. Our Christmas evening was held at the Bunnass Bakery, which was very cheerful with decorations and lights. To get us in the spirit, we had crackers, secret Santa presents and a Christmas quiz. Everyone had a more than ample sufficiency of food, and we thank Jenny and Rod for their hard work.

DATES FOR THE DIARY Federation Show, June 4, Creich Hall, Fionnphort



Daylight owls in Ardnamurchan

Owls are night birds...except in Ardnamurchan, it would appear. Local resident Sue Cameron snapped this tawny owl at Ockle last Thursday - but what it was doing there in broad daylight was 'a bit of a mystery', she said.

Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd

A bheil ùidh agad Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh san sgìre agad?

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JURA

THE ISLE OF JURA's first festival of oral culture will be held over Easter weekend, April 8 and 9 2012.

Jura's annual September jamboree of Scottish traditional music has been a must go, must see, must hear, event for over a decade and a half.

Now, that team is bringing their enthusiasm to mounting an Easter holiday event.

Bàrr mo Theanga or Tip of the Tongue is a celebration of oral culture in its many forms - storytelling, poetry, song and

reading out loud, in English and Gaelic. With place at its heart, the new event will explore Jura, Scotland and her islands and that common ground that is human experience.

Artists and features confirmed for Bàrr mo Theanga include: Anne Michaels, Orange Prize for Fiction winning Canadian author of 'The Winter Vault', set partly on the island. Ian Stephen, Lewisman, storyteller, poet and man of the sea, plus Alasdair Roberts, renowned musician and

folklorist. Jura's ceilidh and oral tradition will be to the fore with workshops, ceilidhs, song cycles, oral histories and a wonderful children's programme - a new song cycle based on the works of the Islay Bards

All this at what those in the know say is the best time of year to see a rugged west coast island that boasts one of the UK's last wildernesses, with a community that won't stop making you part of it while you're there.

And of course, there's always the chance of a dram or two from the island's own distillery.

The event has been made possible by a Quality Production award from Creative Scotland and support from Jura Development Trust's Argyll and the Islands Leader and HIE funded GaTE Local Development Officer.

You can find more information at www.tipofthetonguefestival.com and www.barrmotheanga.com

GIGHA

GIGHA Coastguard Team was tasked with helping a stricken fishing vessel, which was taking on water.

Highland Queen was positioned off the island failure last Tuesday when it suffered engine failure.

Another fishing vessel, Blue Angel, was also called to assist the boat, which had three people on board.

The vessel was towed to Tayinloan for repairs.

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Appin Gaelic Playgroup, Croileagan Apainn, held a fun morning last Wednesday, in Strath of Appin Primary School. It was a huge success with 15 pre-school aged children enjoying a morning of art and craft, a lively Bookbug session, and fun with Stramash outside.

Some of the Gaelic medium pupils joined in the fun too. The event was supported by Bord na Gaidhlig. Appin Gaelic playgroup is every Tuesday and is open to all pre-school aged children



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Sentence delayed on two men who caused £9,000 of damage to caravan park

TWO MEN who caused £9,000 of damage to static caravan at a Lochaber holiday park have had their sentencing deferred until February 15.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the one of the men, Michael Gallacher, of 92 Salisbury, East Kilbride had been remanded in custody in

Hamilton on a separate charge and could not attend court in Fort William last Wednesday when he and Scott Miller were due to be sentenced.

Gallacher, aged 21, and Miller, aged 27, previously pled guilty to wilfully or recklessly damaging the property of another by knocking holes in wall panels

and damaging the electrical supply, bending doors, smashing a light fitting, the living room fire and a microwave and smearing blood over other

furnishings. Miller, of 95 Warwick, East Kilbride also admitted a breach of the peace by shouting, swearing and uttering threats to

the proprietor at Caolasnacon Caravan Park near Kinlochleven. The incidents occurred on August 15, 2010.

Connel church lunch to aid those less fortunate

CONNEL Parish Church members are doing their bit to aid starving children in East Africa by inviting everyone to join them for lunch this Saturday, January 28, at Connel Church Hall from 12 noon until 2pm.

Parishioners of St Oran's and Dunbeg churches are supporting the Argyll-based charity Mary's Meals who are sourcing food for the Horn of Africa from Malawi, where they have been active for several years. Sacks of a nutritious porridge made from maize, called Likuni Phala, are being transported by road to Durban from Malawi. Then from South Africa the food is shipped to Mogadishu, the capital of famine-hit Somalia. One tonne of Likuni Phala costs £380 and provides 13,000 meals at very low cost and also supports the Malawian economy.

Mary's Meals is also providing life-saving meals for children in 23 nurseries around Lodwar, a remote part of Northern Kenya. These children belong to the Turkana tribe whose lives are being destroyed by climate change. Their cattle have died and the Turkana have flocked to villages to get Mary's Meals.

In the schools the children receive two meals per day: the first of porridge and one of beans and maize mash, and there they are safe, happy and are receiving an education.

The Connel lunch date comes as Mary's Meals appeal for donations as soon as possible to enable them to buy more food for East Africa.

Man threatened mother and son with hammer

A MAN who threatened a mother and her son with a hammer in a Lochaber farmhouse is due to be sentenced on February 15.

Joseph McAlpine, of flat 4/3, 18 Burness Drive, Glasgow was found guilty of assaulting the woman and robbing her of a mobile phone after a trial at Fort William Sheriff Court.

The 30-year-old was also found guilty of uttering threats of violence to the woman and her teenage son while holding a hammer at Drimnatorran Farm House, Strontian on March 8.

New home-based palliative care service launched

Oban Hospice and North Argyll Carers' Centre joint forces for new Hospice at Home venture

A NEW service helping to deliver palliative care to people in their own homes was officially launched last week.

Run jointly by Oban Hospice and the North Argyll Carers' Centre (NACC), Oban Hospice at Home - supported by local NHS and social services management - is as a result of detailed discussions and planning over the last 18 months.

Oban Hospice will fully fund the role, while the Carers' Centre has been contracted to deliver the service. Lisa Anderson has been appointed the new Hospice at Home co-ordinator, working from the NACC office in Oban's Albany Street.

Lisa has effectively been fulfilling the role since October last year and response from service users has so far been positive. It is hoped Lisa's current three day week will be expanded over the coming months in line with need.

"Modern palliative care is best delivered at home."

Dr Mac Armstrong chairman Oban Hospice

Phillip White, chairman of NACC, said: 'We are delighted negotiations between the two boards have come to fruition and particularly pleased that our ability to operate and manage projects such as this is recognised by the awarding of this contract.'

Dr Mac Armstrong, chairman of Oban Hospice, said: 'Modern palliative care is best delivered at home and the aim of this new service is to ensure people

can access the network of help available from social services and the NHS earlier and in a more co-ordinated way.

'Working with NACC allows us to ensure this service is delivered in a managed and efficient way, making best use of the funds so generously donated to Oban Hospice by people in Lorn and the Isles.'

The idea for Hospice at Home was germinated during a workshop with local service and NHS professionals, sponsored by Oban Hospice, to explore what more could be done to improve the high standard of services in Lorn and the Isles.

Oban Hospice has committed to fund the Hospice at Home Service with up to £40,000 per annum for three years.

For more information about the Hospice at Home service, contact Lisa on 01631 564422 or drop into the NACC at Albany Street, Oban.



North Argyll Carers' Centre manager, Ruth Moody, is pictured with new Hospice at Home co-ordinator Lisa Anderson and Oban Hospice's chairman, Dr Mac Armstrong. 15_104hospice1



Regan Campbell got into spirit at last year's event. 20_104together01

Lochaber fundraisers to Run Together for second year success

Previous event raises £14,000

THE LOCHABER Run Together charity fundraiser is to be held for a second year, organisers have announced.

£14,000 for charity
The inaugural 2011 event at the BA Club in Fort William raised over £14,000 for Cancer Research UK.

The family day saw hundreds of people walk, jog or run five kilometres through the town's scenic outskirts.

Run Together 2012, again in aid of Cancer Research UK, will be held at the same venue on Saturday, April 28. Registration is now open.

Head organiser, Caol man Adam Ramsey, said: 'The route is almost flat and is suitable for

wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

'Participants of all ages and abilities will begin their walk, jog or run at 2pm, but the fun starts at 12 noon with the Kidzone - including face painting, bouncy castle and more.'

Live music throughout the day, local strong men, a car boot sale and a Zumba warm-up will also feature, Mr Ramsey said.

Registration forms are available online at www.lochabertogether.co.uk or from the Cancer Research UK shop on the High Street. For more information visit the website, speak to Sharon in the shop or call Adam on 07887 706 100.

Employers encouraged to help the young

OBAN'S Papparazzi Bar and Club is just one employer to receive a £2,000 boost by taking on an apprentice.

Expanded
More local businesses are now being encouraged to look at taking on an apprentice after eligibility criteria for the Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI) scheme was expanded. Now, any business that takes

on an apprentice aged 16-19, or anyone aged 20 or over who has been unemployed for a short period, will be able to take advantage of the scheme delivered by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and supported by the Scottish Government.

The chief executive of SDS, Damien Yeates, said: 'Scotland's young people make a valuable contribution to businesses and

the wider economy. We hope this will encourage more employers to offer our young people that opportunity.'

'As well as the recruitment incentive, the cost of an apprentice's training is subsidised, making it a really smart way to grow a skilled workforce.'

For more information, call the SDS helpline on 0800 783 6000 or visiting sds.co.uk/eri.

Caol man denies assaulting woman

A CAOL man who denies assaulting a woman in his house is due to stand trial at Fort William Sheriff Court on February 2.

Lee Murray, aged 24, of 72 Glenkingie Street, pled not guilty to striking the woman on the head and hand to her injury and seizing her by the body causing her to lose her balance.

The alleged incidents occurred between November 7 and 10.

Calmac ferry heads for dry dock

THE CALEDONIAN MacBrayne (CalMac) ferry *MV Isle of Lewis* left for dry dock in Liverpool earlier this week for maintenance.

Her place on the Ullapool - Stornoway run will be taken by the *MV Clanman* which normally services the Oban - Barra - South Uist route.

In February, the *MV Hebrides* is due in dry dock in Aberdeen.

Man smashed windows of family house in Corpach

A MAN who became abusive and smashed two windows while visiting his family in Corpach is due to be sentenced on February 15.

Kenneth Livingston, of 5 Fort William Parade, Antrim Road, Belfast pled guilty to wilfully or recklessly breaking the windows on July 22.

The 27-year-old also admitted behaving in a threatening or abusive manner by shouting and swearing and threatening violence.

He was due to be sentenced last Wednesday but failed to appear at Fort William Sheriff Court. Defence agent Stephen Kennedy said Livingston was still in Northern Ireland as his partner had been taken to hospital.

Asda plan new store expansion

SUPERMARKET chain Asda has announced plans to open 25 new stores and three depots in the UK, creating 5,000 jobs this year. It also plans to extend and refurbish 43 of its existing stores.

Asda is currently looking at building new stores in Inverness and Tain.

Celtic Connections fires into life for 2012 festival

THE BIGGEST annual celebration of Celtic song, literature, music and art fired-up last week as Scotland's Celtic Connections festival got underway.

A festival that focuses the spotlight on Celtic culture and music, the event will see more than 2,100 musicians from around the world take to the stage at 20 venues across Glasgow.



Argyll's world-class piper Angus MacColl, Benderloch

Featuring singers, fiddlers, pipers and artists from across the west coast, and in particular Lochaber and Argyll, the region will be well represented at the 18-day festival featuring 300 concerts, ceilidhs, art exhibitions, and workshops.

Scottish bagpipe legend, Fred Morrison, who recently spent time training young Argyll pipers, took the centre stage on Tuesday, when he joined the Irish quartet

of Dónal Lunny, Liam O'Flynn, Andy Irvine and Paddy Glackin. Fred performed material from his 2010 album *Outlands*, which combines his family's South Uist piping style and that of US bluegrass.

The ever-popular Blazin' Fiddles also be returned to the event with the band's new members - Shetland fiddler Jenna Reid and multi-instrumentalist Anna Massie. Hailed as one of the best live acts to see today, the group will play songs throughout the festival from their recent album *Thursday Night in the Caley*.

Argyll's world-class piper Angus MacColl has also been invited to play at the Gordon Duncan Recital.

Designed as a homage to the famous piper, Angus, from Benderloch, near Oban, has been invited to play music from the Scottish, Irish and Breton piping traditions, which Gordon enjoyed and excelled in playing. The Glenfiddich Piping Champion of 2010, Angus will compete against pipers Alexis Meunier and Northern Ireland's Robert Watt for the Gordon Duncan Recital title.

The 2012 Celtic Connections event will see a focus on Irish song, with musical greats from the Emerald Isle joining to perform the Song for Ireland concert. The cast includes two veteran colossi of Irish folk, singer and uilleann piper Finbar Furey and singer/accordionist Séamus Begley, the latter joined by his daughter Méabh. The renowned Cara Dillon and Luka Bloom will each cast their distinctive but equally compelling spell on the night, together with Eleanor McEvoy and Julie Feeney, winner of the Choice Music Prize for Irish album of the year.

The famed Celtic Connections ceilidhs are also on the bill for this year's festival, with no less than six ceilidhs scheduled throughout the 18-day festival. Shetland dance band, The Cullivoe Ceilidh Band, will take to the stage next Saturday urging the audience to kick up their heels and join in.

Charity needs volunteers to distribute £4million to Scottish communities

VOLUNTEERS are being sought by a Scottish charity to help distribute some £4million of funding to good causes.

The Scottish Community Foundation is one of Scotland's busiest grant makers, distributing money on behalf of its clients to exceptional charities and projects across the country.

Training
To help make the best awards, the foundation is looking for a team of volunteers to help assess applications. Volunteers can work from home, with any expenses reimbursed.

Nick Addington, head of philanthropy services for the foundation, said: 'The foundation has worked with volunteer assessors since 1996. We find that our

applicants - who are often volunteers - respond well to other people who are giving their time to a good cause.'

'We have a staff team based in Edinburgh and Glasgow, so having assessors based throughout Scotland keeps us informed about the needs of communities from the Highlands and Islands to the borders.'

In return, the foundation will provide training; link volunteers to a network of like-minded people; and create opportunities for assessors to visit projects funded by its clients through the Foundation's grants programmes.

For more information, visit the foundation's website at scottishcf.org or contact Alice Dansey-Wright on 0141 341 4960.

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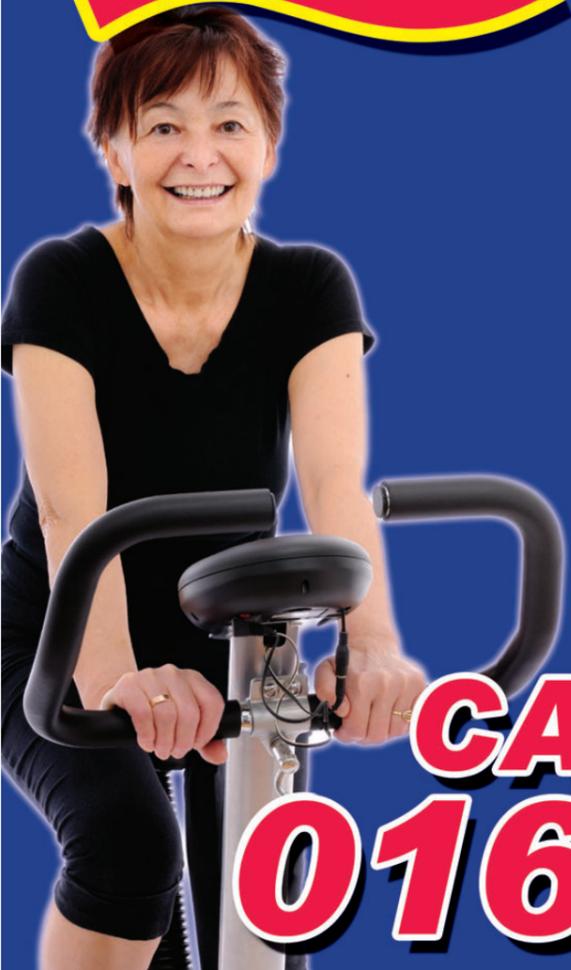
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Mallaig fishing fleet stuck in port after stormy start

JANUARY storms have prevented Mallaig fishermen putting to sea at all in 2012. Around 20 prawn boats have remained tied up in port, leaving skippers fretting over when they will be able to land their next catch. Mallaig port manager Robert MacMillan told *The Oban Times*: 'It has been a pretty disappointing start to the year. Some boats have never been at sea yet. 'It's been a storm one day quickly followed by another. There's no point in going to sea for a day, because it takes two or three days to get back into the swing.'

Caol man charged through hospital in wheelchair

A CAOL man has admitted charging through accident and emergency at the Belford Hospital in a wheelchair on New Year's Day demanding an x-ray. Robert Lawrie, of 22 Glenpane Street, pled guilty at Fort William Sheriff Court to causing a disturbance by propelling himself through the busy department on a wheelchair and assaulting, obstructing or hindering two nurses by shouting and swearing. Sheriff Douglas Small said the 48-year-old's behaviour was 'quite unacceptable' and said he was considering putting him in jail. Sentencing was deferred until February 15 for reports. **Lochaber historians to meet** LOCHABER Local History Society will hear the history of T.S. St Christopher at its monthly meeting next Thursday. Commanding officer Derrick Warner will speak on how the extensive land based naval training station was based around Loch Linnhe during WWII, with buildings requisitioned and a slipway and built at Corpach. All are welcome to Alexandra Hotel gathering at 8pm.



Footballing cousins Sean (left) and Michael Ellis are swapping Lochaber for Australia next month. 20_04elliss01

Fort duo to play in Australia

TWO FORT William FC players are preparing to leave Lochaber behind and jet off for a new start in Australia. Cousins Sean and Michael Ellis, both aged 22, have secured a deal with Melbourne-based club Cobram Tigers and will fly out next month. Amateur side Cobram play in the North Eastern Soccer League, and the club have found jobs for the pair with a local building firm as well as accommodation. The move was facilitated by another former Claggan Park favourite who made the move to the south-east coast of Australia a number of years ago. Sean explained to *The Oban Times*: 'There's a guy who used to play for Fort William, Stuart Vance, who's out there playing for Cobram and he's set most of it up for us. He sorted us with jobs and a place to stay. Michael added: 'We started thinking about it six months ago. It's all come about a bit quicker than we were expecting actually. We weren't planning on going until about August, but the opportunity came up so we took it. I just wanted a change of lifestyle, to see what it's like down there.' Sean, who also played for the youth teams at Inverness Caledonian Thistle and Ross County, said there will be mixed emotions when he leaves Claggan Park after seven years with the club. He said: 'I think we've got two home games to play before we leave then that's it. It will be sad to go but I want to try something new. It's been something we've been thinking about for a while. 'We will miss our friends and family. I'll probably miss playing in the Highland League as well. But I think we're both quite happy about the move - there's much better weather and we want a wee change of scenery. 'We're flying out on February 10. We only booked the tickets on Sunday so we don't even have them yet.' Fort manager Danny Conlon told *The Oban Times* losing the two would 'certainly be a blow' to his side, but Michael said he is confident the players left behind can cope. 'I think they'll be fine without us,' he said. 'There's some good young boys coming through just now. We'll still be looking up all their results to see how they are getting on.' The pair are following in the footsteps of Caol man George Campbell, who made the move to Australian football back in 1978. The former Aberdeen winger became Australia's most expensive ever signing when he left the Dons to join South Melbourne FC for £20,000. He played for and managed a number of different Australian clubs and now runs his own footballing academy, Melbourne Football STARS.

Kilmallie Community Council appoint new chairman

KILMALLIE Community Council (KCC) has appointed a new chair after incumbent Jillian Clark stepped down. Maggie MacKenzie was voted in as the new chair at the first KCC meeting of 2012 in Kilmallie Hall last week. Russell Leaper remains secretary while Mrs Clark said her reasons for stepping down were 'purely personal'. She said: 'I'm working full time now and I just don't have the time anymore. But I am still a member of the council.' Meanwhile, the KCC website launched late last year, www.kilmallie.org.uk, is proving popular with the local community. As well as giving details of KCC meetings and local events, the website details some of the history of Corpach, Banavie and Tomonich thanks to local historian Hugh Muir. Mr Leaper said a 'steady stream' of people had used the website. He said: 'The feedback is very positive about it.'

Unexploded bombs found on famous Singing Sands

Bomb disposal squad delayed by road closures and ferry restrictions

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



One of the mortar rounds found on the Singing Sands near Ardtoe on Monday

NAVY BOMB disposal experts from Faslane were called to a popular Lochaber beach on Tuesday to blow up live World War II mortar rounds. Salen coastguard team member Tom Jackson came across three of the unexploded shells while walking on the Singing Sands, Kentra Bay, Achacrae, late on Sunday afternoon. **Violent storms** The beach was cordoned off at first light on Monday so coastguard members could carry out a detailed search. By Tuesday morning, 14 finned mortars, each around 18 inches long, had been located. It is believed recent violent storms stripped sand off the beach, exposing the ordnance. Stornoway coastguard tasked the Faslane bomb disposal squad to attend, but their arrival at Ardtoe was delayed because high explosives are not allowed on the Corran Ferry and the Glenluig road was temporarily closed for repairs. Coastguard Lochaber sector manager Phil Wren warned the public to keep clear and report any similar finds in future by dialling 999 for the coastguard. He told *The Oban Times*: 'Some of these mortars would appear to be live and are extremely dangerous. 'Don't go near them and don't pick them up, but if you have a camera with you take a picture to help us identify them. 'There's no doubt there are more there, because the ones we have found are all that have been exposed so far. 'We will be asking the landowner if we can display warning signs.' Achacrae Community Council chairman Hugh MacPherson said bullets, bombs and other wartime explosives are uncovered regularly on the sands, which are only accessible along a four-mile track from Ariveigaig. He said: 'Every time there's a big gale the sand shifts and shows up the shells. 'Maybe some sort of clean-up using metal detectors would be the answer. 'The amount of people using the beach has gone up ten-fold in the past 20 years - it's a beautiful spot. 'Walkers, wild campers and kayakers all use it - it's quite a busy beach now in summer. 'God forbid if there was an accident.' The scenic beach was used as a training ground for the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, in June 1944. The coastguard and Navy take responsibility for any ordnance found on the shoreline. Police and the Army handle munitions found inland.

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River Lochy shotgun trial held back until March

THE TRIAL of a Torlundy man accused of firing a shotgun over the heads of four men near the River Lochy has been put back to March 12 after he appointed a new lawyer. John Veitch, aged 45, of The Steading, Camisky Lodge, pleaded not guilty at Fort William Sheriff Court to culpably and recklessly discharging the pump action shotgun over the heads of the men to their alarm and danger at Torcastle, near Banavie on July 1.

Oban archers line-up for Portsmouth

OBAN AND Lorn Archers will hold their annual Portsmouth competition at Atlantis Leisure, Oban this Sunday. There is a much reduced entry this year, possibly due to the national body running a coaching session at Largs at the same time, but there will still be several good archers coming as far as Ayr, Edinburgh and this year from North of Inverness. The competition is scheduled to start at 1.30 pm.

Man who fought with police sent to wilderness

A FORT William man has been ordered to take part in a six-month wilderness course aimed at helping people with 'chaotic lifestyles' after admitting struggling violently with two police officers. John Lawrie will start the course with Edinburgh-based charity Venture Trust on February 1. Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'There's no harm in trying to get him back on the straight and narrow, and I think Venture Trust might just do that.' The 26-year-old, who has a number of previous convictions, was also ordered to attend alcohol counselling and be of good behaviour for one year. Lawrie, of Room 2 An Caladh, Fassifern Road, pled guilty at Fort William Sheriff Court to resisting the officers at 30 Douglas Place on September 29.

Councillor calls for 'common sense' in Argyll disability benefit overpayment case

COUNCIL officers who overpaid disability benefit to three people in Argyll and Bute need to find a 'common sense' solution to recovering the monies paid. That's the view of Oban SNP councillor Roddy McCuish, who criticised the decision to ask those overpaid an average of more than £600 each across seven months to pay it all back at once. He believes the council should instead be asking for the money back in smaller payments, but stopped short of calling for the gaffe to be written off entirely. Argyll and Bute Council has this week said, however, that two of the three persons affected by the error have now returned the overpayments. Mr McCuish, who sits in opposition to the administration, said: 'We have to look for a sensible way of rectifying our mistake and it absolutely was our mistake. 'We have to look at staggered payment spread over a number of weeks until we've got the money back when situations like this arise. 'At the end of the day, those affected received money they shouldn't have, so it's right that they do pay it back. 'But people shouldn't have to suffer hardship because of a council mistake.' He has now called for more rigorous checks to be carried out to ensure no over or underpayments are made in future. In total, £1,836 was overpaid to three individuals who receive the payments through the new Direct Payment Allowance (DPA) scheme. One of those affected, Oban man Lawrence Nugent was told that, minus a waiver of £34.87, he had been overpaid £587.57, which would be deducted from his next monthly payment of £710.92. That would leave him with just £123 to get him through the month. Mr Nugent believes it is imperative those who receive DPA are treated properly because they may not be able to properly scrutinise what monies are paid into their account. A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said new safeguards have been put in place to ensure there is no repeat in future. Responding to an enquiry first submitted to the council on December 9 last year, a spokesperson on Friday said: 'All three people affected by the overpayment were sent the same letter from Argyll and Bute Council. 'All three were asked for 100 per cent of the money back at the same time and two of them immediately returned the money. 'A new system is in place at the council and there were mistakes made and we are sorry for any distress caused. 'Controls have been put in place to make sure this does not happen again.'

Dalmally's dark days should be over

DALMALLY residents should not suffer a repeat of the rolling power cuts that have been blighting the village since November. **Darkness** Problems first arose at the end of November, when a transformer failed, plunging homes and businesses into darkness. While a repair was quickly effected, the problem was followed up by a series of storms throughout December and January, causing trees to fall on the overhead supply network. This trend continued at the weekend when trees, already weakened by previous strong winds, shed branches during last week's moderate to strong winds. Dalmally resident Wendi Phillips said: 'Since the end of November I don't think a week has gone past without at least one power cut - this week we have had three. 'While I take my hat off to the lads that repair the lines and restore the power I have to say I am sick of it all - as they must be too.' A spokesperson for Scottish Hydro Power Distribution (SHPD) said: 'Extensive tree cutting is now underway at Cladich Hill and Bovuy to protect our overhead network. 'We're hopeful the residents of Dalmally will benefit from this preventative work.' Meanwhile, trees on power lines in Jura caused outages to the island, Islay and Colonsay on Monday morning. Power went off at 9.25am but was restored an hour later. Again, extensive tree cutting is taking place in a bid to prevent a recurrence. SHPD's spokesperson said: 'We would like to apologise to all our customers affected by the faults and we are doing all we can to prevent a repeat in the future.'

Caol man admits threatening family

A CAOL man has admitted threatening members of his family and waving a knife at them on Christmas Eve. Alexander Williamson, 22, of 4 Glenmallee Terrace, pled guilty and

Sustainable Mull and Iona
Craignure Village Hall • February 4, 2012

MULL'S second Renewables Fair takes place next weekend, giving locals a chance to find out about the latest green energy sources. Sustainable Mull and Iona will host the event on Saturday, February 4 from 11am-4pm. The group's chairman, Nigel Burgess, says the event gives everyone a chance to discover how they can reduce their energy bills and carbon footprint. He said: 'For those who are seeking solutions to rising energy bills, or simply a desire to reduce their carbon footprint, this event will have something of interest. 'Exhibitors will be on hand to discuss wind, wood fuel, solar and hydro technologies, as well as advisors on energy efficiency. 'At present, the west coast of Scotland is the focus of a number of multinational corporations scabbling to get their hands on the rich renewable resources around our coastline. 'This event will also help identify a way of working together to harvest these resources for local benefit.' Keynote speaker at the fair will be Alastair MacIntosh, professor of human ecology, author of *Soil and Soul*, protagonist in the Harris super-quarry story and co-founder of the Isle of Eigg Trust. The afternoon theme will be introduced by Barry Edmunson of Abernethy Community Hydro electric. For more information about the event can be found at Mull and Iona Community Trust's website at mict.co.uk.

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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Few options available to A83

THE RISING tide of interest in a petition originating from the First Argyll political group within Argyll and Bute Council highlighting the need for long-term improvements to the A83 road network clearly demonstrates the importance of this route to the economy of Argyll in general and the southern sector of Argyll in particular.

While accepting that the geography of the area is diverse and complicated, the sheer volume of traffic that is dependant on this high-level route through the Argyll hills is both an indication of the demand for a long-term solution - and, perhaps, in itself, part of the problem.

It has to be accepted that there are few, if any, alternative suitable routes, therefore an in-depth investigation into the environment through which the road travels may be the only logical first step - and a halt called to the current short-term, high cost, high-tech projects that have raised expectations - and little else.

GLASGOW LETTER

Ceol's Craic at Celtic Connections

ALTHOUGH there is activity in the CCA throughout Celtic Connections today, (Thursday), is the start of three evenings of programmed entertainment.

Anna Martin and Friends supported by Asklen, a Breton band, and Glasgow University staff and students will play tonight and then tomorrow night it will be Kaela Rowan, Ewan MacPherson and James MacKintosh supported by Alix Quoniam, a French singer who mixes her passion for Gaelic traditional songs with French songs, and Yves Pucher.

Saturday will see Donald MacDonald, son of Calum of Runrig, and The Island supported by Willie Campbell (Astrid) and Graeae Hollands.

Each evening the concert will commence at 8pm. The CCA is a Gaelic Hub throughout Celtic Connections with information being provided on all matters relating to Gaelic in the city throughout the Festival.

Mull and Iona Association Gathering and Concert

THE FIRST of the 2012 Gatherings will take place in Glasgow University Union on Friday February 10th with the concert commencing at 7.30pm and the dance at 10.30pm.

Over the past few years the Mull and Iona Association have introduced a less formal format to their proceedings and this has proved to be successful at a time of declining attendances.

Singers this year will be Alasdair Whyte, Jennifer Campbell and Stuart Jackson with the Mull and Iona Ceilidh Band and the Mull and Iona Pipers also performing. The concert will be chaired by Jim Corbett (Lochbuie). Music for the dance will be provided by Camus. Ticket prices are £8.00 for the concert and dance or £5 for the dance only.

Ceilidh in Milngavie

RECENTLY I reported the cancellation of an Annual Ball scheduled for Milngavie Town Hall due to lack of numbers and now I am happy to report that last weekend the same venue was packed for a buffet ceilidh dance held jointly by the shinty communities of Glasgow and Milngavie.

All age groups were represented, with the majority being teenagers, and all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the traditional ceilidh dances and also some not quite so traditional.

Stirling An Comun

SOLOISTS at the recent Stirling ceilidh were Kirsteen Grant, Ceitidh Smith and Iain MacLean with the instrumental items being in the capable hands of piper Dr Innes Smith and accordionist Fiona Johnstone. The ever present Cluaran Dancers were there to delight the audience and both Fiona and Kirsteen provided the accompaniment for a sing along in what was an enjoyable ceilidh chaired by Mary MacColl.

Paisley Highlanders

THE RECENT ceilidh dance organised by Paisley Highlander's Association was a great success and was extremely well attended.

Archie Duncan's Band provided the music, Morag Law was the soloist and the piper for the evening was Josh Fraser.

The committee look forward to similar support for their forthcoming events.

Dates for Diary

THURSDAY January 26 Glasgow Sutherland Association Burns Supper. Buff's Club, 937, Dumbarton Road. 7pm. Ceol's Craic-see above. Friday January 27 Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance, Glasgow University Union

Friday February 3 Closing date for entries to the Junior Piping Competition at the National Piping Centre Saturday February 4 Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Marag Supper, Partick Burgh (Lesser) Hall, 7.45pm. Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, Perth Concert Hall, 7.30pm

Pub Scene

MUSIC in the Park Bar this weekend will be provided by Gunna Sound on Friday, Eriskey Lilt on Saturday and Willie Cameron/ Martin Pottinger on Sunday while in the Islay Inn it will be Crooked Reel on Friday and on Saturday the band will be Annaas Bahm.

Saturday evening in the Islay Inn will also be the first round of the piping competition which is being run in association with the National Piping Centre and which was very successful last year.

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



Bruichladdich Distillery management and staff from 45 years ago this week

Retired stillman Mr A Neish, Port Charlotte, Islay sent us this photograph of the management and staff of A.B Grant Ltd's Bruichladdich Distillery on January 23 1967 at the Grand Opening of No13 Warehouse - the first steel rack.

Back Row standing - I Campbell, D Henderson, T Henderson, D McGregor, A Neish, J Henderson, I McCuig, D McCellan, R Learmond, J Ferguson. Sitting on casks - left, D MacKinnon, right, J Clark. Sitting front - J MacLachlan, J Mitchell, Miss Thomson, director, Mr P Logie, manager, I MacKinnon and D Christie. Missing from picture - G Carmichael, D McLean, R MacLeod and D McIntosh.

Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Inaccuracy over number of Radio Scotland job losses

Sir, Your leading article ('Cold wind of change blows through BBC' of January 19) does not accurately reflect the position.

One third of Radio Scotland's production staff will not lose their jobs.

Eleven post reductions in News, which are being discussed with the BBC unions, are part of a package of cuts required of the BBC as a result of the current Licence Fee settlement. That settlement will require a £16m reduction in BBC Scotland's annual budget by 2017 and a reduction of between 100 and 120 posts.

In News, in total, 30 posts will be lost, over the next five years, from a workforce, in that area, of around 240.

The Licence Fee freeze will inevitably impact on BBC Scotland's budget. However we will endeavour to minimise its effect by seeking, where appropriate, voluntary redundancies and redeployment and by ensuring that audience needs at all times take precedence.

Ian Small, Head of Public Policy & Corporate Affairs, BBC Scotland

Kinloch Castle is national icon

Sir, Admire it or hate it for whatever reason, Kinloch Castle on Rum is a national icon. It stands alongside such giants as the Cullins, the Glenfinnan Monument and the Caledonian Canal. The classic photograph from the upstairs balcony of the main hall with its tiger skins, stags' heads and Lady Bullough's portrait, is one of the most recognisable

images in Europe.

The announcement by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) that they are to close the hostel inside the castle and replace it with 'high-quality' accommodation elsewhere on the island, must surely set alarm bells ringing for the future of the Castle and the island's resident community.

Although the proposed new hostel is being described as 'temporary' it could so easily become permanent and ultimately lead to the abandonment of the castle even though it is a Grade 'A' listed building.

It is well known that SNH does not feel it should be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of historic buildings. The temporary 'sticking plaster' approach they have adopted over the past decade instead of a long-term rolling programme of serious repairs and stabilisation, is indicative of that.

When Lady Bullough sold Rum, lock stock and barrel to SNH's predecessors in 1957 it was on condition that the castle would be kept as it has been in its Edwardian heyday. SNH should honour that commitment before they find they have another Lewis Castle on their hands.

Instead of spending £13 million in 2006 on Great Glen House, their massive headquarters in Inverness, SNH should have relocated to Kinloch. That would have assured the castle's upkeep and brought many economic benefits and improved transport links to the Inner Hebrides for the foreseeable future.

Iain Thornber, Morvern

Questions asked over Mull mail

Sir, Could those responsible please explain why our mail and newspapers arrive on Mull on Fridays from the 8am boat - and thus enable postmen, shopkeepers

and customers alike to enjoy a less attenuated day - when for the rest of the week we have to wait for the 10am sailing?

Could it be that, on Fridays in the winter timetable, there is no 10am boat? Not even 12noon or 2pm?

Let us have an answer please. Alison Bartholomew, Calgary, Mull

Comments on priority needs issues in housing

Sir, As a member of Oban Community Council, I would like to respond to recent comments on homeless applications.

It is my understanding that the Scottish Government requires local authorities to move to a target of 100 per cent priority needs determination for all unintentionally homeless applicants in the coming year 2012/2013.

The Argyll and Bute figure of achievement for 2011/2012 is already in the order of 90 per cent and steadily increasing despite the slow down in house building.

Argyll and Bute Council have recently approved changes in their policy to achieve the Scottish Government target of 100 per cent, however, any changes in Government and Local Authority policy/targets has to be carefully considered to ensure that our most vulnerable and deserving residents are still prioritised.

Sean MacIntyre

Scottish Labour's contribution to Rural Scotland

Sir, I read with interest the recent column by Alan Cochrane (January 5) regarding the SNP's

current dominance of Rural Scotland.

Admittedly a fair and considered journalist, I was nevertheless intrigued by his analysis of Scottish Labour's contribution to Rural Scotland that implied a contribution that was fairly minimal with its primary characteristic being that it 'smacked of outright class war'.

My party has a long and proud history of serving rural Scotland and one that is often overlooked. This history goes all the way back to the 1940s when Tom Johnston the Labour Secretary of State for Scotland, nationalised hydro power, giving electricity to Highlanders for the first time. This continued in 1965 when Willie Ross created the Highlands and Islands Development Board and paved the way to help turn around a massive population decline in the Highlands and Islands.

More recently the national minimum wage has made an enormous difference in rural Scotland. Labour's UK wide commitment to the NHS has improved health outcomes across the board and, under devolution, the biggest school building programme in Scotland's history has made a huge impact not least in Argyll and Bute where it included brand new schools such as Hermitage Academy in Helensburgh, Dunoon Grammar, Lochgilphead High School and of course Oban Primary campus.

In the Scottish Parliament Labour has a record of which we are proud. Cochrane is right to mention land reform as one of our key achievements. Far from being an act of class war this legislation was about righting a historical wrong, but more importantly empowering communities across Scotland to prosper and develop in the way that the communities themselves choose. Ultimately rural policy is

Times Diary

WHEN thieves broke into Ewan MacDonald's flat in Perth over the New Year holiday they must have thought they had hit the jackpot when they found a small plastic bag of white powder, with the word 'Charlie' scribbled in pen, concealed at the back of a drawer.

Police informed Ewan that 'Charlie' is a common slang name for cocaine - but this Charlie was the ashes of Ewan's recently dearly departed Jack Russell.

Enjoy!



FRIGGATRISKA IDEKAPHOBIA - no it's not just a jumble of letters - apparently it's the fear of Friday 13th.

While some people in this country may be a little uneasy about that particular day, America has taken it to new heights.

According to figures recently released the U.S. economy loses \$800-\$900 million each Friday the 13th because people are afraid to take 'risks,' such as flying in planes.

So if you are looking for the opportunity of a cheap flight, try a certain Friday in April or July this year.



WHEN police in Inverness interrupted an attempted break-in at a warehouse on an industrial estate they thought they had been foiled when the thieves had had the foresight to disabling a video surveillance system by taking the camera with them as they fled.

However, the thieves forgot to take the recorder to which the camera was connected. Police replayed a tape and found full facial shots of the would-be thieves disconnecting the camera.



A LOCAL bar manager tells us that a group of his younger regular customers have been noticeable by their absence over the last few weeks.

The lads, all islanders, have been lying low and the barman suspected that they were either short of funds or had moved on to a new 'watering hole'.

However, he needn't have worried as one of the drinkers explained that between 'a mega spree' at New Year and 'a big skosh' on Burns Night, the boys observe a period of abstinence known as 'Highland Ramadan'.



WE GRATEFULLY receive weekly reports from various groups throughout the wide west coast community. Some are news-worthy, some highly entertaining, some - like the following, unintentionally entertaining.

From a report about a community concert held in the local village hall we learn that 'Catriona Campbell sang 'I Will Not Pass This Way Again' - much to the delight of the audience'



FISHING enthusiast John MacDonald was on a holiday trip to Spain last summer when an opportunity for a days fly fishing with a Spanish guide arose.

Keen to practice his newly learned language skills John attempted to speak to the guide in Spanish whenever possible.

As they walked up a rugged mountain path, a large blue and purple fly landed beside them on the vegetation. John pointed to the fly: 'Mira el mosca', he said confidently.

The guide shook his head and his finger: 'No, señor, "la mosca"... es femina'.

John was stunned and looked intently at the fly: 'You must have bloody good eyesight.'

'Que?'



MEMORABLE quote: 'Sure, there are dishonest men in local government. But there are dishonest men in national government too.'

- Former US President Richard Nixon

Eh... Yeh!



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

Honest Oban

Sir, Passing through Oban on our way to visit our son and family in Mull on Friday I was careless enough to lose my wallet in Tesco's store or car park.

I was delighted and relieved upon phoning Tesco to find that amount of cash and bank cards, had already been handed in by a young lad (only description available) who had not left his name or address.

I would like to thank him very much for his honesty, a young lad whose family, and Oban, should be proud of.

David Stewart, Regional Labour MSP for the Highlands and Islands, Inverness

John Rigby, Rutherglen

30 Years Ago

Those Were The Days

The Oban Times

Thursday, January 21, 1987

Whisky industry future looks gloom

FEARS for the future of the whisky industry on the islands of Islay and Jura have become acute with the news that Bunnahabhain Distillery is to cease production in mid-March.

Only six months ago Ardbeg Distillery closed, with the loss of 11 jobs. Now 15 workers will be made redundant at the Highland Distilleries plant. Seven will be kept on to maintain the distillery and move casks when required.

Two voluntary redundancies will be necessary at Jura Distillery, where last week manager Mr J Bulman said: 'I have just had word that we are not to produce whisky in 1982.'

The remaining 15 employees will work a three-day week.

At Bruichladdich Distillery, which until now have been able to maintain full staff and a full working week, manager, Mr Iain Allan confirmed that short-time working would be necessary soon, although he could not predict the extent of the cutbacks until after a meeting this week.

Workers at the three Scottish Malt distilleries - Lagavulin, Port Ellen and Caol Ila - have been on a four-day week for more than a month.

Stormy session in Lochaber

THE corridors of Lochaber House, Fort William, the headquarters of Lochaber District

Council echoed to the angry voices of nearly 100 tenants, after they had listened for nearly two hours to a debate - one of the stormiest ever held in the council chambers - on the state of their houses at Lochside near Fort William.

The subject high on the council's housing committee meeting was tabled by Councillor James MacKay, Caol representing the area, calling for action to be taken to rectify the state of the houses not yet handed over to the council and demanding that answers be given as to why they should be so.

In his opening remarks the councillor said that although he had been complaining openly since October 1980 he held no malice against any person but would stress that in no way was he going to be intimidated in his fight for justice to be done for those tenants who had suffered all along the line and more so in the recent article conditions that struck the area.

The houses, said Councillor MacKay, were in a £2 million scheme, costing around £23,000 each.

In reply to a question by the councillor of they had been built to specification, the council's architect said that they had. 'As far as can reasonably be expected,' and that this was backed by the maintenance officers.

There was much laughter and cheering, in the packed gallery when Mr Boyce of the consultant architect's department said that he agreed with Mr Maxwell the council's architect but that in his opinion they were not for the temperatures

such as they had recently. The debate was lost in the shouts and applause that came from the public gallery.

Mr Boyce said: 'They were not the best houses', and there were aspects of the design that were not as he would wish.

Lochaline work ahead of schedule

WORK IS now well ahead of schedule at the modernisation scheme which is taking place at the council houses at Torr-na-Faire, Lochaline.

The interiors of 16 of the 36 houses in the programme have almost been completed and all are now fitted with completely new windows contained in horizontal pivoting stained hardwood frames insulated lofts, a Spencer solid-fuel closed stove in the living-room, which also provides hot water for the wall radiators now fitted in the kitchen, hall and bedrooms and towel rail in the bathroom.

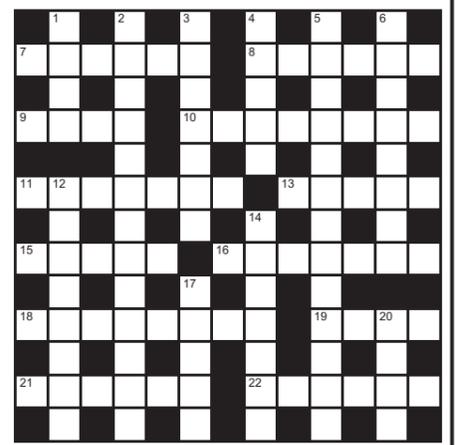
Mr Gordon Simmonds of Oban Stove Shop, who supplied the stoves, stated that this is the first time that a local authority has chosen this type of heating.

The contract is under the supervision of Mr Alex Black, of A Black, Builders, Oban Limited who accepted tender price of £267,000 also includes such outdoor work as the painting of all exterior surfaces, the erection of fences, upgrading of paths and the provision of gated access to the existing hard standings.

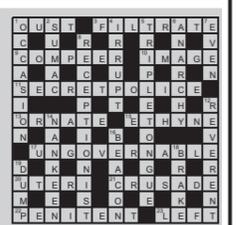
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- Across
- 7 Afternoon service (3,3)
 - 8 Countless (6)
 - 9 Several (4)
 - 10 From the side (8)
 - 11 Throw (7)
 - 13 Offspring (5)
 - 15 Appearance (5)
 - 16 It goes around the world (7)
 - 18 Where it is (8)
 - 19 One's supporter... (4)
 - 21 ...supporter for one's building (6)
 - 22 Not honoured by music? (6)

- Down
- 1 Building blocks (4)
 - 2 Land off the southwest coast of England (5,2,6)
 - 3 Disbelief (7)
 - 4 Adult insect (5)
 - 5 Female heir to the throne (5,8)
 - 6 A gentleman's other half (8)
 - 12 Anxiety or depression can be symptoms (8)
 - 14 Bone protecting the encephalon (7)
 - 17 Extremely small (5)
 - 20 On this cloud and you'll be happy! (4)



Last week's solution



Hauliers' group back call for A83 improvements

Sir, The Road Haulage Association (RHA) wholeheartedly agrees that the time has come for fundamental and lasting improvements to be made to the A83.

Whilst the current 'patchwork' approach in responding to emergency closures is of some help, and absolutely necessary at the time of the incident, the continual disruption to business - and in our particular case to haulage operators - is very damaging to the area's economy.

Hauliers are increasingly having to alter their vehicle and delivery schedules at short notice in order to meet their contractual commitments. This also entails incurring extra costs as the detours involved usually involve many extra miles.

Also as an area relatively remote from the rest of Scotland and the main business markets, substantive works to improve pinch points and accident blackspots are urgently needed.

We therefore strongly support the local community in aiming to achieve its goal of radically improving the A83.

Phil Flanders
Director Scotland and Northern Ireland Road Haulage Association Ltd

MSP urges Argyll and Bute people to sign A83 petition

Sir, When I questioned the Transport Minister about the A83 in the Scottish Parliament he revealed that Transport Scotland are looking at protective netting, shelters and the potential for planting of the hillside around the Rest and Be Thankful and that the improvement and strengthening of the parallel forestry road as an emergency alternative will also be investigated - something I and my colleague Councillor Donald Kelly have consistently called for.

While these measures are to be cautiously welcomed, it remains my view that the Scottish Government is going to have to make significant investment in the A83 in order to improve this key strategic route and prevent future landslides closing the road, something which has the potential to cripple the economy.

That is why I continue to urge constituents and businesses from Argyll and Bute and indeed beyond to support the 'Sign for the A83' petition being co-ordinated by Councillor Kelly and others; this can be done online at www.signforthea83.com

It is crucial that pressure is maintained on the Scottish Government and that they are aware of the strength of feeling that exists.

Jamie McGrigor MSP (Highlands & Islands) Edinburgh

Seafood company back A83 campaign

Sir, We are a seafood processing company based in Ayr and have a long-standing relationship with the fishing boats operating from Kintyre and Argyll Island ports extending over more than 20 years.

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

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

It goes without saying, therefore, that the main transport route being the A83 is a vital artery in ensuring the products reach us in time for processing so that there are no delays 'from net to plate.'

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

I am sure this has been the same for many other companies. The short-term repairs and fixes do little good and the problem, in my opinion, will continue to grow unless addressed properly. Similarities exist between what

is happening on the A83 now and that which happened on the A75 Ayr to Stranraer road a few years back with landslides, re-routing and continual ineffective repairs being carried out there. Eventually the government had to bow to pressure and take the necessary decision to substantially upgrade the road, finally alleviating the problems.

I think it is now crucial for the same to happen to the A83.

Kenneth Hastie, Scotprime Seafoods Ltd, Ayr

Argyll and Bute Council leader backs campaign

Sir, At last Thursday's meeting of Argyll and Bute Council the Council Leader Dick Walsh and Provost Billy Petrie agreed to sign the petition for the A83.

This was closely followed by the remaining members of the administration doing likewise.

Argyll First are delighted to have been able to unite the Council on this very important issue.

We now have eight MSPs, 33 councillors and numerous businesses throughout Scotland supporting the campaign.

During the final weeks we are asking everyone to try and raise the profile of the campaign and encourage as many people as possible to sign the petition.

Councillor Donald Kelly, Campbeltown

Undemocratic economic illiteracy of CHORD board

Sir, At a time of austerity where the Government and households are cutting back on spending, Argyll and Bute Council considers borrowing money to fund non-essential projects proposed by the CHORD project board.

The Oban part of the CHORD project board arguably has no democratic legitimacy in that the board consists of only three out of the current seven councillors in Oban.

The cost of repaying this loan will have to be paid for years to come out of the revenue budget.

The money borrowed for the CHORD proposals which are arguably of limited value to the citizens of Oban, would require in the region of £100,000 per annum to repay the interest alone. This would reduce the revenue budget available to fund core services and if one takes into account all of the initial CHORD projects across Argyll and Bute, the sum, in interest payments alone, council taxpayers would have to fund is considerable.

Borrowing money to fund projects of debatable value at the expense of limiting funds for essential services in the future and burdening the Council with debt and the consequential reduction in services is not a good idea.

The current CHORD Board has wasted enough of the taxpayer's money on consultants without burdening the taxpayer further by recommending borrowing money for projects of debatable value.

The Council Executive should do the honourable thing and kick the CHORD Board's proposals into touch until after the council elections in May, when the proposals should be re-examined by all elected members.

We need sound economic management to protect council services and jobs for now and the future.

Frederick Hall, Oban

MP urges contact with Scottish Affairs Select Committee

Sir, Following the recent power cuts, I persuaded the Scottish Affairs Select Committee to hold an inquiry into the state of the electricity network and the response of the power companies to the cuts. The main aim is to see what can be done to reduce the risk of future power cuts.

If you would like to contact the Committee with your views on what should be done, please email the Committee by 2 February in Word or rich text format at scotaffcom@parliament.uk

If you don't have email please write to my office as below and I will forward your letter to the Committee.

Alan Reid MP 95 Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8AL



Taking a break from the building of St Columba's Cathedral in Oban

Taking a well-earned break from building work at St Columba's Cathedral in Oban, these men were pictured during 1945 in the lane that is now part of Corran Brae. Standing - left to right are, Leslie Ross, Jimmy Gillies, Donald-Archie MacIntyre and Freddy Tindall. Kneeling - 'Wee' Donald Campbell and Alisdair Wright. 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.

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Annoyance at 'no public access' forestry signs

Sir, I was annoyed earlier this month to find the woodland section of the Glencoe-Inverriggan public path closed even though there were no forestry operations in progress.

The alternative was about 1km along an often busy road so I ignored the Forestry Commission's 'no public access' notice and stayed on the path.

It was perfectly safe to walk. I encountered no forestry workers or machinery, and there were no obstructions apart from a large branch which was easily bypassed.

It was a holiday period which probably accounts for the lack of activity, but couldn't the route have been temporarily reopened - perhaps with a few 'take extra care' notices?

There was no indication as to when the path was due to reopen, and even the nearby TIC in Ballachulish was unaware that it had been closed.

Restricting access to woodland paths can greatly inconvenience walkers, so I appeal to the Forestry Commission to provide full information and to minimise the duration of such closures as much as possible.

R M Atkinson Edinburgh

Don't talk Scotland down Mr McGrigor

Sir, I would like to respond to the letter in *The Oban Times* of January 5, 2012.

The letter was written by Jamie McGrigor MSP entitled 'Unhelpful attack on UK Government'.

I note the minutes of the First Minister's question time referred to by Mr McGrigor in which Alex Salmond asked him to refer to nephrops as langoustines.

The reason was that langoustines command a higher price on the market. However, Mr McGrigor appears to have ignored your attention the enormous negative impact removing RET from large commercial operators will have on business and the economy.

While I am aware that Mr McGrigor is prepared to take a stance against independence, he should be able to accept that Scotland needs more control over its fishing industry, and that it is necessary to take control of our interests from within Scotland.

The begging bowl era must come to an end before we have no resources left onshore or offshore.

At this junction I would say to Mr McGrigor, I have no doubt in my mind about who I could trust to represent me and my country both at home and abroad.

J MacFadyen, Oban

The Legend of King Arthur in Argyll

Sir, The mythical legend of King Arthur featured in *The Oban Times* of January 12, 2012 made interesting reading.

The author himself encourages Argyll and Bute Council to promote the legend but need not believe it.

Rather than locating the

legend at Dunadd I would make the case for the ancient fort of Beregonium in Benderloch.

The village and North Lorn could well do with increased tourism promotion.

Dr Alexander Carmichael, author of 'Carmen Gaedlica' accused the Latinist George Buchanan of confusing many Gaelic place names. In particular he had translated the early name 'Barr-nan-gobhan' (the Ridge of the armourers) to Beregonium.

It is perfectly possible that King Arthur's famous sword was crafted by the armourers on the ridge of Dun Mhic Uisneachan, the Benderloch Fort of the sons of Uisneach.

Hard historical facts are scarce but King Eugenius was said to be the father of Eugenie (Aiden the Great) who was reputed to be the conqueror of King Arthur and taken at his death to Ireland by St Columba.

When I was a child in Benderloch over 70 years ago there were old people around who could tell the tales of Queenhynde and her warrior tribe who dwelt on Dun Mhic Uisneachan, the legendary capital city of Dal Riata. The nearby crag of Dun Bhail an Righ was closely associated as was the fair Selma of Ossian.

It is unfortunate that 'Beregonium' is heavily overgrown by whins making access to the site of the fort virtually impossible.

Peter Macleod, Oban

Western Isles councillor tackles Transport on RET

Sir, Allow me to avail readers of *The Oban Times* of my letter to Minister for Transport Keith Brown on the potential impacts of removing RET from Outer Hebrides commercial operators.

'Dear Minister, Further to my recent letter and following a meeting on January 16 2012 with Outer Hebrides hauliers arranged by Alasdair Allan MSP, I write to bring to your attention the enormous negative impact removing RET from large commercial operators will have on business and the economy.'

The indication is that with fares set to at least double from April 2012 the consequences are likely to be extreme, with exporters fearing they will be unable to meet contractual obligations.

In one respect this shows the huge success RET has delivered. It is therefore deeply regrettable that responses to the RET Pilot Monitoring programme did not properly highlight this fact. At the Stakeholder Group meetings, specifically set up to evaluate the pilot, I warned on several occasions that the true value and benefit in this specific area was not being appropriately measured.

I recognise and appreciate the allocation of finance to support discount schemes however, even at 25per cent maximum there is still a crippling fares increase. Added to that, it is unclear how islands with limited services and small communities can achieve the volume of movement which would generate maximum discount, penalising smaller communities and smaller freight

companies.

There are also specialised vehicles such as livestock and live shellfish vehicles which have comparatively less movement but are a crucial part of the economy. It is difficult to see how such vehicles could benefit from high volume movement discount.

In the years prior to RET being introduced very considerable effort was expended trying to achieve a fair rebate scheme. The RET scheme itself was found to be, by far, the simplest and fairest method.

For the reasons set out above I ask you to initiate a cost benefit analysis and consultation on this aspect of the scheme and consider suspending withdrawal of RET on commercials pending the outcome.

Yours sincerely,
Donald Manford, Chairman of Transportation, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Who is gaining from wind farms?

Sir, It is very apposite that in last week's edition of *The Oban Times* there is notice of a planning application for a wind farm in Glen Lonan alongside a letter from G W Stewart of Clachan Seil in which he draws attention to the arrogance of the developers and landowners who are benefiting financially from these installations at the expense of their local communities.

The Renewable Energy Foundation (REF) states that landowners receive £15,000 per year for each turbine, the nine turbines at Clachan Flats therefore net the landowner £135,000 per year and the Glen Lonan wind farm will generate £165,000 for the Dunach Estate. However, also according to the REF, the developers expect to receive in revenue over £2,250,000 annually from the Clachan Flats wind farm and over £4,000,000 annually from the Glen Lonan wind farm, this being more per turbine than the Clachan Flats installation as the turbines are much taller - at 121 metres in height.

Half this revenue comes from the Renewable Obligation Subsidy which is paid out of our household electricity bills. Of this very substantial income the developers offer to set up a Trust Fund to benefit the community, in the case of the Glen Lonan wind farm, the community, which encompasses an area within 10 kms of the development, and therefore includes Oban, will receive the sum of £40,000 per year or one per cent of their revenue.

Are there not echoes here of events which took place in the Highlands 200 years ago?

Jeremy Church, Glen Lonan

Argyll tourism will suffer from 'playground politics'

Sir, I would like to respond to the letter from Councillor John Semple from Campbeltown who asks 'who gave me right to call Oban the Jewel in Scotland crown' alas I cannot claim the lone credit as this is a statement used long before I became council spokesperson for tourism just over a year ago.

I have to remind him that in the three and a half years that he was in the council administration that this crucial tourism sector which employs over 16 per cent of our population did not have a spokesperson.

His playground politics and disregard of facts are unfortunately very familiar.

Oban has one of the busiest ferry terminals in Scotland and the second busiest tourist office in the country which 'feeds' all the other offices in the authority. My support for Argyll and Bute as whole is there to see for anyone who isn't wearing blinkers.

I must point out that whilst attending Scotland's main tourism events in Glasgow and Edinburgh I represent all the diamonds in Argyll and Bute. As a member of our busy planning committee I find myself in many of the gems of towns and villages that we have in Argyll and its Isles. Whilst in those many different places I have managed to utilise the visit to help me gauge the tourism needs of as many places as I can.

His repetitive inaccuracies are unfair and unhelpful.

The Argyll tourism bus is on a journey and gaining speed - we need everyone on board pulling in the same direction - not attempting to put spanners in the works.

Neil Mackay, Argyll and Bute spokesperson Enterprise, Energy, Culture, Tourism

Need for roads and bridges not schools

The roads situation that has evolved over the past 30 years across the whole of Scotland is nothing short of a national scandal.

The Oban/Lochgilphead road has not changed in that time and the Oban/Fort William/Mallaig road has changed little, while the main Oban to Perth and Glasgow roads have had little improvement.

The islands are even worse in many ways, as the two-lane road which was begun in the Uists in early 1980's is still not even half-way finished - 28 years later!

But the amount spent on schools and various other contracts are over the top, especially if one is to consider the decline over the past 30 years in the number of children on the isles.

The roads that were there 40 or 50 years ago had much less traffic - the amount of children over the same period has dramatically declined. It is simple maths, logic and common sense.

Will we see the massive roads and bridges investment that is so very long overdue being promoted now, or are we as usual going to continue down the wrong track?

A Campbell, Garrynamonie, South Uist

Your news, views and letters can be emailed direct to editor@obantimes.co.uk or posted to The Oban Times PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

ISLAY LETTER

Glasgow Islay Association Gathering

LORD Robertson of Port Ellen will be the guest chairman at the Glasgow Islay Association's 150th annual gathering in the Mitchell Theatre on Friday, 2nd March, beginning at 7pm.

The former Defence Minister and NATO Secretary General last chaired the 'Islay' in 1996 when he was the Labour Government's Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland. This took place in the Govan Town Hall and was the last function of this kind which took place in the venue which was once a Mecca for the city's Gaels.

Lord George Robertson is a current honorary patron of the association as is his fellow Port Ellenite Professor Sir William Stewart.

Filling the bill at this year's 'birthday bash' will be the Islay Pipe Band, led by Pipe-Major Nigel Morris, the Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir, conducted by Kirsteen Grant, and the Glasgow Islay Junior Gaelic Choir, under the baton of Jane MacQueen.

Lady Mòd gold medalists appearing are Bette C Bell, who struck gold at the National Mòd in Glasgow in 1967, Nina Mackellar, who enjoyed similar success at Oban in 1992, and Iseabail Mactaggart who took the premier solo singing award at the Perth Mòd in 2004.

More songs will come from the veteran singing Ilich Ian A Carmichael, gold medal winner at Stirling in 1961, and Dugald Gillespie, the top solo singer at the National Mòd in Lochaber in 1981.

The Glasgow Islay Association, one of the 'big 3' in the city, has made its own telling contribution to the social and cultural life of Glasgow's Gaeldom since it was founded by the noted printer Archibald Sinclair in 1862. Although the halcyon days of such associations and their annual gatherings are long gone the fact that they continue to function with a degree of success and their own particular impact makes for a note of optimism.

However, none of the current concerns will be evident when the Glasgow Ilich, and their wide church of supporters, celebrate another remarkable milestone in their distinguished history on March 2.

This special gathering programme will be broadcast live on www.clanradio.net and will remain on the web for a short period after the event.

To allow more socialising time for the patrons the normal ensuing gathering dance will be held at a later date.

The anniversary will also be further celebrated with markers taking place on the green, green grass of home.

Aileen Fiona Whyte

THE UNTIMELY death of 47-year old Aileen Fiona Whyte on January 3 in the Southern General Hospital greatly saddened all who knew her and came as a bitter blow to her parents and immediate family.

Aileen was born in Bowmore and after school days spent in her native village she studied agriculture. This was followed by a 23 year spell as a popular island post woman. When the deteriorating health and increasing infirmity of her parents Maimie and Iain became problematic she took over their care and the responsibility of looking after their smallholding and stock.

She shouldered these responsibilities uncomplainingly and the massive brain haemorrhage which sadly proved fatal came as a deep shock to all who knew her, and especially to her ageing parents, her sister Mairi, brothers Alastair and Duncan and the wider family.

A service of thanksgiving for her all too brief life was conducted in the Round Church by the parish minister the Rev Dr Rob Barlow before interment at Bowmore cemetery.

Aileen's presence is missed about the village and in the surrounding fields which almost became her second home.

All send sincere condolences to Maimie, Iain and the family as they come to terms with a grievous and totally unexpected loss.

Mòd Ìle 2012

SYLLABUSES for Mòd Ìle 2012, to be held at the island's high school at Bowmore on Saturday, 2nd June, are now available.

These can be obtained from Mòd secretary Alison Gray at alisongrayislays@aol.co.uk or by telephoning 01496 301546. The closing date for entries is Friday, 20th April.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658

Eye to eye
with John Wallace



Computers and Eyes

One of the many problems optometrists frequently have to deal with is the mistaken belief one pair of spectacles will solve a patient's entire visual problems. This is particularly the case when a patient hits middle age and starts to have problems reading. Up till then most patients will have been able to see comfortably both at distance and when reading with 'single vision' lenses in their spectacles. With the onset of middle age our eyes become 'presbyopic'. In simple terms we can no longer easily focus up close as easily as when we were young.

and the necessary equipment to allow a worker to function efficiently. In the case of computer users this means, if an employee normally wears bifocals or varifocals, employers must provide basic 'single vision' spectacles to enable their employees to use a computer without adopting unusual and painful head postures.

Most patients solve this inconvenience by using either bifocals or varifocals. These are excellent solutions for general use but if you need to use a desktop computer neither are very good and you can end up with a very sore neck due to poor ergonomics and an unusual head posture. In an office environment Health and Safety legislation stipulates employers must provide a safe environment

With the dramatic increase in silver surfers many older patients are attempting to use bifocals or varifocals the view the screen on their desktop computers. Not only is the reading area of their spectacles in the wrong position, but the strength of their lenses is inappropriate for the distance their VDU screen is positioned. Recently dedicated varifocal lenses which enable comfortable viewing of screens and also reading at a normal distance have become readily available. Your optometrist can advise on the most appropriate type of lenses for your computer usage.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP
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YOUR LETTERS

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

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With another cold spell forecast and rocketing energy prices, there has never been a better time to get your home ready for winter.

Keeping your family cosy will help you all feel better even in the depths of the dark winter nights and help prevent you succumbing to colds and flu.

But if a lot of heat is escaping, it can cost a fortune. The good news is there is plenty you can do to keep warmer and cut energy bills.

Major work like insulating the attic and walls can cost a bit but will be paid off in reduced heating costs. Grants are also available to homeowners and tenants.

Even simple measures like draught proofing doors, windows and the letterbox can save about £60 a year in fuel bills. Also consider lining curtains and hanging a thick curtain over the porch door and remember to close your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in as the temperatures drop.

A reflective, insulated material can be put behind radiators to bounce the heat back into the room.

And don't forget pipes – lagging them and popping a jacket on the hot water tank are quick and easy actions to carry out yourself, to prevent frozen pipes and heat loss.

When it's really cold, focus on keeping one or two rooms nice and snug. Wear a lot of layers and don't be afraid to pop a woolly hat on.

Particularly for older or unwell people, it is important to eat well, get lots of hot drinks and stay active when it is cold.

It also the time of the year to be a good neighbour, and keep an eye on those living alone or who might need a bit of extra help with shopping or cooking. A friendly call or a hot meal will go a long way to make sure they don't feel isolated.

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Winter festival boosts Oban's economy by almost £1 million

OBAN'S inaugural Winter Festival, held at a cost of around £10,000, helped boost the local economy by nearly £1million. Figures released by the committee behind November's week-long celebrations show that approximately £938,000 extra cash was brought into the town last November, with

thousands of people turning out to take in the numerous events and activities on offer. Some of the more popular events include Santa's Reindeer Parade from the Corran Halls to Station Road, a synthetic ice-rink at Atlantis Leisure, the Victorian Market and the much anticipated and spectacular

'O-bang' fireworks display, arranged by Pyrol in the way of apology for the now infamous failed November 4 display. Confirmation that the event gave the town such a boost has re-energised organisers, who are pressing ahead to make year two even more spectacular. One of the festival's organisers,

Pamela Lockhart, said: 'We were so shocked and happy - delighted in fact - with the figure. It's great news for the town and it certainly gives us more reason to press ahead again for this year.' Local businesses and organisations have been quick to

realise the benefit of the festive extravaganza, with most who took part last year already confirming their participation in 2012's Winter Festival. This year's programme is scheduled to commence on November 17 with the ever-popular Reindeer Parade. While there will be some

changes to the events being lined up, some of the more popular attractions will return. 'Hopefully, we will have the fireworks back. We're also hoping to have some different things on the programme this year, so it's not just a carbon copy.' The not-for-profit committee

is now the process of submitting applications for funding. To aid planning, the committee aims to build a bank of volunteers to call upon for fundraising events, or to lend a hand during the festival itself. Information can be found at obanwinterfestival.com or on the group's Facebook page.

Fresh start for Lismore couple who lost dog

A LISMORE farming couple whose beloved collie was killed on an Aberdeenshire road have found another dog to take her place.

John and Dorothy Livingstone were left devastated when Grampian Police confirmed a collie found dead near Oldmeldrum was their Jenny.

The grey-whiskered pet had gone missing during a walk on Christmas Eve with the couple's son Andrew, of Cross Stone Farm, Ellon, who immediately began a search with the aid of police and volunteers.

Two days later a dog matching Jenny's description was found lying on the grass verge, killed, it is believed, by a passing car.

The dog's identity remained unconfirmed and public appeals for information on Jenny's whereabouts continued, until the tragic news came through last week.

Despite their grief, John and Dorothy felt they needed another working collie for their island farm at Balure, as Jenny, aged 11, had been a big help to John, 72, with his 150 Blackface and Cross ewes.

And this week the couple found a new collie, five year-old bitch Flash. Early signs are that the new arrival will do a job - but Jenny will never be forgotten.

Dorothy, 74, told *The Oban Times*: 'It's early days yet and we are just getting to know her, but I think Flash is going to be okay because she has been a working collie.'

'Jenny was a member of the family. She was a working dog - that's what we got her for. But she was also a pet, more so in the last couple of years.'

'When you went out the door and she wasn't there it made the place feel dead. She knew the roads on Lismore, but not the faster roads up in Aberdeenshire. At least we know she was hit by a car and not caught on a fence somewhere and left hanging.'

'We both want to say we are so appreciative of the efforts everybody made to try to find her. It was amazing the calls our son got.'

Broadcasting from Barra for RNLI

A GROUP of licensed radio amateurs will broadcast from Barra Lifeboat station throughout the week to help raise funds for the RNLI.

Taking part in SOS Radio Week, the broadcasters will be taking sponsorship for their efforts across the nine day event.

It is hoped that the profile of the RNLI will be raised throughout the world, as well as giving ex-pats the opportunity to make contact with Barra in either English or Gaelic.

For more information about the nationwide event, log on to sosradioweek.org.uk.

Eight-minute council meeting sparks 'cynical' blame game

A ROW has broken out over last week's full meeting of Argyll and Bute Council, which 31 members attended - for just eight minutes.

Waste of taxpayers money New Oban north and Lorn councillor, Louise Glen-Lee of the SNP, criticised the administration for holding the meeting, saying it was a waste of taxpayers money, with members able to claim travel expenses of 45p per mile for the journey to Kilmory. Island councillors could also claim accommodation expenses for the meeting if required to stay overnight.

'Ill-informed' However, the deputy leader of the authority, Ellen Morton, was quick to return fire on Mrs Glen-Lee, claiming the new councillor is 'ill-informed' and 'factually inaccurate.'

Councillor Morton also said many of the councillors who attended wouldn't be claiming expenses. 'Only eight items were on the agenda for last week's meeting. However, one item was withdrawn before the meeting started, while councillor James Robb demanded a motion appear on the agenda, despite being advised in advance that it was incompetent.'

Oban north and Lorn councillor, Mrs Glen-Lee, said: 'It was a total waste of time and money bringing us all here. The council has to find another way of doing things.'

'There's a number of things we could have talked about - CHORD, the budget, anything? It is terrible this was allowed to go ahead.'

That sentiment was echoed by Bute councillor, Robert Macintyre. He said: 'Some of the

administration thought it was a bit of a joke - but I didn't see anything funny about it at all.'

However, Helensburgh and Lomond south councillor, Ellen Morton, said the brevity of the meeting was as much the responsibility of the SNP opposition for not asking questions about any item on the agenda, including a report summarising the council's borrowing, investment and economic forecasts.

Letter Furthermore, she says a number of meetings were held after the full council meeting, including one originally scheduled for the following day - saving unnecessary travel.

In a lengthy letter to *The Oban Times*, Mrs Morton said: 'Louise Glen-Lee is a recently elected member of Argyll and Bute Council and so it may be that, despite her years as a journalist attending council meetings, she is unaware of the rules.'

She added: 'If I were a suspicious, cynical person I might think that the motions were submitted and then withdrawn and that no questions were asked to deliberately make the meeting brief, just so that this attack on the council administration could be launched.'

'However no responsible group of councillors would dream of wasting taxpayers' money like this so that cannot possibly be the reason. Can it?'

The leader of the council, Dick Walsh, added: 'If councillor Glen-Lee and her colleagues in the SNP, or other groups, had no issues or concerns with what was proposed in the agenda, then it was open to them to approach us to consider a delegated way of dealing with the business. No such approach was made.'

Burst pipe floods pensioner's newly refurbished home

'Call centre help line told me 'we don't just sit around all day waiting for your call.''

SCOTTISH Water has been criticised for not acting quickly enough after receiving a call that an elderly Oban woman's newly refurbished home was being flooded.

Anne Lennox, who turned 79 this week, was in tears after discovering a burst water pipe in her kitchen last Tuesday at 2pm, causing gallons of water to pump into her kitchen every minute.

With the internal stop-cock useless - as the leak preceded it - the family and a local plumber hunted for the main stop-cock to the property. Unfortunately, it couldn't be found so Anne's daughter, Fiona Fraser, contacted Scottish Water to ask for assistance at 2.45pm.

Half an hour passed with no sign of an engineer so Fiona phoned again. Eventually, with no engineer in sight, she was forced to phone a third time just before 4pm. By this time, the kitchen was completely flooded and water pouring out of the visibly sodden foundations.

A Scottish Water engineer eventually arrived just before 4.20pm, but told Fiona he was only made aware of the problem at 4pm.

Water supply to the street was eventually switched off at around 5.20pm, allowing the offending pipe to be capped.

By then though, the newly refurbished living room was soaked and the kitchen destroyed. Anne had to be evacuated from the property and is in the meantime staying with her daughter.

Fiona has been quick to criticise the response of Scottish Water's contact centre.

She said: 'I kept saying to them that it was an emergency and that they didn't realise the seriousness of the situation.'

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by STEVEN FLANAGAN sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

'At one point, one of the call handlers actually told me 'we don't just sit around all day waiting for your call.'

'I couldn't believe the attitude. They didn't even advise us to switch off the electricity in the house.'

'There was a total breakdown in communications. When the engineer arrived he did everything he could - the call centre just didn't bother doing their job.'

Anne, who has lived in the cottage for more than 13 years and shares her home with grandson, Lamont McGillivray, said: 'I hope nobody has to go through this. It's my home and I love it. Now it's just ruined.'

A spokesperson for Scottish Water said: 'Scottish Water fully understands the inconvenience that flooding can cause and we attended as quickly as possible after we were contacted about this.'

'We established this was a burst on an internal private pipe and, although this is not our responsibility, we helped the customer by locating the toby, or valve, and turned it off to stop the flooding.'

'We clamped the customer's service pipe under the kitchen sink and we put in a temporary stopcock on her internal pipe to allow her to turn her water supply back on without causing any flooding.'

'We will look into any issues related to the customer's telephone contact with us.'



Fiona Fraser, Lamont McGillivray and Anne Lennox clean up the 15_104anneLennox1

Barra campsite improves facilities as TV boosts tourism

A BARRA campsite is hoping to attract even more visitors to the island with a major upgrade of its facilities.

Donald MacLean has lodged a planning application to build a toilet and shower block on his Borne Caravan and Camping site, a development that could cost in the region of £25-50,000.

The proposal to improve the island camp site, only opened last year, comes as a response to the continued increase in tourism to the island thanks to the BBC documentary, *The Island Parish* and the reduction in ferry fares brought in by the RET.

In addition to toilet facilities, the building would allow caravans on the mixed-use 18 berth side hook up to the electricity supply.

Donald MacLean, said: 'Barra has probably become one of the most popular destinations in the Western Isles, so more people are always coming here. Pending planning permission, I'd hope to have the new building ready by May.'

Injured Spanish fisherman airlifted

THE STORNOWAY-based coastguard helicopter rescued a severely injured fisherman from a vessel 230 miles offshore, amid storm force winds and 10 metre high seas, at the weekend.

Long-range rescue The long-range mission was launched after the Spanish coastguard agency asked for help

to bring a crewman from the UK registered *Mar Blanco*, who fell and suffered head injuries, to safety. The *Mar Blanco* had to sail towards Stornoway to bring it within the helicopter's range.

The injured man was winched aboard the helicopter and was flown to hospital in Stornoway. Stornoway Coastguard watch

manager Murdo Macaulay said: 'In this weather and at this range it was vital that the helicopter was able to rendezvous with the vessel and evacuate the injured crewman with as little delay as possible. This operation has required close co-operation by many different partners in the search and rescue framework.'

Argyll and Bute introduce new 'golden number' to planning

A NEW hotline to streamline the system for making planning enquiries was introduced this week. Argyll and Bute Council's 'Golden Number,' 01546 605518, was activated on Tuesday, replacing planning services' previous reception numbers in the various council areas. Anyone dialling the old numbers will hear a message telling them the new number before automatically transferring the call.

Daniel Kelly, chair of the planning, protective services and licensing committee, believes the new number makes the service more customer friendly. He said: 'We wanted to ensure that the system for handling initial customer enquiries regarding planning made the best use of our significant investment in the Customer Service Centre and Customer Service Points.'

NEWSFLASH!

GEOFFREY (TAILOR) STAYS!

Due to popular demand we will continue to provide a full Highland Dress Sales and Hire Service from 2 McGregor Court, Argyll Square, OBAN.

By appointment only - ring Brian on 07780 505057 or Head Office 0131 557 0256

LORN LINES

OBAN Photographic Club's members viewed images from all over the British Isles on Monday evening, January 16.

The images were from the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain's portfolio and they varied from abstracts and landscapes to portraits and wildlife; and then some which were more art than photography. As is usual in that kind of presentation, most of the images deserved to be included but members had doubts about a few of the rest! Photoshop use, or its equivalent, was clearly evident!

In the second half of the evening, member Tim Haynes gave an instructive talk and demonstration on black and white photography and how to process it digitally. As he said, it is really shades of grey varying from dark to light. This type of photography is becoming more popular and to see how to take a colour image and change it to black and white was very interesting.

The next meeting of the club is on January 30 when members will themselves judge the entries for the Argyll Trophy. The subject chosen this year is 'Argyll Weather' so some spectacular images will be on show.

THE SCOTTISH Wildlife Trust Lorn and Mid-Argyll Members' Centre met recently at Dunstaffnage Marine Institute to hear Kilmichael based Dave Batty's illustrated talk on 'Argyll's Atlantic Oakwoods', on what was the best attended evening for some time.

Dave told the group about the history, the botany, the wildlife and the former economic uses of these damp and mossy woodlands which have fringed the western seaboard of Scotland for thousands of years and are at their very best along the Argyll coast.

As always, after the talk members enjoyed the excellent home-baking which is always much appreciated - thank you ladies! Meetings are open to all and visitors are always welcome.

TAYNUILT Gaelic Choir's weekly practices have now resumed, with members looking forward to this year's National Mod in Dunoon, the present choir's 15th annual Mod.

The choir meets at 7.30pm every Tuesday evening in the sports pavilion, Taynuilt. Any person interested in joining the choir should contact president Davy Paterson on 01866 822565, conductor Ann Barlow or any of the committee for more information. In particular, the choir is looking for new sopranos.

The Oban Times

HOTLINE

If you have a story to share, call us on

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Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd

The National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music

In High School? Passionate about Traditional Music?

If you already play to a high standard, or show genuine potential to do so, why not audition for Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd?

Open Days 3 & 4 February 2012

Advisory auditions by appointment
Closing date for applications 2 March, for admission in August 2012

For further information see www.musicplockton.org

Director: dougie.pincok@highland.gov.uk 01599 544706

Admin: rhona.sharp@highland.gov.uk

The Scottish Salmon Company

The Scottish Salmon Company: Isle of Mull Community Information Events

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

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

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

The proposed plans include;

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

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

“ Geographically, the Oban Times encompasses a 400sq mile radius. This provides the most extensive coverage of Argyll, the West Highlands, and Islands – an area usually very difficult to reach. ”

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Salmon farming company activate £40 million expansion on west coast

SALMON farmers Marine Harvest have announced its first two sites under a £40m expansion plan of its operations off the west coast.

The sites at Stulaigh, near Loch Eynort on South Uist and Heisay in the Sound of Barra will employ 12 staff and

produce up to 8,000 tonnes of salmon over a 22-month farming cycle.

Moorings for both farms will be put in place next month followed by fish farm pens. The farms will be stocked with smolts in April.

Earlier plans had looked at

residential fish farms but local people made it clear they would prefer staff to be based onshore.

A further three potential sites have been identified and consultation with local communities is underway in those areas.

MH Managing director Alan

Sutherland said: 'These two sites are a clear demonstration of our commitment to the Western Isles and to Scotland.'

'Demand for Scottish salmon continues to be strong and the Western Isles of Scotland is a wonderful environment in which to grow our fish.'

Local councillor Donald Manford said he welcomed 'all opportunities' for local employment and looked forward to the jobs coming on stream.

He told The Oban Times: 'I would hope also that local communities can be able to benefit much further from potential spinoff opportunities.'

MH announced proposals for up to six large-scale farms in deeper water in October 2009 and worked to identify the best locations and submit planning applications since then.

The company has four hatcheries, four freshwater

loch sites and 30 sea farms situated in the Western Isles, Skye, Wester Ross and Lochaber. Live fish are harvested at Mallaig and processed at the Blar Mhor processing plant in Fort William. In total over 500 employees are employed at these locations.

Former footballer on cocaine charge

A FORMER Fort William FC defender has been fined £300 after being found with a trace amount of cocaine.

Stephen Hendry, who left the club earlier this season, was searched by officers after turning up at 5am at the back door of a house in Kilmillie Road during a police raid.

Hendry, of 29 Torlundy Road, Caol, pled guilty to being in possession of the Class A drug on September 11.

Annual stockjudging

LOCHABER Shepherds are holding their annual stock judging competition tomorrow night (Friday).

The evening gets underway at 7.30pm at the Lochaber Rural Complex, Torlundy, with proceeds going to local charities.

Driver banned for five years after Spean Bridge crash

A BANNED driver who crashed his work vehicle near Spean Bridge while drunk has narrowly avoided jail.

After drinking in Spean Bridge on May 14, Christopher MacKay got as far as Stronoba before crashing off the road.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the 25-year-old labourer, who was banned from driving last year for another drink driving offence, failed to give breath specimens at the scene, claiming he was too cold.

Banning MacKay, of 5 County Cottages, Lochend, Inverness, from driving for five years, Sheriff Douglas Small also ordered him to carry out 216 hours of unpaid work in the community.

Care home work nears completion

IMPROVEMENTS to a Highland Council care home in Fort William should be completed by the end of next month, the council says.

The £120,000 upgrade at Invernevis House includes assisted bathing facilities, a new entrance door with automatic entry system, a new kitchen and fire safety arrangements.

Further work is planned to upgrade electrical and heating systems, install a sprinkler system and provide some larger rooms with en-suite facilities.

Stephen Hardie, of 30 Ardgour Road pled guilty to assaulting the man on December 5.

At Fort William Sheriff Court, Sheriff Douglas Small deferred sentencing the 21-year-old until February 15 for reports.

Councillors highlight pitch problems

LOCHABER councillors have again expressed concern at how much community usage will be available at Lochaber High School's two new grass pitches.

At their business meeting in Fort William last week, members insisted effective maintenance arrangements are put in place before spring, with local groundsmen in charge if possible.

Councillor Bill Clark told The Oban Times: 'The problem right now is that the pitches are not playable and the money [for them] from SportScotland was subject to a top of the range maintenance programme being in place.'

'Even with that they recommend a pitch usage of only eight hours per week - but the school, I am told, could take six hours a day. Either way, there's not going to be a great deal of community use.'

'The amount of rain we have in Lochaber is unbelievable and that has to be taken into account by Highland Council - we need more money from the maintenance budget to take account of the extra work required.'

He added: 'An all-weather pitch available for community use must be the way to go.'

Police files

A NUMBER of Lochaber businesses have been contacted by telephone by a man claiming to be from Fort William police.

The man, disguising his voice with a fake accent, asked people to contribute to a security article to be published in a police magazine. A Northern Constabulary spokesman said: 'Local police conduct their business on a personal level and any such contact would be made in person not over the telephone.'

DAMAGE was caused to the window of a house in Camesky Rod, Caol in the early hours of Saturday January 21.

A CAR parked in Carn Dearg Road, Claggan and another parked in Rowan Drive, Caol were both damaged overnight on Friday January 20 to Saturday January 21. Another car parked at the long stay car park at An Aird was damaged between 10.30am and 8.20pm on Wednesday January 18.

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

Councillors back Red Fox cycle path

LOCHBER Ward 22 councillors have agreed to support the Red Fox cycle path from Oban to Fort William with a £3,850 contribution from their discretionary budget.

The money will pay for path interpretation signs for walkers and cyclists at key locations along the route.

Driving trial date set for March

THE TRIAL of a Glencoe man accused of dangerously overtaking several cars on a bend on the A82 near Glenlyon is due to be held at Fort William Sheriff Court on March 12.

Managing director of Kinlochleven's Ice Factor, Jamie Smith, aged 44, of Minard Cottage, Tigh-Phuir, denies overtaking the vehicles at excessive speed on approach to a blind summit and crossing solid white lines when it was not safe to do so on September 15.

Lochaber bio-mass firm doubles jobs

A LOCHABER renewable heating firm has defied the gloomy economic climate by doubling its staff numbers in 12 months.

Torlundy-based HWEnergy now employs 40 people at its office and manufacturing base at the Lochaber Rural Complex, near the Nevis Range ski centre.

It designs, installs and runs biomass heating systems fuelled by wood chips or pellets, sourced in part from its own chipping and drying plant at Ballachulish.

The firm has already secured orders from Shetland to the Borders to become a major force in the sector nationally.

But a new scheme, the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), which pays businesses and community organisations cash for each unit of heat generated from renewable sources, could spark extra demand - so HWEnergy managing director Bruno Berardelli decided more skilled staff were needed.

Speaking to The Oban Times on Monday, Mr Berardelli told The Oban Times the jobs move was 'a gamble' - but essential if the firm was to have the capacity to cope with new business generated through the RHI.

He said: 'What we did not want to happen was that we got lots of added demand but could not take it on - and fall flat on our faces because we could not deliver. So in anticipation and hope we scaled up on staff last year.'

'We employ around 40 people just now compared with under 20 a year ago, but I think it will level out for a bit. We have quite a lot of capacity and we

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

"We are trying to create jobs for Highlanders and export their skills across the country."

HWEnergy boss Bruno Berardelli

will need to see how it goes.

'The rocketing oil price has been a big boost to us. If it collapsed that would have an impact big time - but if it remains high people are going to be looking for an alternative.'

'We have a policy of bringing in graduate engineers from the Highlands, who are now working in their own area. We have at least 10 here from across the region, including Lochaber and Inverness. In total, probably half our staff are from Lochaber. Working in the renewable sector is something that appeals to them.'

'And it's not just the jobs in house - we have local joiners and fabricators make the biomass heat cabins, so there are spinoffs elsewhere.'

He added: 'We are trying to create jobs for Highlanders and export their skills across the country. That's the main reason I got into this - I think biomass heating is a great thing and is creating a lot of jobs here.'

Project manager Gary Kennedy, from Fort William, was a traffic engineer in Glasgow when a post with HWE came up.

'Coming back to work here was a very attractive option,' he said.



HWEnergy boss Bruno Berardelli has doubled his workforce in 12 months 20_f04hwe01



Kinlochleven teenager Fraser Cooper will now go on to compete in the young chef Scottish final

Young Kinlochleven chef in national final

'Wowed' judges with culinary skills

A KINLOCHLEVEN teenager has won a place in the national final of the Rotary Young Chef of the Year competition.

'Wowed' the judges

Kinlochleven High School pupil Fraser Cooper beat off eight rival chefs to take the West of Scotland district title in East Kilbride last week.

The 14-year-old cooked up a three-course meal from a £15 budget. He served up a smoked haddock soufflé for a starter, with a fillet of pork wrapped in pancetta as a main course, and finished with a white

chocolate and raspberry cheesecake for desert.

His father Richard Cooper told The Oban Times Fraser had 'wowed' the judges with his culinary skills.

He said: 'We're absolutely delighted. Fraser's been keen on cooking for a few years now, since he was about nine or ten and he's very keen to carry it through to a professional level. He would love one day to gain a Michelin star.'

Fraser will compete in the final in Edinburgh in March.

UHI hit right note with music courses

WEST HIGHLAND college UHI and the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music have announced a range of new courses in traditional music.

Made possible by a Scottish Government-funded partnership between the two institutions, the courses will broaden access to the Plockton-based centre, running in parallel with its existing work.

Starting in September, the full-time NC Music qualification will include performing, listening skills and harmony, sound engineering and production techniques. Studying one more modules part-time will also be possible.

A range of non-certificated instrumental and song-based evening classes will complement the main

course, hosted by some of Scotland's finest tutors.

Free 'taster' weekends

To give a flavour of both strands, two free 'taster' weekends - one on Feb 25-26 for the NC Music course and the other on March 10-11 for the evening classes, have been arranged.

NCETM director Dougie Pincock said: 'With enquiries about the NC already arriving from students based locally as well as further afield, course administrators would like to hear from anyone who could offer term-time accommodation at a reasonable rate in the Lochalsh area.'

On the evening classes he added: 'Relaxed, informal and fun, these will be ideal for anyone who would like to improve their playing skills whilst learning some great new

tunes, or who wants to explore the vast collection of Scots and/or Gaelic songs.'

Meanwhile, the centre's search for prospective students for its secondary school programme has begun.

Any secondary school age pupil resident in Scotland, who can play or sing to a good standard and who is passionate about Scottish traditional music, can apply.

Quality tuition aside, extra-curricular activities and a busy performance schedule form an integral part of the curriculum.

To introduce prospective students to the music school, two open days will be held on February 3 and 4. Applications will close on March 2 and auditions will be held in the week beginning March 19.

Throat cut threat over cigarettes leads to fines for Glasgow couple

TWO GLASWEGIANS threatened to cut the throat of a member of staff at a Fort William supermarket after being refused the sale of cigarettes.

Steven Mitchell and Claire McQuillan, both of flat 1/4, 5 Norfolk Court, Gorbals, were in Morrisons supermarket at closing time on October 19 when Mitchell attempted to buy cigarettes, but the cashier did not accept the identification card the 25-year-old produced.

Mitchell pleaded guilty to uttering threats and was fined £375, while McQuillan was fined £300 after admitting shouting, swearing and threatening violence.

NEWSFLASH!

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Due to popular demand we will continue to provide a full Highland Dress Sales and Hire Service from 2, McGregor Court, Argyll Square, OBAN.

By appointment only - ring Brian on 07780 505057 or Head Office 0131 557 0256

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what's on oban

Thursday 26th January > Ceilidh @ 9pm
Skipinnish Ceilidh House followed by Club Night
Saturday 28th January > Club Night with Mark
Skipinnish Ceilidh House and Stuart 11pm 'til 2am
Thursday 26th January > Australia Day Beach Party
Markie Duns Fancy Dress & Free Juke Box 9.30pm
Friday 27th January > Burns Night Party
Markie Duns Themed Disco with DJ Steevo 9.30pm
Saturday 28th January > Free Juke Box All Day
Markie Duns
Sunday 29th January > Quiz Night 9.30pm
Markie Duns

what's on lochaber

Friday 27th January > Wonderland (live band)
Fort William Skipinnish Ceilidh House only £3 entry
10pm till 2am
Saturday 28th January > Clubnight "Skint"
Fort William Skipinnish Ceilidh House only £3 entry
with DJ Symondo, 10pm till 2am
Tuesday 31 January > Cabairachd Abairachd
Fort William Skipinnish Ceilidh House 7pm till 9pm
informal Gaelic chat & songs. Free, all abilities welcome

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Top table guests and musicians at Lochaber High School Burns Supper on Saturday night. 20_104burns02

Lochaber High hosts Burns supper

LOCHABER High School Burns Supper in aid of next month's S6 school trip to London proved another great success on Saturday night.
Chairman and depute head teacher Paul Reynolds provided some memorable highlights in his witty introductions of the speakers.
Local piper and driving instructor Raj Smith delivered a fine immortal memory, made all the more special by his rich Enniskillen accent, undimmed by 24 years in Maybole and Lochaber.
English teacher Stephen Carruthers' excellent Toast tae the Lassies met an equally witty reply from

fellow staff member Naomi Westwood, while head teacher Jim Sutherland's faultless Tam o' Shanter earned a rapturous ovation.
Hector MacLean gave the Selkirk Grace, Eilidh Sykes the 'Address to the Haggis' and Cameron Melrose recited 'Address tae the Toothache'.
Mod gold medal winner Laura Davies sang a selection of Burns songs, accompanied by fellow Lochaber High pupils Helena Rose - Highland Young Musician of the Year - Kevin Cameron and Lorna Linfield.
Andrew Hepburn piped in the haggis and Matthew Duff gave the vote of thanks.

Taynuilt winter ceilidh success thanks to audience participation

DANCERS performing at Taynuilt's winter ceilidh on Saturday enjoyed the full support of the audience, who provided the music for their dance.
Eilidh MacInnes dancers, Karina Black and Abbie MacKenzie demonstrated their bravery when they performed regardless of the fact they had forgotten the CD required for some of the Highland dances.
Not to disappoint though, the thoroughly professional performers carried on with the assistance of the audience, who provided some 'mouth music' to dance to.
The support summed up the good feeling for the evening, which started with some stirring tunes from young piper, Donald Morrison. Later, his brother Ruairidh gave some highly impressive performances on his accordion.
Maurice Duncan gave his usual five-star performance on the fiddle and had toes tapping in the audience.
Singers Morag MacNeil, Riona McCormick and Duncan MacDonald provided excellent Gaelic songs throughout the evening and Duncan also sang a couple of Burns' songs for good measure.
Bean an Taighe for the evening was Ishbel Banks who kept proceedings flowing smoothly.



Atlantis Leisure was 'bouncing' at the weekend, when Oban High School pupils hosted the first Saturday Night Live event. Bodyzorb-ing was one of the main attractions, with participants taking the opportunity to throw themselves around without fear of injury.

Saturday Night Live is bouncing along

BY COMBINING Bodyzorb-ing, football, spin class, climbing and swimming with live music and computer games, a group of enterprising Oban pupils hope to eradicate all Saturday night boredom.
Senior pupils at the school got their heads together to find alternative ways to keep their peers entertained after realising there was little in the way of activity for 15-17 year olds to do on Saturday evenings, particularly during the dark nights.
The result is Saturday Night Live at Atlantis Leisure, giving pupils a change to keep off the streets and entertained from 7pm-10pm.

Your favourite Bonnie Babies competition is back with prizes

Look out the photos and get your entries now to win £500 of vouchers

ATTENTION all mums! The Oban Times' Bonnie Babies competition is back and the sooner we get your entries in, the sooner you can start voting!
We are on the lookout for 2012's cutest baby and this year it will be up to you, our readers, to decide who should win.
Not only does the winner receive the title of Bonniest Baby 2012, but Mum and Dad also win £500 worth of shopping vouchers to spend at with the

co-operative stores.
If the idea of feeding the family for free sounds good, see below for details on how to enter and send us your baby photo today.
Our competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. Readers will have the chance to vote for their favourite baby by text or by post, using a coupon provided in the paper. A different selection of entries will appear

in The Oban Times each week of the competition. At the end, the babies with most votes from each week will qualify for our grand finale.
All finalists will then feature in The Oban Times for one last time, again for public vote. The baby with the most votes will then be crowned 2012's bonniest!
For more information and to enter, visit obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

'Sound and light' art exhibition for forest near Laggan

STRATHMASHIE Forest near Laggan is playing host to an unusual 'sound and light' art exhibition which aims to brighten the dark winter nights.
'Sörn', by former artist-in-residence at Sabhal Mor Ostaig Gill Russell, will be in place until March 26.
'Privileged'
The forest is gently lit when the sun goes down and a series of recorded noises are played out, including a group of women singing in Gaelic, children chanting, and bells ringing.
The project has been supported by Cairngorms National Park Association, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Cairngorms Local Action Group.
Meanwhile, LFT are in the process of hiring a new community recreation assistant to help with event support and maintenance of the facilities. The six-month post is being funded by Community Jobs Scotland.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

<p>Comunn Gaidhealach An Obain Ceilidh Saturday 4th February, 2012 at 7.30pm Masonic Hall, Oban Alasdair Whyte, Linda MacLeod Audrey and David Paterson Piper, Angus J MacColl Music, Peat Moss Ceilidh Band Admission £5</p>	<p>Oban Concern For Palestine Sunday 29 Jan. 2012 @ 7.30pm Glencruitten Church Centre, Oban Public meeting and showing of two 30 min. DVDs depicting the realities of the situation in Palestine/Israel. Intervals for discussion Admi. Free All Welcome Further info. Contact Graeme Pagan 01631 563737</p>	<p>Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club Monthly Club Night Thursday 2nd February 2012 Argyllshire Gathering Hall 7.30pm Audience and Players welcome Special Guest Artist Sileas Sinclair Trio Admission £3 Come along and enjoy the music</p>
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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies

competition 2012

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WIN £500 worth of Vouchers

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies Competition 2012

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

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

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

ENTRY FORM

Child's name.....

Child's date of birth.....

Tel:

Address:

Name of parent/guardian.....

Signature of parent/guardian.....

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

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

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

'Castle Commando' remembered in TV documentary

ACHNACARRY Estate in Lochaber will be the focus of a BBC Scotland documentary on Monday night.

Castle Commando will tell how in January 1942 the estate was transformed into a wartime paramilitary academy for elite, highly trained soldiers - the commandos.

Over four years, 25,000 men came to Lochaber to endure the world's toughest infantry training course. The programme features larger-than-life characters that helped shape Winston Churchill's legendary raiding force.

Contributors include Major James Dunning, who used local ghillies' knowledge of stalking deer to teach soldiers the fieldcraft of war. Narrator Rory Bremner said: 'Achnacarry built a new generation of fighting men.'

Castle Commando will be shown on BBC Two Scotland at 9pm.

Abbeyfield entertained

RESIDENTS of Abbeyfield House in Ballachulish were treated to live music on Friday night thanks to a charity initiative.

The gig, one of a series of concerts organised by Music in Hospitals and supported by Crerar Hotels, saw Perthshire-based Heather Innes and Belfast-born Ciaran Dorris entertain with a varied mix of folk tunes.

Darrell Williams, general manager at Oban Bay Hotel & Spa, part of the Crerar Hotels group said: 'The charity carries out fantastic work and support for hospitals and care homes all over the UK, and we are glad that our support over the years has allowed them to continue their great efforts.'

Music in Hospitals provides over 1,700 live concerts a year at care establishments throughout Scotland.

Colonsay's celebration of Spring adds a touch of Hollywood

HOLLYWOOD glitz will help get Colonsay's second annual Festival of Spring underway this April, the committee behind the event has said.

It is hoped that this year's event will be an even bigger

draw than last year's undoubted success, which helped attract new attention to the isle.

Stunning natural attributes Taking centre stage, as last year, is the island's stunning natural attributes - its scenery,

flora and fauna.

Drawing as much attention though is the committee's promise that 'a Hollywood A-lister' will introduce its Scottish film nights, part of a hugely diverse programme of events.

Wildlife and nature will be explored in diverse ways during the festival, with guided walks and talks led by a team of experts, while ancillary events will include foraging and cooking wild food, historical and ar-

chaeological talks, photography courses, spinning and dyeing wool with natural plant dyes.

Workshops

Other activities include painting and art workshops, farming walks, malt whisky tasting,

bread making courses, poetry and Gaelic evenings.

The Beltane event, an ancient Celtic festival heralding the return of summer marked by lighting fiery torches on the top of every high hill on Colonsay

before dawn on May 1, will be repeated this year.

More information on the festival, which runs from April 28 to May 18, can be found at colonsayevents.co.uk/springfest-2012.



Eilidh Campbell receives the £700 cheque from Oban Classic Vehicle Club. Handing over the cheque are, from left, chairman Kevin Devine, vice chairman Ken Munro and secretary Neil Owen. 15_104marycheque01

Classic car enthusiasts boost Mary's Meals fund

OBAN Classic Vehicle Club last week handed a cheque for £700 to Mary's Meals - just before the girl receiving it on behalf of the charity went to Kenya for six months.

Bonawe girl, Eilidh Campbell, volunteered to go to Malawi with Mary's Meals some 18

months ago, but has continued to work with the charity following her return.

While her visit to Oban Classic Vehicle Club was primarily to give a presentation on her previous charitable work with Mary's Meals, she confirmed she was already dusting off the

passport for a return to Africa, this time to volunteer with the Single Mothers' Association in Kenya.

While there, she will help expand the scope of the project to western Kenya, most likely from the charity's base in Nairobi.

Meanwhile, Kevin Devine was delighted to present Eilidh with a cheque for Mary's Meals during their meeting at North Connell's Lochnell Arms.

It is the fourth year in a row the not-for-profit community group has handed a large donation to a local good cause.

The club's vice chairman, Ken Munro, said: 'This is the fifth year of the club and we decided early on we wanted to raise money for local causes. This year, we just felt Mary's Meals was a worthwhile local charity whose work makes a massive difference to those they help.'

Dewar's boost Birks cinema campaign

WHISKY distiller, Dewar's, has contributed £10,000 to the campaign to reopen Aberfeldy's Birks cinema, by sponsoring a whole row of seats.

The boost to the campaign takes the group closer than ever to its goal, but the race is on to gather in the last £180,000 of the £1.8million required to meet match-funding requirements by the end of January.

'Absolutely wonderful'

Dewar's sponsorship of 10 seats has been described as 'absolutely wonderful' by Charlotte Flower, chair of the Friends of the Birks Cinema, but she admits the pressure is on to find the remaining sum by Tuesday.

She said: 'It is absolutely wonderful for our famous local distillery to make such a generous gesture and takes us even closer to our goal. Many local

and national businesses have been invited to help, and we hope the example set by Dewar's will spur others into action. 'We are making our last big effort now with our remaining funding applications and direct appeals. We are hopeful but it is by no means a certainty and the project still hangs in the balance.'

'If we cannot raise the remainder the project will not go ahead - it is as simple as that.'

Stephen Marshall, senior global brand ambassador for Dewar's, said: 'Aberfeldy is our home and the local community has always been vital to Dewar's.'

'The son of our founder, Tommy Dewar, produced the first cinematicadvertforadrinksproduct in 1898, so it feels apt to help support such an exciting venture.'



Dewars Visitor Centre, Aberfeldy

Weekend Breaks

Inverness Arran Whisky Trail

Many people consider post-New Year to be the time of year when you stay at home and count the cost of Christmas. However, there is a growing school of thought that advocates going away for a short winter pick-me-up holiday, and this year, a February break could be an ideal answer to the depressing weather for yourself and your family. There are numerous choices open to the off-season traveller. First however, one must decide whether the holiday is to be a short break in the UK or an opportunity to sample winter in the sun. Throughout Britain, many hotels offer excellent off-season entertainment or adventure programmes alongside equally special catering. Generally, bookings can be on a self-catering basis - which is not always the cheapest option but which may offer the 'freedom' that a family are aiming for; the traditional bed and breakfast or several hotels and guest houses currently offer very special deals on an all-inclusive break, which may include evening functions in addition to normal board and seasonal foods.

Because tourism outlets can be quieter at this time of year it is a good opportunity to take the children away for a few days. Kids are usually well catered for and, if the hotel includes a 'nanny' or baby-minding service, there is ample opportunity for parents to get out on their own from time to time to perhaps join the evening activities. Tourist outlets which have, or are near to, indoor facilities such as pools, spas, etc are especially popular during February and March as are the more remote locations where roaring log fires and a warm welcome awaits your return from walks in the countryside, frolics through the forests, or enjoying the numerous opportunities to experience stunning, 'wild', Scottish scenery with its winter coat on. Overseas, broadly similar deals apply, though of course, flight or ferry arrangements are normally included within the holiday 'package'. And there are lots of good deals in the sun or on the ski slopes, out there at the moment. If you do go abroad, you may have a choice of a traditional beach-type relaxing break, or one that is full of

adventure and challenges. Or you may find you have the choice of a 'mix and match' vacation where you can experience the unfamiliar customs and cuisine of the country in which you are staying, while being sure of temperatures well in advance of what is being experienced in Scotland at the moment. Again, many European hotels are happy to cater for children and provide some 'listening' services. It is however wise to make sure of this in advance, before you confirm your booking. Some tour companies put on special winter tours that cover a number of different countries within a short timespan and these can be very happy experiences as there is always an element of surprise and the unexpected. Winter sports around this time of year is another favourite. This year, the weather is cold enough to produce ideal skiing conditions at several of the Scottish centres, however, weather conditions are, at best, unpredictable, and it is always best to check with the centre direct.

If you are not prepared to take the risk, you may look further afield to the traditional European winter sports centres. Northern Scandinavia can also usually be relied upon to provide the right conditions as can parts of North American and Canada. Obviously these further-flung centres are rather more expensive, but there are good value packages on offer as well as some fairly special, seasonal 'bargain' deals. If you want to escape Scotland's winter weather, how about a relaxing cruise, perhaps in the Caribbean? It could include trips to see the rain forests in South America, the Inca ruins in Peru or the Aztec remains in Mexico. You could the whole hog, head for Australia or New Zealand and enjoy a 'winter' beach Barbie? With Australia only just over a day away by plane, it is now well within reach of even the least intrepid holiday maker. This year, if February at home is beginning to pall, think seriously about a seasonal holiday break. It could set you up for the challenges of the year ahead!

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Spring born calves sell to £1,040 at Lochboisdale

UNITED Auctions held their Annual January Sale of all classes of cattle and sheep at Lochboisdale Auction Mart last Thursday when 176 head of all classes of cattle was sold plus a few pens of sheep.

Averages up £156.24 per head
Bullocks sold to £1,040 for Limousin calves from 136 Stilligarry and to 258pence per kilo, also Limousin cross calves, from 1 Airdhmuillinn.

Heifers sold to £795 for Limousin calves from 136 Stilligarry and to 238pence per kilo, also Limousin cross calves, from 439 Lochboisdale.

Breeding cattle sold to £1,200 for in-calf cows from 352 South Boisdale whilst east cows from 200 Stoneybridge and 2 Kileravagh sold to £935.

Cast ewes from 8 West Gerinish sold at £100 and wedders from 9 Milton fetched £76.

Overall, sale averages rose by £156.24 per head or 47.03pence per kilo for the bullocks and £106.95 per head or 36.96pence per kilo for heifers.

Limousin cross heifers sell to £940 at Lochmaddy

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 147 store cattle and 28 Over 30 Month cattle at Lochmaddy, North Uist last Thursday when an excellent show of cattle met a strong demand from a full rigside of buyers.

Bullocks averaged 219.0p and sold to 259.6p per kg for a pen a 260kg Limousin cross from Taigh Fada, Paiblesgarry, and £930 for a 410kg British Blue cross from 4 Tigharry, Lochmaddy.

Heifers averaged 207.4p and sold to 230.2p per kg for a 265kg Limousin cross from 2 Hosta, Lochmaddy, and £940 for a of 445kg Limousin cross also from 7 Middlequater, Sollas.

OTM cattle averaged 102.8p and sold to 128.9p per kg for a 675kg Limousin cross from 4 Tigharry, Lochmaddy, and £960 for a 750kg Simmental cross from 7 Sollas, Lochmaddy.

Market reports LOCHBOISDALE United Auctions

Bullocks
Aberdeen Angus X: £815 319 Kilpheder; £720 & £715 325 North Boisdale; £715 319 Kilpheder; £705 299 Kilpheder; £685(2) 319 Kilpheder; £660 299 Kilpheder.
Limousin X: £1040, £1000, £965, £885, £875 and £865 136 Stilligarry; £820 and £800(2) MacSweens Dunganichy; £795 18 West Gerinish; £775 356 South Boisdale and MacSweens Dunganichy; £765 356 South Boisdale; £760 18 West Gerinish; £745 356 South Boisdale; £735 8 Milton; £725 18 West Gerinish and 8 Milton; £720 6 Askernish; £705(2) 1 Airdhmuillinn; £695 MacSweens Dunganichy and 17 Torlum; £685 356 South Boisdale, MacSweens Dunganichy(3) and 18 West Gerinish; £675 6 Askernish, MacSweens Dunganichy and 17 Torlum; £665 6 Askernish, Shorthorn X: £755 200 Stoneybridge; £720 202 Stoneybridge.
Simmental X: £900 136 Stilligarry; £755 8 Milton; £705 324 North Boisdale and 336 North Boisdale; £675 328 North Boisdale; £655 3 Ormicate.
Heifers
Aberdeen Angus X: £760 and £700 301 Kilpheder; £640 319 Kilpheder.
Charolais X: £650 132 Stilligarry.
Limousin X: £795, £775, £745 and £735 136 Stilligarry; £715 439 Lochboisdale; £705 136 Stilligarry; £700 356 South Boisdale; £695(2) 136 Stilligarry; £685 352 South Boisdale; £665 MacSweens Dunganichy.
Simmental X: £725 299 Kilpheder; £700 325 North Boisdale.
Cows with calf at foot: £820 - 352 South Boisdale
In-calf cows: £1200 352 South Boisdale; £885 19 West Gerinish.
Cast cows: £935 200 Stoneybridge and 2

LOCHMADDY Dingwall and Highland Marts

Bullocks
201-250kg - 7 Borve, Berneray, £550, 250.0p; 251-300kg - 13 Balemore, Bayhead, £710, 1.1 Grenitote, Sollas, 250.0p; 301-350kg - No 1 Clachan Farm, Lochmaddy, £800, Hastain, Bayhead, 243.8p; 351-400kg - 4 Tigharry, £890, 240.5p; 401-450kg - 7 Middlequater, £870, 4 Tigharry, 226.8p; 451-500kg - 17 Grenitote, Sollas, £840, 184.6p.
Heifers
201-250kg - 10 Hougharry, Lochmaddy, £530, 9 Maliglate, Lochmaddy, 221.7p; 251-300kg - 13 Knockintorran, Paiblesgarry, £680, 226.7p; 301-350kg - No 1 Clachan Farm, £760, 7 Middlequater, 224.6p; 351-400kg - Hastain, £870, 226.0p; 401-450kg - 7 Middlequater, £840, 211.2p; 451-500kg - 12 Sollas, Lochmaddy, £860, 1 Grenitote, 180.7p; 551-600kg - 1 Grenitote, £930, 161.7p.
OTM cows
2/3 Clachan Sands, Lochmaddy, (LimX), £910; 2 Hosta, Lochmaddy, (AA), £880; Old Inn, Lochmaddy, (SimX), £850.
OTM cows:
7 Sollas, (SimX), 128.0p; 2/3 Clachan Sands, (LimX), 125.5p; 2 Hosta, (AA), 119.7p.
Sheep
Wedders: £76.00 - 9 Milton
Ewes: £100 - 8 West Gerinish

Suffolk X: 15 Balmadison, Lairg, £86; Suffolk: Strath of Pitcalnie, Nigg, £78; Charolais X: Netherside, Cuthness, £80; Texel X: Eilean Darrach Farm, Dundonnell, £84; Texel: Kildun, Dingwall, £93; Cross: South Balkeith, Tain, £81; Blackface: Aberchelder Farm, Invergarry, £75; Beltex X: Strath of Pitcalnie, £76; Mule: Achnabat, Torness, £76; Zwartbles: Muirton, Munloch, £76; Ewes: Texel: Bunchrew Farm, Bunchrew, £112; Texel X: Brae Edge Farm, Cuthness, £114; Cheviot: South Balkeith, £105; Bluefaced Leicester: Broomhill Farm, Muir of Ord, £97; Suffolk X: South Clunes, Kirkhill, £100; Cross: Easter Strath of Auchterlow, £94; Beltex X: Upperton, Glenquhart, £99; Charolais X: Glustallich Farm, Tain, £108; Mule: Brae of Coulmore, North Kessock, £102; Blackface: Blackford Farm, Croy, £76; Suffolk: Katewell, Evanton, £124; Weyler: Corriemony, Glenquhart, £89; Cheviot: Sands Farm, Garloch, £80; Cross: Dundreggan Croft, Glenmoriston, £80; Swaledale: Cawder Estates, Cawdor, £72; Blackface: Lower Milton Farm, Drumnaodoch, £60; Lley - Corriemony, £90; Rams: Suffolk: 2 Digg, Staffin, £120; Cheviot: South Balkeith, £116; Bluefaced Leicester: Ruivard, Atrross, £90; Texel: Milton Muir, Rogart, £122; Charolais Wester Cairnglass, Gollanfield, £122; Beltex X: Leanach Farm, Leanach, £108; Blackface: 9 Sasag, Sleat, £110; Bleu De Maine: Bogellan, North Kessock, £92.

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09 59	BMW 120i ES 2.0 Crimson Red, 17765mls	£13,000
11 11	BMW 320d Exclusive Edition 2.0d Vermilion Red, 4623mls	£22,000
11 11	BMW 320i M Sport Coupe 2.0 Bluewater, 4150mls	£23,000
08 58	BMW 530d M Sport Saloon 3.0d Deep Sea Blue, 28653mls	£22,000

10 10	Honda Accord 2.2 i-DTEC ES 4dr Silver, 6003mls	£16,495
09 09	Honda Accord 2.2 i-DTEC ES GT 4dr Buran Silver, 51000mls	£12,995
09 09	Honda Accord 2.2 i-DTEC EX 4dr Polished Metal, 18234mls	£15,995
06 06	Honda Civic 1.4 i-Dsi SE 5dr Galaxy Grey, 53000mls	£5,995
11 61	Honda Civic 1.4 i-VTEC Si 5dr i-Shift Milano Red, 2316mls	£13,995
11 11	Honda Civic 1.4 i-VTEC Type S 3dr i-Shift Milano Red, 11000mls	£10,995
10 10	Honda Civic 2.2 i-CTDi SE 5dr Silver, 5553mls	£13,495
11 60	Honda CR-V 2.2 i-DTEC ES-T 5dr Black, 15500mls	£23,995
10 10	Honda CR-V 2.2 i-DTEC EX 5dr Crystal Black, 9000mls	£23,995
11 11	Honda CR-V 2.2 i-DTEC EX 5dr Ionizd Bronze, 13956mls	£24,995
10 10	Honda CR-Z 1.5 IMA Sport Hybrid 3dr Blue, 26000mls	£13,995
11 60	Honda CR-Z 1.5 IMA S Hybrid 3dr Crys Black-Red Lt, 3297mls	£15,995
06 56	Honda FR-V 2.2 i-CTDi SE 5dr Sparkle Grey, 37011mls	£9,495
10 60	Honda Insight 1.3 IMA ES Hybrid 5dr CVT Cerulean Blue, 12739mls	£12,995
09 09	Honda Insight 1.3 IMA ES Hybrid 5dr CVT Crystal Black, 39000mls	£10,995
10 60	Honda Insight 1.3 IMA ES Hybrid 5dr CVT Polished Metal, 16273mls	£12,995
11 61	Honda Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S 5dr [AC] Ionized Bronze, 2000mls	£10,995
11 11	Honda Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S 5dr [AC] Milano Red, 11500mls	£8,995
11 61	Honda Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S 5dr [VSA] Ionizd Bronze, 3000mls	£10,495
10 60	Honda Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC SE 5dr [VSA] Cerulean Blue, 6309mls	£9,495
10 10	Honda Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC SE 5dr [VSA] Crystal Black, 4000mls	£9,495
11 11	Honda Jazz 1.3 IMA HE Hybrid 5dr CVT Crystal Black, 3506mls	£14,995
08 58	Honda Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES 5dr Deep Sapphire Blue, 23198mls	£7,995
10 60	Honda Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES 5dr Milano Red, 14195mls	£9,995

09 59	Hyundai Coupe 2.0 SIII 3dr Black, 18000mls	£8,995
11 11	Hyundai i10 1.0 Blue 5dr Crystal White, 6444mls	£6,795
08 58	Hyundai i10 1.1 Comfort 5dr Grey, 24036mls	£4,995
09 59	Hyundai i10 1.2 Comfort 5dr Silver, 15972mls	£5,495
11 11	Hyundai i20 1.2 Comfort 5dr Sleek Silver, 11811mls	£7,995
10 60	Hyundai i30 1.4 Classic [2010] 5dr Stone Black, 6700mls	£7,995
10 10	Hyundai i30 1.6 CRDi Comfort [2010] 5dr Red, 25000mls	£9,495
11 11	Hyundai i30 1.6 CRDi Comfort 5dr Steel Grey, 8733mls	£11,995
10 60	Hyundai i800 2.5 CRDi Style 5dr Grey, 15600mls	£15,495
11 61	Hyundai ix20 1.4 Classic Crystal White, 3000mls	£9,995
11 11	Hyundai ix35 1.7 CRDi Premium Sirius Silver, 11239mls	£17,995

10 60	Kia Ceed 1.6 2 5dr Black, 12198mls	£9,995
10 60	Kia Ceed 1.6 CRDi 3 5dr Auto Silver Storm, 8233mls	£10,995
11 11	Kia Ceed 1.6 CRDi 3 5dr Silver, 14755mls	£13,495
09 09	Kia Ceed 2.0 CRDi Sport 5dr Silver, 14000mls	£9,495
10 60	Kia Magentis 2.0 CRDi TR 4dr Auto White, 5145mls	£11,495
09 58	Kia Picanto 1.1 2 5dr Auto Bright Silver, 14000mls	£5,795
08 58	Kia Picanto 1.1 Chill 5dr Black, 18547mls	£4,995
11 60	Kia Pro Ceed 1.4 1 3dr Silver, 500mls	£7,995
10 60	Kia Rio 1.5 CRDi 1 5dr Silver, 15869mls	£6,995
11 61	Kia Rio 1.5 CRDi 2 5dr Sapphire Blue, 7000mls	£8,995
11 61	Kia Rio 1.4 2 Auto 5dr Blaze Red, 1050mls	£12,995
11 60	Kia Sorento 2.2 CRDi KX-1 5dr Auto Bright Silver, 12964mls	£19,995
11 11	Kia Sorento 2.2 CRDi KX-1 5dr Auto Bright Silver, 14951mls	£20,995
11 11	Kia Sorento 2.2 CRDi KX-1 5dr Auto Bright Silver, 3000mls	£23,995
10 10	Kia Sportage 2.0 CRDi XS 5dr 2WD Auto Astral Blue, 13000mls	£15,995
11 11	Kia Venga 1.4 CRDi EcoDynamics 2 5dr Blue, 13915mls	£10,495
11 11	Kia Venga 1.4 CRDi EcoDynamics 2 5dr Contin Silver, 10910mls	£10,495
11 11	Kia Venga 1.4 CRDi EcoDynamics 2 5dr Stone Black, 11502mls	£10,795

10 60	Mazda 2 1.3 Takuya 5dr Red, 8000mls	£8,995
11 11	Mazda 2 1.3 TS2 3dr Ice Blue, 7000mls	£7,995
11 11	Mazda 3 1.6d [115] TS 5dr Red, 7557mls	£12,995
11 61	Mazda 5 1.8 TS 5dr Aluminium Metallic, 200mls	£13,495
10 60	Mazda 6 2.0 Takuya 5dr Silver, 2000mls	£14,995
11 11	Mazda 6 2.2d [180] Sport 5dr Crystal White Pearl, 4500mls	£17,495
10 10	Mazda CX-7 2.2d Sport Tech 5dr Blue, 7848mls	£22,295

07 07	MINI Cooper 1.6 D 3dr Pure Silver, 37069mls	£10,000
08 08	MINI Cooper S 1.6 2dr Pepper White, 26104mls	£10,000
10 59	MINI Hatchback 1.4 First 3dr Pepper White, 9500mls	£9,500
07 57	MINI Hatchback 1.6 Cooper 3dr Pepper White, 35000mls	£9,000
07 57	MINI Hatchback 1.6 Cooper 3dr Pure Silver, 21820mls	£9,500
10 10	MINI One Clubman 1.6 Graphite 5dr Dark Silver, 14798mls	£11,300

11 61	Mitsubishi ASX 1.8 3 ClearTec 5dr White, 6000mls	£17,495
11 11	Mitsubishi ASX 1.8 4 ClearTec 5dr 4WD Red, 5429mls	£22,495
11 11	Mitsubishi Colt 1.1 CZ1 3dr White, 10mls	£6,750
10 60	Mitsubishi Colt 1.1 CZ1 5dr Silver, 8942mls	£7,495
11 61	Mitsubishi Colt 1.1 CZ1 5dr White, 10mls	£7,495
11 11	Mitsubishi Colt 1.3 CZ2 ClearTec 5dr Blue, 2661mls	£8,995
11 11	Mitsubishi Colt 1.3 CZ2 Black, 7200mls	£7,995
11 11	Mitsubishi Lancer 1.5 Juro 5dr Orient Red, 3199mls	£12,995
11 60	Mitsubishi Lancer 1.8 GS3 4dr CVT Red, 400mls	£11,495
10 60	Mitsubishi Lancer 2.0 DI-D GS2 5dr Black, 9889mls	£10,995
11 11	Mitsubishi Lancer 2.0 DI-D GS2 5dr Orient Red, 4933mls	£12,995
10 60	Mitsubishi Lancer 2.0 DI-D GS3 5dr Silver, 13727mls	£11,495
11 11	Mitsubishi Lancer 2.0 DI-D Juro 5dr Frost White, 6500mls	£12,995
11 11	Mitsubishi Outlander 2.2 DI-D GX3 5dr 2WD Black, 6107mls	£18,995
10 60	Mitsubishi Outlander 2.2 DI-D GX4 5dr SST Silver, 6531mls	£21,995

11 61	Suzuki Alto 1.0 SZ4 5dr Silky Silver, 2000mls	£6,995
07 07	Suzuki Grand Vitara 1.6 VVT + 3dr Clear Beige, 27000mls	£8,995
09 09	Suzuki Grand Vitara 1.9 DDiS 5dr Grey, 41000mls	£12,495
11 61	Suzuki Grand Vitara 1.9 DDiS SZ5 5dr Silky Silver, 3000mls	£19,995
11 61	Suzuki Splash 1.0 GLS 5dr Cosmic Black, 2000mls	£7,995
11 11	Suzuki Splash 1.0 GLS 5dr Lagn Turquoise, 4000mls	£7,495
11 11	Suzuki Splash 1.2 GLS + 5dr Sunlight Copper, 4000mls	£7,995
10 10	Suzuki Splash 1.2 GLS 5dr Cosmic Black, 3500mls	£6,995
11 61	Suzuki Splash 1.2 SZ4 5dr Auto Galactic Grey, 2000mls	£8,995
11 11	Suzuki Swift 1.2 SZ2 5dr Kashmir Blue, 7000mls	£8,295
11 61	Suzuki Swift 1.2 SZ4 3dr Silky Silver, 4000mls	£9,495
11 61	Suzuki Swift 1.3 DDiS SZ3 5dr Cosmic Black, 2000mls	£9,795
11 11	Suzuki Swift 1.3 DDiS SZ3 5dr Kashmir Blue, 4000mls	£9,495
06 06	Suzuki Swift 1.3 GL 3dr Silky Silver, 35000mls	£4,995
11 61	Suzuki Swift 1.6 VVT Sport 3dr Cosmic Black, 1000mls	£9,995
11 61	Suzuki Swift 1.6 VVT Sport 3dr Silky Silver, 3000mls	£9,995
07 07	Suzuki SX4 1.6 GL 5dr Kashmir Blue, 21440mls	£4,995

10 10	Audi A3 1.6 Technik SE 5dr Black, 14595mls	£12,995
10 60	Citroen C3 1.4 HDi VTR+ 5dr Silver, 8738mls	£9,495
08 58	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Titanium 5dr Green, 23979mls	£7,995
09 59	Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec S 5dr Blue, 29000mls	£8,495
09 09	Mercedes-Benz C180K BlueEfficiency Sport 5dr Aut Black, 18000mls	£19,095
09 58	Peugeot 107 1.0 Urban 5dr Blue, 40150mls	£5,495
07 07	Seat Leon 2.0 16V TDI Stylance 5dr DSG Blue, 26623mls	£7,995
07 07	Seat Altea XI 1.6 Reference 5dr Red, 25000mls	£6,095
08 58	Toyota Aygo 1.0 VVT-i Platinum 5dr [AC] Silver, 31776mls	£5,495
09 59	Vauxhall Astra 1.6i 16V SXi [115] 5dr Silver, 30000mls	£6,295
10 10	Vauxhall Astra 1.7 CDTi ecoFLEX Exclusiv 5dr Black, 9000mls	£10,695
10 10	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4i 16V [100] Exclusiv 3dr Auto Blue, 4400mls	£7,495
08 58	Volkswagen Passat 1.9 Highline TDI 4dr Black, 31000mls	£10,595
10 60	Volkswagen Polo 1.2 60 SE 3dr Blue, 7000mls	£8,995

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Dumbarton Rd/South St
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Seafield Road

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GLEN LONAN WIND FARM

Did you know about the planning application for a wind farm in Glen Lonan (6km outside Oban)?

The proposal is for 11 turbines, 121 metres (394 feet) tall.

The proposal is to place them between Loch Nell and Beinn Ghlas with access gained by a new road through Fearnoch Forest.

Glen Lonan is a unique environment, rich in ancient history, monuments and beauty. It draws many hundreds of visitors every year from all around the world. Is this really an appropriate setting for such a wind farm?

The turbines will dominate the landscape and blight one of Scotland's most beautiful glens. They will be visible from Oban, Connel, Benderloch, Lismore, Mull, Morvern and elsewhere within a 35km radius. If the turbines were placed on Oban's North Pier they would tower over 200 feet above McCaig's Folly. Is the scale of this development really appropriate?

Golden Eagles, Hen Harriers, Merlins, Red-throated Divers and many other protected species have been regularly recorded by the developers in and around the proposed wind farm area. Is it right that our protected species be sacrificed for the benefit of Europe's largest energy company, EDF Energy (Electricite de France)?

We urge you please to make your views known and stop this development. Let the people speak.

Online: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk Go to 'Planning and the Environment'. Click 'Find and Comment on planning application'. Under 'simple search' click 'simple search for planning application'. Type reference **11/02553/PP**. Click 'Make Public Comment'.

By letter to: Richard Kerr, Principal Planning Officer, Dalriada House, Lochnell Street, Lochgilphead PA31 8ST. Remember to give the reference number **11/02553/PP**, your name and your address.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY; online at www.highland.gov.uk and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected
11/04521/FUL	Creag Beag Achalee Road North Ballachulish Fort William PH33 6SA	Alterations to roof, extension to house and erection of car port/terrace	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04587/PIP	Land 35M West of Allt Na Beithe Invergarry	Erection of house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04654/FUL	30M South of Stable Bathy Lagnahe Farm Duror	Conversion of agricultural barn to cafe/shop	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04696/FUL	Land To South West of The Rowans Bohuntin Roy Bridge	Erection of house and garage	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00003/PIP	Land 60M To North West of Benloch Cottage 76 Camoghael Fort William	Erection of house with garage and letting unit	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00017/FUL	Site 50M South East of Glenbeg Acharacle	Erection of new-build distillery, warehousing and visitor centre	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00023/FUL	Land NE of Dale Cottage Glenborrodale Acharacle	Formation of access (retrospective)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00054/FUL	46 High Street Fort William PH33 6AH	Change of use of office to residential flat	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00096/FUL	Land 60M South East of Whitehorn (Site 1) Greenfield Duror	Erection of house and garage	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

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

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

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

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

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

Ma thasibhairson 's gun tèid an leanabhagaibhagusgoileleiseach a' bhun-sgoilleanadail, feumaidhsibh anclàrachadhaig a' bhun-sgoilleanadail an toiseach, agus iarrtas a chur a-steachàsdeidh sin gu Oifis Foghlaim, Cultair agus Spòrs na Sgìre. Chan eil feum air iarrtasairson àite-sgoileairson Foghlaimtro Mheadhanna Gàidhlig no dhàibhsan a thairidh air roghainnairsonsgoilbuidhne.

Cuin a chlàrassibh an leanabhagaibh?	Càite	Dèbheirsibhleibh?
3.00f - 30 Faoilleach - 3 Gearran 2012	A' Bhun-sgoilleanadail	Teisteanasbreith an leanabh

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To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

PLANNING

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02141/PP	Partial demolition, alterations and extension of existing steading to form 12 dwellings and associated storage building	Glenmore Steading Kilmelford Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
11/02523/PP	Erection of 16 single storey office/ workspace units together with associated parking and landscaping	Glenshellach Business Park Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office
11/02556/PP	Erection of three self catering lodges and one dwellinghouse	Barbreck Farm Bungalow Kilmelford Argyll and Bute PA35 1HF	Sub Post Office Taynuilt
11/02566/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land West Of Hill House Arduaine Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4XQ	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
11/02567/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land East Of Hill House Arduaine Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4XQ	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
11/02577/PP	Construction of footpath linking Lorn Road to Etive Road	Vacant Land Between Lorn Road And Etive Road Dumbeig Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Dumbeig
12/00012/PPP	Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse	Vacant Land To South of Schiehallion Crosspoll Isle of Tiree Argyll and Bute PA77 6UP	Tiree Area Office
12/00038/PP	Construction of a cycle and walking path and associated works	Land South of Appin Waste Water Treatment Works Tyerribbie Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Leidaig
12/00042/PP	Demolition of existing agricultural building, erection of dwellinghouse and installation of septic tank	Land North East of Stone Farm Dalmally Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Dalmally
12/00054/PP	Erection of a 19.02 metre high (to blade tip) wind turbine	Land To Southwest Of 3 Heypoll Isle Of Tiree Argyll And Bute PA77 6TY	Tiree Area Office
12/00067/PP	Change of use of land to form carriage driving arena with associated fencing and erection of carriage store	Land North West of Baravullin Beag Benderloch Oban Argyll and Bute PA37 1QS	Sub Post Office Leidaig
12/00095/PP	Alterations and change of use from shop to tourist information office	Former Bennetts Shop North Pier Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 50D	Oban Area Office
12/00104/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Land West of Achraha Lodge North Connel Oban Argyll and Bute PA37 1RF	Sub Post Office Leidaig
12/00107/PP	Demolition of existing byre and store and erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage and installation of septic tank and associated drainage	Land 130 Metres West of Kilmoran House Balvicar Isle of Seil Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4RA	Sub Post Office Balvicar

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02196/LIB	Partial demolition, alterations and extension of existing steading to form 12 dwellings and associated storage building	Glenmore Steading Kilmelford Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
11/02575/LIB	Works to enable conversion of barn to single dwellinghouse	Barn at Shuna Farmhouse Shuna Island Appin Argyll and Bute PA38 4DH	Sub Post Office Leidaig
11/02595/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Laoin, Glengorm Castle, Glengorm, Isle of Mull, Argyll and Bute, PA75 6DE	Tobermory Area Office
12/00018/LIB	Erection of single story extension to existing garage	Duart Castle Lochdon Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA64 6AP	Sub Post Office Craignure
12/00096/LIB	Alterations and change of use from shop to tourist information office	Former Bennetts Shop North Pier Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 50D	Oban Area Office

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/01933/MIN	Resumption of sand and gravel extraction operations	Torra Quarry Lotts Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7AS	Sub Post Office Fort Ellen
11/02533/PP	Erection of extension to side and rear of dwellinghouse	Rose Cottage Inverlussa Isle of Jura Argyll and Bute PA60 7XW	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura
12/00047/PP	Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse and installation of sewage treatment plant	Glebe Cottage Scalasaig Isle of Colonsay Argyll and Bute PA61 7YW	Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
12/00115/PP	Erection of detached double garage, formation of car parking and installation of 5 photovoltaic solar roof panels on proposed garage	83 Frederick Crescent Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7BG	Sub Post Office Fort Ellen

Argyll and Bute Council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <http://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>. The Council maintains a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST. A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982

TAXI FARE REVIEW
Notice is hereby given that Argyll and Bute Council, having consulted with taxi operators licensed by the authority, propose to make no amendments to fares for taxis operating within the jurisdiction of Argyll and Bute Council. This proposal will become effective from 30th April 2012.

Any person wishing to lodge representation in respect of these proposals should do so by writing to the Head of Governance and Law, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT, by no later than 1st March 2012.

COUNCILLOR SURGERY

Councillors Roddy McCuish (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles) and Louise Glen-Lee (E.W. 5 Oban North and Lorn) will be holding a joint surgery in Meeting Room 1, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.30pm to 5.00pm on Friday 27th January 2012.

No appointment is necessary. To make an appointment with the Councillors outwith these times, they can be contacted as follows: rodder.mcuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk or Tel: 01631 567142 louise.glen-lee@argyll-bute.gov.uk or phone/text 07717 526 999 or 01546 604029

TENDER FOR KERRERA REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE

Argyll and Bute Council are inviting tenders for the provision of Kerrera Refuse Collection Services for the period commencing 1 April 2012. Tender documents can be obtained from www.publiccontractscotland.gov.uk Tender ID: JAN106289 or contact J. King (jenniferking@argyll-bute.gov.uk).



The Council has received an application from Adelphi Distillery Ltd for erection of new-build distillery, warehousing and visitor centre at Site 50M South East of Glenbeg, Acharacle (12/00017/FUL). The application is supported by an Environmental Statement.

The application, the accompanying Environmental Statement and its addendum are available for public inspection between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday at the following location:-

1. Planning and Development Service, Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William, PH33 6XY

They can also be accessed online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> (search using the application number 12/00017/FUL)

Printed copies of the complete Environmental Statement can be purchased from Organic Architects LLP, 41 West King Street, Helensburgh, G84 8UL TEL: 01436 670 922 at a cost of £25.00. The Non Technical Summary and DVD can be obtained free of charge.

Any person who wishes to make a representation on the application, Environmental Statement and addendum can make them online by visiting <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> or by writing to The Head of Planning and Building Standards, ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX. The deadline for receipt of comments is 28 days from the date of publication of this notice.

The Council will acknowledge receipt of comments but is unable to respond individually to points or questions raised. Please note that your comments will be published online. Please quote the application reference number in your correspondence.

J. Stuart Black
Director of Planning and Development

NEWS

Salmon company aims to invest in Mull sites

Workforce could double if £4million plans are successful

A SALMON farming company is aiming to increase its workforce by more than 50 per cent on the Isle of Mull with plans for two new fish farms on the island.

The Scottish Salmon Company is submitting planning applications for sites at Loch Scridan and Loch Tuath. Infrastructure investment is in the region of £1.5-£2m per site and the company has vowed to use local suppliers and contractors whenever possible.

Meetings
They have also announced three information events to be held on the island to outline their plans to the local community. These will be held in Bunnassan Village Hall on Tuesday January 31 from 4pm to 8pm, followed by Tobermory's Taigh Solais on Wednesday, February 1 from 10am to 2pm and Craignure's MICT building, also on Wednesday, February 1 from 4pm until 8pm. The events will give people the chance to view details of the proposed sites, speak to staff from The Scottish Salmon Company and give their feedback.

The company already operates three sites on Mull employing 11 people and now aims to create another six full-time posts. Recently, three new members of staff moved to the island to join the company.

Stewart McLelland, chief executive of The Scottish Salmon Company, said: 'Fish farming is a vitally important industry to the west coast and islands of Scotland and, as a company we are committed to developing the economics and supporting the communities of the areas in which we operate.'

'We hope to create a number of new jobs in the region over the coming years as we aim to increase our production significantly. We are confident this will bring enormous benefits to rural communities throughout the country, and Mull is one area that can really benefit from this industry in terms of careers with development potential and the knock-on effects of a vibrant economy.'

The Scottish Salmon Company currently produces more than 20,000 tonnes per year, over 20 per cent of the total Scottish production.

The company owns 40 sites in the Hebrides and West Coast of Scotland including two processing plants.

Island council calls on Government to abandon Barra plan

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar has called on the Scottish Government to abandon plans for environmental designations at the Sound of Barra, saying they could be unlawful.

'Found wanting'
The Western Isles council has objected to the proposals on both socio-economic and scientific grounds, while all 31 council members have united to reject the proposal.

It says Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) failure to investigate alternative sites could be contrary to the Habitats Directive.

Angus Campbell, leader of the authority, said: 'SNH's scientific approach has been found sorely wanting and the Scottish Government should now comprehensively reject the designation of the Sound of Barra as a Special Area of Conservation.'

Damaging step
'The lack of investigation of alternative sites amounts to a shocking degree of oversight, especially as this designation would have such a detrimental effect on one of the most vulnerable communities in Scotland.'

'To force an economically damaging designation upon the Sound of Barra on the basis of inconsistent and inconclusive scientific evidence would be a cavalier, retrograde and altogether damaging step.'

MP welcomes fuel duty sign-up rate

ALMOST every fuel retailer in the Hebrides has signed up to the Fuel Duty Discount Scheme.

Those petrol stations that sign up for the scheme are entitled to a 5p per litre discount on duty, in compensation for transport to the isles making fuel sometimes 15-20p more expensive per litre.

The discount will be available at registered retailers from March 1.

Argyll and Bute MP, Alan Reid, welcomed the news.

He said: 'I am pleased almost every island petrol retailer has already signed up to the scheme. I hope every island petrol retailer will have signed up by March 1, so all island motorists can benefit from the reduction.'

Finding Merlin website launched

A NEW website has been launched by Scottish Advocate, Adam Ardrey to accompany his latest book, Finding Merlin.

After years of research, Adam is convinced that the legendary King Arthur was in fact Arthur Mac Aedan, son of King Acaean of Dalriada.

In his book, he suggests Iona is in fact the mystical Avalon, while Camelot is in fact the land around Dunadd.

He hopes his new website will help persuade Argyll and Bute Council to take up his plea to establish a historical trail at the sites, saying his theory has 'worldwide tourism potential.'

The website can be found at finding-merlin.com

Lochaber to get Gaelic nurseries

LOCHABER must play its part in Bòrd na Gàidhlig's bid to increase the number of Gaelic speakers nationally by 15 per cent each year, Highland Council leader Michael Foxley has pledged.

Mr Foxley said education of young people should take a 'prime role' in the National Plan for Gaelic Language 2012-2017, and suggested establishing a primary Gaelic unit in south Lochaber and reintroducing a part-time provision for Kilchoan.

His proposals also included starting a Gaelic nursery in Banavie Primary and introducing a second afternoon nursery at St Mary's Primary in Fort William.

He said: 'These initiatives should double or more the number of Gaelic speakers in Lochaber.'

Three high schools in the area, Mallaig, Kinlochleven and Lochaber, are all currently looking for Gaelic teachers.

Argyll and Bute adds 'hybrid' vehicles to fleet

ARGYLL and Bute Council has invested in four hybrid vehicles as it aims to reduce its 'carbon footprint.'

The three 17 seater minibuses and one van replace older diesel vehicles, predicted to reduce fuel and carbon emissions by 15-25 per cent.

The minibuses will be based in Dunoon for school and community group use.

NEWSROOM

01631 568000

Crofters Commission
Coimisean nan Croitearan

Name, Croft, Extent/Reason, Conditions, Case number
Mr K Barry
5 Onich, Kilmallie
0.066 ha -
4.86.36343
Conditions: 2, 3b & 4

(2) To provide a site for a dwellinghouse
(3) Complete enclosure of the land with a stock proof fence within 4 months of:
(b) the proposed development completion
(4) That fence shall be maintained in good order and repair by each successive owner or occupier of the land.

Any person with an interest in the application may appeal against a decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days of the date of this advert.

The Crofters Commission is holding an in the Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel Ferry, on 7th February 2012 from 18:30 to 19:30.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the forthcoming election of Commissioners to the Crofting Commission.

For further information please contact Jane Thomas on 01463 663 479 jane.thomas@crofterscommission.org.uk.

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Paul Knight trading as PDK Shellfish Ltd of 2 South Pier, Gallanach Road, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4LS is applying for a licence to use Creag Mhor, Bunnassan, Isle of Mull, Argyll PA67 6DL as operating centre for 2 Goods Vehicles. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

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Barcaldine House Hotel goes on the open market

BARCALDINE House Hotel, which ceased trading this month, has gone on the market, with the offers over £525,000 sought for the freehold lease.

Leisure and Hospitality surveyors, CDLH, have been instructed to sell the property by joint administrators of Barcaldine House Hotel Ltd, Elizabeth J Mackay, Simon Wilson and Anne C O'Keefe of Zolfo Cooper.

The hotel comes furnished and equipped. Staff had walked out of the hotel last year after Blue Grange went into administration.

Disgruntled former employees revealed they had been paying for deliveries out of their own pocket long before finally falling out with Blue Grange's Heather Buchanan.

Glenlonan wind farm views aired

PROPOSALS for a wind farm at Glen Lonan will be discussed at Tuesday's meeting of Kilmore Community Council.

EDF Energy want to build 11, turbines measuring 121 metres to blade tip on land east of Kilmore at between Loch Nell And Beinn Ghlas.

Among those attending will be Kilmore resident, Lupi Moll, who is opposed to the plans.

He said: 'Glen Lonan is a unique environment, rich in ancient history, monuments and beauty. It draws many hundreds of visitors every year from all around the world. Is this really an appropriate setting for such a wind farm?'

The meeting, at Kilmore Hall, starts at 8pm.

Mull High School is twice attacked by vandals

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after vandals twice hit Mull High School in the space of a week.

A fence at the school was damaged during the evening of January 14, before a bus was hit seven days later. Some drainage pipes were also damaged on the evening of January 21.

Both incidents occurred between the times of 8pm and midnight and local inspector, Julie McLeish, has urged anyone with details to contact Tobermory police office.

Water rates to remain frozen for fourth year

WATER rates are to be frozen for 2012 - the fourth year in a row the charge has remained unchanged.

The average household charge will remain at £324 - the same level it was in 2009/10.

A Scottish Water spokesperson said: 'The fact that charges are being kept at the same level for the fourth year running is a tribute to the efforts of management and everyone who works at Scottish Water in creating an even more efficient Scottish Water.'

Police hunt for dangerous driver

POLICE are hunting for the driver of a black, C-Class Mercedes that overtook a tourist coach at Ledaig, near Benderloch, in the path of an oncoming bus.

Passengers and drivers were alarmed at the overtaking manoeuvre on the A828, which occurred at around 9.40am on Thursday, January 19.

Inspector Julie McLeish of Strathclyde Police said: 'We do have CCTV from the bus which is of assistance, but we would ask anyone with information to contact us.'

'This incident caused great cause for alarm and it was only by luck that there was no collision.'

Argyll and Bute set draft budget

THE DRAFT budget setting out the finances of Argyll and Bute Council was to be published as *The Oban Times* went to press. The document is as a result of several months public consultation and will set out how the council proposes to spend money in the coming year.

Speaking ahead of its publication, council leader, Dick Walsh, said: 'Our job is to ensure that, wherever possible, we safeguard and invest in the areas which people have told us they most want to protect, while at the same time identifying the necessary savings to ensure we can balance our budget.'

'I believe the draft proposals will provide a solid basis on which to achieve that.'

Details of the proposals will appear in next week's *Oban Times*

Island hauliers welcome February RET meeting date

WESTERN Isles hauliers have given a cautious welcome to news that transport minister Keith Brown has agreed to meet them in Edinburgh on Tuesday, February 7.

The move follows a stormy meeting in Stornoway last Monday, when furious local hauliers warned scrapping the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) for lorries from April 1 could cripple their businesses and the islands' economy.

David Wood, owner of Lewis based haulage company Woody's Express welcomed the breakthrough on Tuesday.

He told *The Oban Times* on behalf of the Outer Hebrides Transport Group: 'Our ambition is simple - maintain the current RET scheme for commercial vehicles, and avoid the imposition of a ruinous and unne-

cessary haulage and household tax.

'It's regrettable that it's taken this long to secure a face-to-face meeting. But we hope our MSP Alasdair Allan, who is a minister in the SNP government - will help us ensure that their disastrous policy is ditched.'

'We are collating information that demonstrates that the withdrawal of RET will penalise every family in the islands.'

Transport group co-ordinator Gail Robertson added: 'We will be taking a representative delegation from the islands for the meeting with the Transport Minister in Edinburgh. Anything short of maintaining the fare structure we have - will be a failure.'

'Our group has been overwhelmed by support from the community and from island businesses. We would urge islanders and business owners

to keep sending us information and supporting us in our aim to protect island families from unnecessary and additional costs.'

Hector MacDonald, co-director at Stornoway-based Hebrides Haulage, told *The Oban Times*: 'Mr Brown is heading in the right direction, but what he is going to say is probably another story.'

'However, it has given a wee bit of meaning to the work done so far, and hopefully we will come to some agreed settlement at the end of the day.'

SNP MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Alasdair Allan, had been pressing Mr Brown to fix an early date for the crunch talks.

He said: 'It is obvious how strong feelings are among these companies and as local MSP I have conveyed this to the Government.'

A85 roadworks will affect peak-time traffic near Taynuilt

COMMUTERS travelling between Tyndrum and Oban will have to endure two weeks of peak-time pain from Monday, with the A85 reduced to a single lane for maintenance.

Scotland Transerv is spending £129,000 repairing the road surface between Fearnoch Forest and the Stonefield Railway Bridge, saying that the work will not only make the road surface safer, but drastically improve its life span.

However, the work will take place between 7am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, with a 10mph convoy system in place to govern traffic speed. The restrictions will be lifted during off-peak hours.

Local access will be maintained as far as possible and emergency services will have unrestricted access at all times.

A spokesman for Scotland Transerv said: 'This essential maintenance work will significantly increase the life of the carriageway and will also enhance the running surface of the road.'

'Motorists should allow extra time for their journeys and pay attention to any advisory signs which will be in place throughout the works.'

Traffic information can be found at trafficscotland.org. You can also report any problems you have on *The Oban Times* Facebook page.

Disruption to be at minimum as Fort William hospital rewired

DISRUPTION to patient services resulting from essential rewiring work at the Belford Hospital, Fort William will be kept to 'an absolute minimum', health chiefs have pledged.

Work gets underway in the outpatients, emergency and theatre departments from Monday, with services being relocated between the following dates:

- Outpatient department - Monday January 30 to Friday February 10
- Emergency department - Monday February 13 to Monday February 20
- Theatre suite - Monday February 27 to Monday March 12

Clinical services manager at the Belford, Marie Law said: 'No clinics will be cancelled due to the work. Most of the 31 clinics due to take place during this period will be relocated to other locations within the Belford, two will move to Fort William Health Centre and some will be rescheduled.'

'Patients attending the clinics being relocated within the Belford will be informed of this on their arrival at the hospital and patients who are attending clinics which are being relocated to the health centre will be notified beforehand.'

Ms Law added that while the theatre suite is being rewired, only endoscopy and minor surgical procedures will be carried out. She said: 'All major elective surgery will be undertaken in the week before the theatre is closed and the high dependency unit at the hospital will be converted for use as an emergency operating theatre to ensure we can still provide emergency surgery during the closure period.'

NHS Highland estates manager Alastair McKenzie said the hospital was 50 years old and power and lighting upgrades were needed. 'The contractor will adopt shift working to enable work to be carried out continuously, thus keeping the overall period that each department needs to be closed to a minimum,' he said.

The work, the first part of a two-year £260,000 rewiring upgrade, follows £530,000 of improvement work at the Fort William hospital last year.



Rockfield Primary School - winners of League A



Park B won League B by two points from second placed Taynuilt



Park Sparkies won League C by three points from second placed Ben Lora

Positions at December 4

'A' League (P7 and under)	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rockfield	21	18	2	1	65	9	59
Lochnell	21	10	4	7	37	29	45
St Columba's	21	6	4	11	32	46	37
Rockfield Rapids	21	2	2	17	18	68	28

'B' League (Development)	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Park	12	10	1	1	27	6	33
Taynuilt	12	9	1	2	26	7	31
St Columba's	12	2	1	9	9	27	17
Achadh Na Creige	12	1	1	10	11	33	15

'C' League (P5 and under)	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Park Sparkies	28	23	3	2	50	8	77
Ben Lora	28	20	6	2	47	6	74
Rockfield Rovers	28	18	4	6	53	11	68
Salen Sharks	28	13	6	9	40	14	60
Dunollie	28	8	4	16	15	37	48
Rockfield Rockets	28	6	3	19	9	51	43
Appin	28	5	4	19	12	44	42
Salen Grass	28	1	5	22	5	57	35

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West Coast West Coast Property Guide

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Furnished £400 pcm excl. bills & C/T
Tel: 07776257321

TO LET OBAN

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£620 pcm+ bills
Tel: 01631 566466

TO LET

3 bedroom, unfurnished apartment at 10 The Greens, Oban.

£600 pcm plus all bills.
Deposit of £600 also required.
Tel: 07766 811 082

TO LET

Detached cottage in Ellenabeich. Lounge, kitchenette, bathroom, double bedroom, single bedroom and loft bedroom. Electric central heating. No DSS Non Smokers £400 pcm excl. bills
Contact: Tel. 01475 540365 Mob. 07753 627615

TO LET

Three bedroom house, near Campbeltown Available from beginning of February.

For more details please telephone 01526 378337 or 07740 553003.

TO LET

One Bedroom Flat In Fort William With Parking

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TO LET

Furnished 2 bedroom country cottage

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Regional Press closer to home



Seasonal Waterway Operatives Wanted

March - September / October 2012

www.scottishcanals.co.uk/seasonals

Putting Tenants First

argyll community housing association

Vacancies for Independent Board Members

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

ACHA's Board of Management continually undertake self assessment to identify areas on the Board where the recruitment of specialised skills would be beneficial to the Association.

What are we looking for?
People with experience in:

- Financial management/ Insurance
- Building sector
- Housing sector
- Governance or Legal compliance
- Human Resources
- General business
- Performance management
- Customer services

Having recently been granted charitable status for our parent company, we are now setting up a separate trading subsidiary to allow us to extend the way we currently manage our day to day response repair service, and to continually improve our delivery of emergency and routine repairs. At the same time we are adapting to the significant economic, political and policy changes affecting the housing sector in Scotland today. We are committed to addressing the challenges by working with partners and the community to find solutions by adopting good practice, improved performance and efficiency.

What commitment will you require?

- Approximately 1.5 days a month supporting Association business
- Please note: we generally hold our Board meetings on a Thursday morning, once a month, usually in Inveraray

What can we offer you in return?

- Support, training and development
- Out of pocket expenses
- The satisfaction of giving something back to the community

If you are interested in obtaining an application pack, please contact Lesley Lindsay, PA to the Board of Management, Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd, 50 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh, G84 8TQ. Telephone: 01546 605971 or email: lesley.lindsay@acha.co.uk or visit the Association's website at www.acha.co.uk where application packs can be downloaded

Closing date for applications is: Friday 3rd February 2012.

ACHA welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

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

INVERARAY CASTLE SEASONAL STAFF REQUIRED

Full/Part-Time GUIDES

An interest in Scottish history and foreign languages an advantage

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Cash handling experience preferable

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Mrs J Young, Castle Manager
Inveraray Castle, INVERARAY PA32 8XF
E-Mail - manager@inveraray-castle.com

Marine Husbandry Vacancies

Bloody Bay, Isle of Mull

Scottish Sea Farms is a leading aquaculture company producing high quality Atlantic salmon for specific UK and international markets. We operate a unique training and personal development programme designed to add to the skills of our staff and enable rapid career progression. The following opportunity exists for an enthusiastic, self motivated individual with a clean UK driving licence.

Husbandry Staff:

You'll have at least 2 years fish farming experience and be able to bring relevant skills e.g. boat handling, fish health, moorings, appetite assessment etc. You may be already working with other marine species or within a freshwater environment. Above all you'll be keen to improve your career by taking greater responsibility and being rewarded accordingly. Salary: dependent upon experience and qualifications.

This position is based at our Bloody Bay site on the Isle of Mull, which has seen recent investment with a centralised feeding barge and state of the art camera and oxygen monitoring system. Assistance with accommodation may be available for the successful candidate.

If you would like to know more please contact Claire Scott on 01786 445521 or email Claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com to obtain an application pack.
Closing date: Friday 10th February 2012

Shinty Development Officer

The Camanachd Association, in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council and sportscotland, wish to appoint a Shinty Development Officer to lead the Association's plan for the promotion and development of shinty in Argyll & Bute. This is an important role with a particular emphasis on Youth Development, Club & Volunteer Development and Coach Education.

The Job Description, Person Specification and further information on the application process are available on www.shinty.com.

Closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 3rd February 2012.

For further information, please contact the Camanachd Association on 01463 715931.

Growth at the Edge/Fas aig an Oir VACANCY - Ulva Ferry, Isle of Mull Local Development Officer (full-time equivalent)

Salary £22,500 per annum (pro rata if job share)

The Mull and Iona Community Trust is looking to recruit an energetic and self motivated individual to act as a catalyst for innovative and sustainable community development in the Ulva Ferry Torloisk area.

This post is funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Argyll and the Islands LEADER.

For an application pack please visit www.mict.co.uk, or contact Moray Finch, General Manager of the Community Trust (mfinch@mict.co.uk); or contact Donald Melville (donald.melville@hient.co.uk) for background and further information.

Closing date for applications: **3rd February 2012**

The Dochas Carers Centre invites applications for the following posts

Outreach Worker
30 hours per week, flexible
Salary scale SJC - AP1 - SP23 £20,520 pro rata
Annual leave 22 days per annum plus 5 public holidays pro rata

Administrative Support Worker
20 hours per week
Salary Scale SJC - AP1 - SP16 £17,199 pro rata
Annual leave 20 days per annum plus 5 public holidays pro rata

For information pack and application form please contact: Maggie McLaren, Dochas Centre, 50 Campbell Street, Lochgilphead PA31 8JU
Phone 01546 600022 quoting job title.
Closing date: 10th February 2012

a million voices for nature

Islay Community Information and Tourism Officer
£15,300 - £17,000 pa Island of Islay

Colonsay Community Information and Tourism Officer
£15,300 - £17,000 pa Island of Colonsay

We are looking for enthusiastic and dynamic people to work for the RSPB on two six month projects on Islay and on Colonsay. This is an exciting opportunity to promote Islay's and Colonsay's amazing wildlife and rich heritage.

Main duties will include enthusing people about the islands through guided walks and talks providing information and interpretation about the islands, their wildlife and wildlife watching opportunities. If you are a good communicator, are passionate about wildlife and have the ability to deliver this enthusiasm to visitors, this is the post for you. A flexible approach to work is required, as an excellent organisational and presentation skills and a sound knowledge of birds and other wildlife.

Closing date: 5 February 2012. Interview date: To be confirmed
For further information and an application form, please visit our website.
www.rspb.org.uk/vacancies

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity, England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654.

Opportunity for Native Gaelic Speakers in Childcare in Edinburgh and Glasgow

Links Nurseries Ltd, a private children's nursery provider, are intending to provide early years childcare in the Gaelic Medium at their nurseries in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Vacancies exist for anyone interested in early years education and care and who are native or fluent Gaelic speakers. There are opportunities for full time and part time posts. Candidates must either have or be prepared to work towards a childcare qualification.

Informal enquiries to
Kelly Culbard 07595 219299 or
Mairi McCrae 07768 541350
or e-mail
kelly@city-nursery.co.uk
or mairi@city-nursery.co.uk

Dunstaffnage Marina Ltd

Have a number of vacancies for yard/marina staff with various skills, although this is not essential, from basic engineering and full time yard worker to qualified marine engineer.

Also an office junior to work within the business in three onsite locations to assist with general office duties including cash and credit card payments:

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Are currently seeking cleaning staff for the coming season, Immediate Start

Seasonal with a minimum 2/3 day week
Rate of pay £54.00 per day (6.5hrs)
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Site 20, Kilmory Industrial Estate, Lochgilphead

Excavator 360° Operator Required

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01546 604038

Local Environment Team Operative
£16,533 - £17,556
37 hrs per week
Based in Tobermory Depot
01546 604742

Gardener / Gravedigger
£16,533 - £17,566
37 hrs per week
Based in Tobermory Depot
01546 604038

Gardener
£15,125 - £16,031
37 hrs per week
Based in Tobermory Depot
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Key players set to leave Fort William next month

'It's two of our more experienced players we're losing so it's certainly a blow' - Danny Conlon

REPORT BY RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk



Fort William Football Club manager Danny Conlon.

FORT WILLIAM manager Danny Conlon says he may be forced to rebuild his team after the news two key players are to leave the club next month.

Star forward Sean Ellis and his cousin Michael are moving to Australia in mid-February, leaving Conlon with big gaps in an already misfiring frontline which has only scored eight goals in 16 games this season.

Conlon told The Oban Times their departures, along with a growing number of call-offs and injuries, could force him to rethink his player selection.

Talented

He said: 'Sean is without question one of the most talented players in the league - he is a match winner on his own. It's

FOOTBALL

two of our more experienced players we're losing so it's certainly a blow.

Settled Side

'Maybe we've got to look at getting a more settled side out there, and get the same players playing every week even if they're not necessarily the best players. Rather than just trying to get points on the board we need to start looking long-term and bringing some of the younger players into the side more regularly.'

Fort have also been hit with the news experienced defender Graeme Bamber may need an operation on a hernia problem



Out of action: experienced defender Graeme Bamber is set to be out for a number of weeks with a hernia. 10_f046r01

which will keep him out of action for a number of weeks.

Fort will be looking for revenge when they take on Wick Academy at Claggan Park this Saturday. Wick ran out 8-1 winners when the sides met at Harmsworth Park in September, and the Lochaber men will be

keen to avoid another heavy defeat.

Good Side

Conlon said: 'They are a really good side - one of the better footballing sides in the league. We'll try and stop them from playing and maybe do something ourselves at the other end.'

Sean Grant, Jonathan Hewitt and Michael Ellis are among the players who will miss the game.

A weakened Fort side suffered a heavy 6-0 defeat at the hands of Deveronvale in Banff last weekend. The away side had chances through Sean Ellis and Danny Mackintosh in the first

half but were unable to convert them, leaving the 'Vale to take a 3-0 half time lead.

Comfortable

The chances kept coming for the home team in the second half, and they hit the back of the net a further three times to take a comfortable victory.

Leanachan Forest race on Sunday

ATHLETICS

LOCHABER Athletic Club's winter league competition continues this Sunday with a 10-mile race through Leanachan Forest at Nevis Range.

Around 60 runners are expected to tackle the forest trail, with a children's race also planned for the day.

Race organiser Stuart Gray said: 'It's quite a tough race, but it's one most people enjoy because it's a very variable course, with different terrains and views along the way.'

LAC's Mike Bossard currently has a narrow lead in the men's winter league with 87 points after four races. Fellow local runner Allan Ross sits in joint second with Peter Davenport on 85 points. In the ladies competition, LAC's Lyndsay Shaw currently has a 20 point lead over club-mate Nicola Meekin.

Rugby boys hoping for dry weather

RUGBY

LOCHABER will be hoping for some dry weather this week as they get ready to welcome Moray to Banavie on Saturday.

The club's tie with Banff was called off last weekend after rain left the home pitch unplayable - Lochaber's fifth postponement of the season so far.

Winter league

CYCLING

WEST Highland Wheelers will stage the fifth round of its Alpine Bikes-sponsored winter league competition this weekend.

Competitors will tackle a tricky course at Glenloy on Sunday, with the race due to get underway at 11am. The last event held two weeks ago at Barcaldine was won by Ben Thompson.

Open doubles

TABLE TENNIS

KENNY Gillespie and Jim Hinchley claimed Fort William Table Tennis Club's open doubles championship at the Nevis Centre last Monday night.

The duo took the title after a hard fought match against Neil Feggans and Deek Cameron in the final. Players from as far as Glenborrodale and Spain competed.

Leisure still on top

INDOOR FOOTBALL

RUNAWAY leaders Lochaber Leisure stretched their lead at the top of the Ali Young Premier League to nine points with a 3-1 win over Goon Squad at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night. Second placed TNF United lost ground after drawing 2-2 with second bottom side AA Young, while Steaua Sookabreast moved to within two points of second by beating winless Bayern Bru 6-2.

Balachulish missed the chance to underline their title credentials losing a high scoring game with Stroke City 6-4. Meanwhile, Achintore FC moved into sixth place after beating The Granite House 5-3 and Livercaol defeated HWEnergy No Stars 3-0.

Alleycats are still up to scratch

TEN PIN BOWLING

THE SCRATCH division leaders of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre, Fort William remain unchanged after week nine - the halfway point of the season.

The top four teams all ran out 5-0 winners - Alleycats kept ahead of the pack with 43 points, followed by Council in second on 40, while Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are third on 32.

Alleycats are the new leaders in the handicap division with 30 points with Council in second on 29 points, with last week's leaders Underdogs dropping to third, also on 29 points, after losing 3-2 to British Legion Scotland.

The highest team games of the week came from Council with 598 scratch, 809 handicap. Council also had the highest two-game scratch total with 1175.

Individually, the best game came from Council's Brian Stewart with 190 scratch, 238 handicap. Rossamy Wareing of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio also had a good game with a 177 scratch, 237 handicap. Brian Stewart also rolled the best two-game scratch series with 352.



Nether Lochaber Boxing Club coaches and members are looking forward to their first show this summer.

Kinlochleven to host first boxing show this summer

KINLOCHLEVEN will play host to its first boxing show this summer after the local club were granted to permit by Highland Council.

Nether Lochaber Amateur Boxing Club, which moved into new premises at Kinlochleven Business Park last summer, will hold the show in the village's high school on Saturday June 2. Lochaber young chef of the year winner and high school pupil Erin Mills will provide a three-course meal for spectators.

Head Coach Martin Glenesk said: 'These are really exciting times for the club. We have worked hard to get the club into a position to host a show and will continue working hard over the coming months to ensure all our boxers put on a fantastic display of their talents for the local community.'

BOXING

For tickets, call the hotline on 07799 705742, email netherlochaber@yaho.co.uk or go to the club's gym.

Meanwhile, the club is preparing to send of team of boxers to the Northern Area Schoolboys Championships in Peterhead next Saturday.

Last weekend saw a group of nearly forty boxers from Ayrshire and Lanarkshire attend a sparring session in Kinlochleven. Boxers from Forsyth's ABC (Hamilton) and Northwest ABC (Kilmarnock) put on a fine display in the ring, and coaches from both clubs said they were impressed by the facilities at the gym in Kinlochleven Business Park.

Isle of Skye 10k race runners face tough conditions

ATHLETICS

A HOWLING headwind awaited the runners who lined up for the annual pilgrimage up Glenmore in the Isle of Skye 10k on Saturday.

However, 28 runners took to the field and fought their way up the undulating Struan Hill Road before turning up towards Glenmore and a little respite from the wind as the gradient increased.

The return leg brought some relief with the wind at their heels all the way back to Portree.

The race was won by John MacLean in 43 minutes 45 seconds, followed by the championship leader, Phil Dewar, in 46.16 and Lee Mather in 47.51.

The ladies' race was won by Sarah Stephenson in 51 minutes 48 seconds, with the youngest competitor, Sofie Macdonald, in second place in 52.35, followed by Wilma MacRuary, in 53.59.

Leaders in the male and female championships remain the same, with Phil Dewar and Wilma MacRuary both on 28 points.

The championship standings are as follows: Phil Dewar (28), Lee Mather (14), Alasdair Mac-

Sween and Niall Till (12), John MacLean (10), Neil Turner (8), Paul Davidson (4) and Robert MacAskill (2). Ladies championship: Wilma MacRuary (28), Janette Tasker (20), Sarah Stephenson (18).

Full Race Results:

John MacLean 43.45; Phil Dewar; 46.16; Lee Mather 47.51; Niall Till 48.26; Neil MacVicar 50.18; Robert MacAskill 51.23; Sarah Stephenson 51.48; Sofie Macdonald 52.35; Paul Davidson 53.07; Ally MacLeod 53.44; Alistair Danter 53.55; Wilma MacRuary 53.59; Niall Tasker 53.59; David Knowles 54.00; Richard McGuire 54.50; Calum Gibb 55.00; Heckie Cormack 55.05; Brendan Clancy 56.15; Ian Stewart 56.16.

Krissie Lothian 56.36; Stephen Cormack 57.26; Andy O'Grady 58.11; Janette Tasker 58.12; Sandra Mather 58.12; Vicki Clark 58.19; Ann Gillies 62.13; Ian Macpherson 62.48; Morag Macdonald 64.03.

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Oban area heats held at Atlantis

Ben sets three new records at indoor athletics

THE Sports Hall Athletics competition for the Oban area was held at Atlantis Leisure last Saturday. This event was the third of 4 local area competitions held in Argyll this winter promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club and sponsored by a Communities 2014 Lottery Grant.

Ben Coates, from Kilmore, an S1 pupil at Oban High School was without any doubt the outstanding athlete on the day. Ben's performance in seven of the eight events was exceptional with his only weak event being the shot putt.

Ben set three new Argyll age records starting with the standing triple jump clearing 7.44 metres and adding 7 cm to the record set by David Clunie ten years ago. Ben then proceeded to break the two lap record held by Stuart Tomison from Mull since 2007 trimming only 0.1 seconds off the record with 22.8seconds.

Speed Bounce

The Kilmore boy then broke the speed bounce record completing an incredible 90 jumps in 30 seconds adding one jump to the mark held for many years by another Oban boy Colin Maxwell. Ben also excelled in the high jump clearing 1.45 metres, standing long jump and vertical jump and is arguably the most exciting young athletic talent in Argyll at the moment.

Daniel Teape from Taynuilt Primary was the under 9 champion dominating the competition winning all eight events. Daniel Colthart from Strath of Appin primary was runner up in this section.

Boys from Park primary filled the first three places in the under 11 age group with Rory Dowd the overall winner ahead of Sam Coates and Alasdair Trafford third.

Rory won the high jump, javelin and vertical jump while Sam won both the two lap and four lap races in addition to the standing long jump. Finbar Dunne from Rockfield won the triple jump and Cameron Hill from Park won the speed bounce.

Seven boys entered the under 15 competition and Jamie Kilorn was the overall winner thanks to wins in the two lap and four lap races, high jump and triple jump. Runner-up Alan Colthart won the long jump and shot putt with a promising 9.10 metres throw. Scott Black won the speed bounce with a count of 80 and Malcolm Alloway, from the Isle of Iona, won the vertical jump.

The under 15 girls category was the most keenly contested with only 4 points between first and fourth place.

Alison MacVicar was the champion thanks to wins in the long jump, shot putt and speed bounce. Rhona MacIntyre and Iona Young were not far behind sharing second place on overall points. Iona won the vertical jump reaching up to 55 cm only 3 cm below the Argyll age record. Rhona won the four lap race and Anna Garvin was 4th overall thanks to wins in the triple jump and high jump. Rebecca Bruce won the two lap race in this category.

In the youngest age group, Daniel Teape from Taynuilt Primary was the under 9 champion dominating the competition winning all eight events. Daniel Colthart from Strath of Appin primary was runner up in this section.

ATHLETICS

under 9s, Caitlin Curran from Rockfield won six out of the eight events to ensure victory.

Other individual winners were Lucy Black from Rockfield and Arianna McLellan all the way from Bunnassan on Mull.

Family Double

Grace and Emma Thompson completed a family double success with Grace the under 11 winner and older sister Emma the under 13 champion. Grace, from Rockfield Primary, won the high, long and triple jumps to finish three points ahead of another Rockfield girl Fi Keys who won the javelin and shared first place with Holly Robertson in the speed bounce.

Holly, from Easdale but now at Rockfield primary impressed in winning both the two lap race in 27.8 and four lap race in 61.4seconds. Hannah Teape from Taynuilt won the vertical jump in this age group.

Emma Thompson was a clear winner in the under 13s winning seven out of the eight events and excelling in the high jump with a 1.25metres clearance. The other individual winner in this section was Fiona Maclean in the shot putt throwing 6.60metres.

Successful athletes from Saturday will now qualify to take part in the Argyll Final to be held at Atlantis Leisure on Saturday, 25th February. The final will start at 1pm with registration from 12noon. Qualifiers from the Oban competition will be advised by letter through their schools in February.



Oban Lorne and Strathendrick players prepare for a scrum during last Saturday's match at Glencruitten.

Lorne make league leaders fight all the way for victory

OBAN Lorne welcomed league leaders Strathendrick to Glencruitten last week, looking for a much required win in the battle against the drop. The home team were looking to replicate their good performance from the previous week in the defeat at Cumbernauld.

With the woeful conditions of gale-force winds and heavy rain it was always going to be a game of few incidents worth mentioning. Both sides however adapted well to the conditions in the first half using the wind at times to their advantage. Neither side made any clear cut chances for the line with the only notable event being a missed penalty attempt from Oban's Craig Wright. The score at halftime stood at 0-0.

The home defence kept the league leaders out for over an hour

but eventually succumbed to a soft try, the first score of the game. The Endrick scrum half tapped a penalty from five metres out and managed to touch down himself out wide. The resulting conversion meant they stretched their lead to 7-0.

Oban gave away another score shortly after from a five metre scrum allowing the visitors to double their advantage to 14-0 which was the final score. The result leaves Oban only two points above bottom place in the league with a very winnable game away to fellow strugglers Strathaven next Saturday, 2pm.

RUGBY

Spectators turn out in force to watch Fun 4s

THE early stormy conditions on Sunday led to a cancellation of the senior fixtures at the Community Pitch and meant all eyes were firmly focused on the Fun 4s in the comfort of Atlantis Leisure sports hall with record numbers turning up to watch the eight teams at Primary 1 to Primary 3 level continue with their SYFA recognised player pathway development at 4-a-side games.

One of the early games Swifts 1 against Spartak 1 was a really tight affair and Swifts went in front when Kyle MacInnes and Thomas McKindle exchanged passes in midfield leaving Kyle in the clear to score from close

range with a well worked goal. However Spartak soon got a foot in the game when Lewis Campbell won the ball in midfield threading an accurate pass through to Gregor Warnock to thump the ball into the net from ten yards.

The youngest team in the juniors, Chaos 1, were next up against Ben Lora 1 and they had Innes MacCallum fearlessly tackling everyone on the pitch allowing Callum McMillan time and space to score a great individual goal which was just reward for his hard work and industry on the day. Ben Lora were not to be outdone however and scored a fine goal of their

own when Rosie Howe won a throw in which was taken quickly allowing Murray Scott to score a great goal from long range.

Swifts 2 and Spartak 2 was no less rewarding to watch and Spartak's Sorley Cameron provided two great defence splitting passes both of which found Cooper MacIntyre in the clear to dispatch into the net with aplomb. Swifts dug in and thanks to outstanding displays of individual skill by Cameron McMillan and Neil MacSween got themselves back into the game and ensured honours were even at the end.

In another of the mornings

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

exchanges Chaos 2 took on Ben Lora 2 with Chaos' Gabriel Tisdar a class above the rest in midfield setting up Nichol Clark for a memorable goal curled into the top corner.

Ben Lora had a star of their own in Dylan Howe who was tackling like his life depended on it and having won the ball it broke free to Karyn Black who scored with a shot almost from one end of the pitch to the other.

The teams meet up again next week at the sports hall for their next round of fixtures and the seniors will be back in action at the high school pitch.

Taynuilt settle for a draw in difficult conditions

Central Scottish Welfare League Taynuilt Amateurs 2

Knightswood 2
THIS fixture was played in poor weather conditions and never going to be pretty and to be fair Taynuilt never really deserved to take anything from the game with keeper Ben Pollock earning the team a share of the points with an outstanding display between the sticks.

The first 20 minutes was a real struggle trying to keep the ball in

play and on the deck. Paul Carmichael came back for his first appearance in 2012, he partnered Kris Gillies up front and it was Paul who broke the deadlock on 34 minutes.

A fine ball through the middle from Scott Maitland put Paul through and from a tight angle finished with a well placed shot in the bottom left hand corner.

At the other end Knightswood had one chance in the first half with Copeland through one on

one with Pollock but a truly magnificent save kept Taynuilt ahead.

In the second half Taynuilt were right up against it with Knightswood dominating and using the strong wind to their advantage.

The equaliser was a poor goal to lose. A throw in from the right found their centre half who flicked the ball in from a tight angle. The lead wasn't to last long though, as Taynuilt re-took

FOOTBALL

the lead with the best move of the match. Stevey Kelly exchanged passes with Kris Gillies and quick feet from Kris beat his marker before drilling the ball across the box to find McGrath for an easy tap in.

The game started to get a bit tasty as Knightswood fought for an equaliser. Tackles were flying in left, right and centre with Stevey Kelly being kicked off the ball but the referee didn't see the incident.

The equaliser did eventually come and was well worked when the Knightswood No 8 found the net from outside the box giving Pollock no chance.

Knightswood should have won the game near the end when the ball broke to their No 2 but he missed an open goal.

Next week Taynuilt are away to Clydebank who are second bottom of the league, so they will be expecting to pick up all three points in this match.

The following Saturday Knightswood come to Oban again in the quarter final of the Wilson Cup.

Saints miss chance to progress in amateur cup

Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup 5th Round
Oban Saints 2
Echt 2

A HOST of missed chances nearly proved costly for Saints as they took on Aberdeenshire Premier League outfit Echt in the 5th round of the Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup at Glencruitten last Saturday.

Although the playing surface at Glencruitten was in excellent condition the weather was shocking with a strong swirling wind along with driving rain and sleet showers making things difficult for the players.

Credit to both teams though they turned in an excellent show for the hardy band of supporters who came up to watch.

The home team, with the elements in their favour, should have taken the lead in the first minute of the match when Ross Maitland had a gilt edged opportunity to score but he fluffed his shot from 10 yards.

Donald Campbell had the ball in the net in the third minute, but the 'goal' was chalked off for a high challenge by the Saints striker.

The opening goal came in the 11th minute when Ross Maitland and Craig MacEwan combined to set up Donald Campbell who raced through and slotted the ball past a helpless Echt keeper Lewis Milne.

Saints were playing well, but that elusive second goal would not come and in the 36th minute another glorious opportunity went begging when Donald Campbell crossed to the far post for Paul Kerr, but the wee midfielder only succeeded in slicing the ball past the post.

The Oban side were pressing hard, but the Echt boys were defending as though their lives depended on it, throwing themselves into challenges stopping two netbound efforts on the line.

Two Chances

With half time approaching Saints created another two chances, a fine shot from Ryan Campbell while Willie Gemmill will be disappointed that he wasted a good chance by firing the ball over the bar.

As the teams turned round for the second half the local lads must have been wondering if

those missed chances would come back to haunt them as Echt would now have the advantage of the strong blustery wind.

Saints came out strongly and Craig MacEwan was unlucky with a good effort in the 49th minute, but the Aberdeen team came roaring back into the game and drew level in the 52nd minute when a harmless looking ball came into the box, fell to the unmarked Alan Douglas who made no mistake from six yards - a bad goal for Saints to lose.

This reversal seemed to stun the Oban side for a ten minute spell, but credit to them they came back into the game and had Echt pinned back, but they were finding it difficult to get through a well drilled visiting defence.

The home side were dealt a cruel blow in the 70th minute when Echts top scorer Paul Presslie found himself unmarked in the box and the prolific goalscorer wasted no time in slotting the ball home to put his team 2-1 in front against the run of play.

The Oban side had 20 minutes to retrieve the situation, and this they did with seven minutes of the match remaining, when

FOOTBALL

central defender Alex Craik, for the second week in a row, was on hand to steer the ball past Lewis Milne to level the score at 2-2.

Both teams battled hard for a winner, but in the end had to settle for a replay which will take place in Echt this Saturday.

Early Start

It will mean a 7.15am start for the Oban team as the game has an early kick-off with extra time and penalties, if required, to see who faces Cambusbarron Rovers away from home in the last 32 of the competition.

Manager Iain Jackson was frustrated at the performance. He said: 'We played well enough in difficult conditions and should have won the game. We created several gilt edged chances, but didn't take them and we lost two poor goals, so we've only got ourselves to blame.'

'Echt are a well drilled side and they will fancy their chances in the replay, but I'm quietly confident and more importantly the players are confident that we can go to Echt and get a result that will take us through.'



Oban Saints Under 16s (in black) travelled to take on Dumbarton FC's Pro Youth team in a friendly match at Hermitage Academy, Helensburgh last Sunday. The Oban lads played well and were a bit unlucky to lose 6-0 to a well drilled Dumbarton outfit. Three of the Dumbarton team are former Saints players, Ally McKerracher, Stuart Alexander and David Beaton. Saints coach Peter Darling said Dumbarton were the better team, but he thought the 6-0 scoreline flattered them slightly.

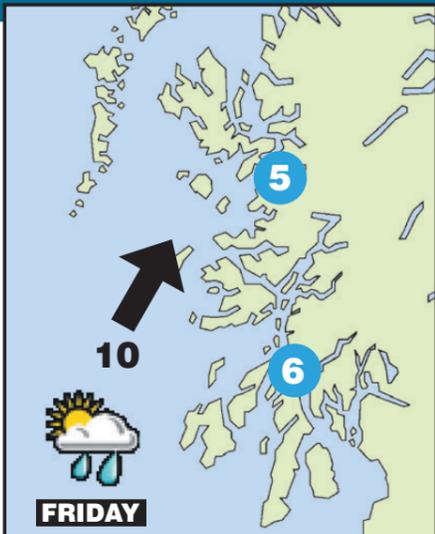
Weather

Thursday Sunshine and showers
Winds light, south, south westerly
Temperatures 0°C to 3°C

Friday Sunshine and showers
Winds light, westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

Weekend Light rain
Outlook Winds light, east, north easterly
Temperatures 7°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 26, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	07.27	4.1	13.58	1.0	19.35	3.8
Thur	01.34	0.7	07.27	4.1	13.58	1.0	19.35
Fri	02.10	0.9	08.00	4.0	14.32	1.2	20.05
Sat	02.43	1.1	08.33	3.6	15.06	1.3	20.35
Sun	03.18	1.3	09.06	3.6	15.43	1.5	21.08
Mon	03.55	1.6	09.43	3.4	16.27	1.7	21.45
Tues	04.39	1.8	10.26	3.1	17.20	1.9	22.32
Wed	05.35	2.0	11.36	2.9	18.23	2.0	23.45

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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Mallaig fishing fleet stuck in port after stormy start

JANUARY storms have prevented Mallaig fishermen putting to sea at all in 2012. Around 20 prawn boats have remained tied up in port, leaving skippers fretting over when they will be able to land their next catch. Mallaig port manager Robert MacMillan told *The Oban Times*: 'It has been a pretty disappointing start to the year. Some boats have never been at sea yet. It's been a storm one day quickly followed by another. There's no point in going to sea for a day, because it takes two or three days to get back into the swing.'

Caol man charged through hospital in wheelchair

A CAOL man has admitted charging through hospital and emergency at the Belford Hospital in a wheelchair on New Year's Day demanding an x-ray.

Robert Lawrie, of 22 Glenpane Street, pled guilty at Fort William Sheriff Court to causing a disturbance by propelling himself through the busy department on a wheelchair and assaulting, obstructing or hindering two nurses by shouting and swearing. Sheriff Douglas Small said the 48-year-old's behaviour was 'quite unacceptable' and said he was considering putting him in jail. Sentencing was deferred until February 15 for reports.

Lochaber historians to meet

LOCHABER Local History Society will hear the history of T.S. St Christopher at its monthly meeting next Thursday. Commanding officer Derrick Warner will speak on how the extensive land based naval training station was based around Loch Linnhe during WWII, with buildings requisitioned and a slipway and built at Corpach. All are welcome to Alexandra Hotel gathering at 8pm.



Footballing cousins Sean (left) and Michael Ellis are swapping Lochaber for Australia next month. 20_104411501

Fort duo to play in Australia

TWO FORT William FC players are preparing to leave Lochaber behind and jet off for a new start in Australia. Cousins Sean and Michael Ellis, both aged 22, have secured a deal with Melbourne-based club Cobram Tigers and will fly out next month. Amateur side Cobram play in the North Eastern Soccer League, and the club have found jobs for the pair with a local building firm as well as accommodation. The move was facilitated by another former Claggan Park favourite who made the move to the south-east coast of Australia a number of years ago. Sean explained to *The Oban Times*: 'There's a guy who used to play for Fort William, Stuart

Vance, who's out there playing for Cobram and he's set most of it up for us. He sorted us with jobs and a place to stay. Michael added: 'We started thinking about it six months ago. It's all come about a bit quicker than we were expecting actually. We weren't planning on going until about August, but the opportunity came up so we took it. I just wanted a change of lifestyle, to see what it's like down there.' Sean, who also played for the youth teams at Inverness Caledonian Thistle and Ross County, said there will be mixed emotions when he leaves Claggan Park after seven years with the club. He said: 'I think we've got

two home games to play before we leave then that's it. It will be sad to go but I want to try something new. It's been something we've been thinking about for a while. 'We will miss our friends and family. I'll probably miss playing in the Highland League as well. But I think we're both quite happy about the move - there's much better weather and we want a wee change of scenery. 'We're flying out on February 10. We only booked the tickets on Sunday so we don't even have them yet.' Fort manager Danny Conlon told *The Oban Times* losing the two would 'certainly be a blow' to his side, but Michael said

he is confident the players left behind can cope. 'I think they'll be fine without us,' he said. 'There's some good young boys coming through just now. We'll still be looking up all their results to see how they are getting on.' The pair are following in the footsteps of Caol man George Campbell, who made the move to Australian football back in 1978. The former Aberdeen winger became Australia's most expensive ever signing when he left the Dons to join South Melbourne FC for £20,000. He played for and managed a number of different Australian clubs and now runs his own footballing academy, Melbourne Football STARS.

Kilmallie Community Council appoint new chairman

KILMALLIE Community Council (KCC) has appointed a new chair after incumbent Jillian Clark stepped down. Maggie MacKenzie was voted in as the new chair at the first KCC meeting of 2012 in Kilmallie Hall last week. Russell

Leaper remains secretary while was Jan MacLugash named treasurer. Mrs Clark said her reasons for stepping down were 'purely personal'. She said: 'I'm working full time now and I just don't have the time anymore.

But I am still a member of the council.' Meanwhile, the KCC website launched late last year, www.kilmallie.org.uk, is proving popular with the local community. As well as giving details of KCC meetings and

local events, the website details some of the history of Corpach, Banavie and Tomonich thanks to local historian Hugh Muir. Mr Leaper said a 'steady stream' of people had used the website. He said: 'The feedback is very positive about it.'

Unexploded bombs found on famous Singing Sands

Bomb disposal squad delayed by road closures and ferry restrictions

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

NAVY BOMB disposal experts from Faslane were called to a popular Lochaber beach on Tuesday to blow up live World War II mortar rounds. Salen coastguard team member Tom Jackson came across three of the unexploded shells while walking on the Singing Sands, Kentra Bay, Acharacle, late on Sunday afternoon.

Violent storms
The beach was cordoned off at first light on Monday so coastguard members could carry out a detailed search.

By Tuesday morning, 14 finned mortars, each around 18 inches long, had been located. It is believed recent violent storms stripped sand off the beach, exposing the ordnance. Stornoway coastguard tasked the Faslane bomb disposal squad to attend, but their arrival at Ardtoe was delayed because high explosives are not allowed on the Corran Ferry and the Gleniug road was temporarily closed for repairs.

Coastguard Lochaber sector manager Phil Wren warned the public to keep clear and report any similar finds in future by dialling 999 for the coastguard.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Some of these mortars would appear to be live and are extremely dangerous. 'Don't go near them and don't pick them up, but if you have a



One of the mortar rounds found on the Singing Sands near Ardtoe on Monday

camera with you take a picture to help us identify them.

'There's no doubt there are more there, because the ones we have found are all that have been exposed so far.

'We will be asking the landowner if we can display warning signs.'

Acharacle Community Council chairman Hugh MacPherson said bullets, bombs and other war-time explosives are uncovered regularly on the sands, which are only accessible along a four-mile track from Ariveagaig.

He said: 'Every time there's a big gale the sand shifts and shows up the shells. 'Maybe some sort of clean-up

using metal detectors would be the answer.

'The amount of people using the beach has gone up ten-fold in the past 20 years - it's a beautiful spot.

'Walkers, wild campers and kayakers all use it - it's quite a busy beach now in summer.

'God forbid if there was an accident.'

The scenic beach was used as a training ground for the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, in June 1944.

The coastguard and Navy take responsibility for any ordnance found on the shoreline. Police and the Army handle munitions found inland.

Ballachulish senior shinty team to fold

BALLACHULISH'S senior shinty team has folded after nine players left the club during the off-season. Five players have signed for other sides, while four others will be unavailable to play in Marine Harvest south division one next season due to work commitments. The club has decided to only operate a junior side in south division two next year. Club chairman Ian Brown told *The Oban Times* the club hoped to reform the senior side, but said there was 'no timescale' on when it would happen. He said: 'It's incredibly disappointing: we feel we've let a lot of people down. But although there is a reduction in the number of teams, shinty is carrying on in Ballachulish.'

Stromferry road to reopen in February

THE SPECIALIST firm appointed by Highland Council to stabilise the rock face above the A890 at Stromferry is 'confident' the road will be partially reopened by mid-February. **Working overnight** Chesterfield-based TRAC Engineering Ltd will begin work once measures to protect the adjacent rail line have been agreed with Network Rail and health and safety issues addressed. Loose rock will be brought down and netting over the vertical rock fitted to allow the road to be opened from 8am to 6pm from February 17. Working overnight, TRAC will then undertake additional rock anchor and netting works to stabilise the slope for the future. All works should be complete by March 17, when the road will be

fully opened to traffic. Meanwhile, times for the two ferries introduced to combat the road closure have been changed following requests at public meetings in Lochcarron and Achmore, and the introduction of an additional early morning train from Inverness to Kyle for Plockton High pupils. **Priority** The six-car ferry, the Glenachulish, runs between 7am and 6pm Monday to Saturday, weather permitting, with priority given to local traffic. Tickets are available at the golf course car park at Lochcarron and on the South Strome access road. The 60-passenger ferry Sula Mhor leaves South Strome, Monday-Friday, at 8am, 9.20am, 4.15pm, 4.35pm and 5.40pm. North Strome times are 8.15am, 9.30 am and 4.25pm.

The single Saturday sailing from North Strome is at 9.30am and from South Strome at 5.40pm. Sunday ferry times from South Strome are 10.20am (return 10.30am) and 2.20pm (return 2.30 pm). Council staff at both slipways will contact the ferry for use between sailings. Bus connections will be provided for the scheduled times only. Travel on both ferries is free. The A890 Lochcarron has been closed since December 22 by the threat of rockfalls, forcing drivers to make a 140-mile detour via Inverness. Longterm solutions for replacing the rockfall-prone Stromferry bypass include a bridge across the Strome Narrows, a new by-pass and avalanche shelters over both road and rail line.



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Salmon farming company activate £40 million expansion on west coast

SALMON farmers Marine Harvest have announced its first two sites under a £40m expansion plan of its operations off the west coast.

The sites at Stulaigh, near Loch Eynort on South Uist and Helisay in the Sound of Barra will employ 12 staff and

produce up to 8,000 tonnes of salmon over a 22-month farming cycle.

Moorings for both farms will be put in place next month followed by fish farm pens. The farms will be stocked with smolts in April.

Earlier plans had looked at

residential fish farms but local people made it clear they would prefer staff to be based onshore.

A further three potential sites have been identified and consultation with local communities is underway in those areas.

MH Managing director Alan

Sutherland said: 'These two sites are a clear demonstration of our commitment to the Western Isles and to Scotland.'

'Demand for Scottish salmon continues to be strong and the Western Isles of Scotland is a wonderful environment in which to grow our fish.'

Local councillor Donald Manford said he welcomed 'all opportunities' for local employment and looked forward to the jobs coming on stream.

He told The Oban Times: 'I would hope also that local communities can be able to benefit much further from po-

tential spinoff opportunities.'

MH announced proposals for up to six large-scale farms in deeper water in October 2009 and worked to identify the best locations and submit planning applications since then.

The company has four hatcheries, four freshwater

loch sites and 30 sea farms situated in the Western Isles, Skye, Wester Ross and Lochaber. Live fish are harvested at Mallaig and processed at the Blar Mhor processing plant in Fort William. In total over 500 employees are employed at these locations.

Former footballer on cocaine charge

A FORMER Fort William FC defender has been fined £300 after being found with a trace amount of cocaine.

Stephen Hendry, who left the club earlier this season, was searched by officers after turning up at 5am at the back door of a house in Kilmallie Road during a police raid.

Hendry, of 29 Torlundy Road, Caol, pled guilty to being in possession of the class A drug on September 11.

Annual stockjudging

LOCHABER Shepherds are holding their annual stock judging competition tomorrow night (Friday).

The evening gets underway at 7.30pm at the Lochaber Rural Complex, Torlundy, with proceeds going to local charities.

Driver banned for five years after Spean Bridge crash

A BANNED driver who crashed his work vehicle near Spean Bridge while drunk has narrowly avoided jail.

After drinking in Spean Bridge on May 14, Christopher MacKay got as far as Stronoba before crashing off the road.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the 25-year-old labourer, who was banned from driving last year for another drink driving offence, failed to give breath specimens at the scene, claiming he was too cold.

Banning MacKay, of 5 County Cottages, Lochend, Inverness, from driving for five years, Sheriff Douglas Small also ordered him to carry out 216 hours of unpaid work in the community.

Care home work nears completion

IMPROVEMENTS to a Highland Council care home in Fort William should be completed by the end of next month, the council says.

The £120,000 upgrade at Invernevis House includes assisted bathing facilities, a new entrance door with automatic entry system, a new kitchen and fire safety arrangements.

Further work is planned to upgrade electrical and heating systems, install a sprinkler system and provide some larger rooms with en-suite facilities.

Stephen Hardie, of 30 Ardgour Road, pled guilty to assaulting the man on December 5.

At Fort William Sheriff Court, Sheriff Douglas Small deferred sentencing the 21-year-old until February 15 for reports.

Councillors highlight pitch problems

LOCHABER councillors have again expressed concern at how much community usage will be available at Lochaber High School's two new grass pitches.

At their business meeting in Fort William last week, members insisted effective maintenance arrangements are put in place before spring, with local groundsmen in charge if possible.

Councillor Bill Clark told The Oban Times: 'The problem right now is that the pitches are not playable and the money [for them] from SportScotland was subject to a top of the range maintenance programme being in place.'

'Even with that they recommend a pitch usage of only eight hours per week - but the school, I am told, could take six hours a day. Either way, there's not going to be a great deal of community use.'

'The amount of rain we have in Lochaber is unbelievable and that has to be taken into account by Highland Council - we need more money from the maintenance budget to take account of the extra work required.'

He added: 'An all-weather pitch available for community use must be the way to go.'

Police files

A NUMBER of Lochaber businesses have been contacted by telephone by a man claiming to be from Fort William police.

The man, disguising his voice with a fake accent, asked people to contribute to a security article to be published in a police magazine. A Northern Constabulary spokesman said: 'Local police conduct their business on a personal level and any such contact would be made in person not over the telephone.'

DAMAGE was caused to the window of a house in Camesky Rod, Caol in the early hours of Saturday January 21.

A CAR parked in Carn Dearg Road, Claggan and another parked in Rowan Drive, Caol were both damaged overnight on Friday January 20 to Saturday January 21. Another car parked at the long stay car park at An Aird was damaged between 10.30am and 8.20pm on Wednesday January 18.

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

Councillors back Red Fox cycle path

LOCHBER Ward 22 councillors have agreed to support the Red Fox cycle path from Oban to Fort William with a £3,850 contribution from their discretionary budget.

The money will pay for path interpretation signs for walkers and cyclists at key locations along the route.

Driving trial date set for March

THE TRIAL of a Glencoe man accused of dangerously overtaking several cars on a bend on the A82 near Glenllyon is due to be held at Fort William Sheriff Court on March 12.

Managing director of Kinlochleven's Ice Factor, Jamie Smith, aged 44, of Minard Cottage, Tigh-Phuir, denies overtaking the vehicles at excessive speed on approach to a blind summit and crossing solid white lines when it was not safe to do so on September 15.

Lochaber bio-mass firm doubles jobs

A LOCHABER renewable heating firm has defied the gloomy economic climate by doubling its staff numbers in 12 months.

Torlundy-based HWEnergy now employs 40 people at its office and manufacturing base at the Lochaber Rural Complex, near the Nevis Range ski centre.

It designs, installs and runs biomass heating systems fuelled by wood chips or pellets, sourced in part from its own chipping and drying plant at Ballachulish.

The firm has already secured orders from Shetland to the Borders to become a major force in the sector nationally.

But a new scheme, the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), which pays businesses and community organisations cash for each unit of heat generated from renewable sources, could spark extra demand - so HWEnergy managing director Bruno Berardelli decided more skilled staff were needed.

Speaking to The Oban Times on Monday, Mr Berardelli told The Oban Times the jobs move was 'a gamble' - but essential if the firm was to have the capacity to cope with new business generated through the RHI.

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

"We are trying to create jobs for Highlanders and export their skills across the country."

HWEnergy boss Bruno Berardelli

He said: 'What we did not want to happen was that we got lots of added demand but could not take it on - and fall flat on our faces because we could not deliver. So in anticipation and hope we scaled up on staff last year.'

'We employ around 40 people just now compared with under 20 a year ago, but I think it will level out for a bit. We have quite a lot of capacity and we

will need to see how it goes.

'The rocketing oil price has been a big boost to us. If it collapsed that would have an impact big time - but if it remains high people are going to be looking for an alternative.'

'We have a policy of bringing in graduate engineers from the Highlands, who are now working in their own area. We have at least 10 here from across the region, including Lochaber and Inverness. In total, probably half our staff are from Lochaber. Working in the renewable sector is something that appeals to them.'

'And it's not just the jobs in house - we have local joiners and fabricators make the biomass heat cabins, so there are spinoffs elsewhere.'

He added: 'We are trying to create jobs for Highlanders and export their skills across the country. That's the main reason I got into this - I think biomass heating is a great thing and is creating a lot of jobs here.'

Project manager Gary Kennedy, from Fort William, was a traffic engineer in Glasgow when a post with HWE came up.

'Coming back to work here was a very attractive option,' he said.



HWEnergy boss Bruno Berardelli has doubled his workforce in 12 months. Photo: f04hwe01



Kinlochleven teenager Fraser Cooper will now go on to compete in the young chef Scottish final

Young Kinlochleven chef in national final

'Wowed' judges with culinary skills

A KINLOCHLEVEN teenager has won a place in the national final of the Rotary Young Chef of the Year competition.

'Wowed' the judges

Kinlochleven High School pupil Fraser Cooper beat off eight rival chefs to take the West of Scotland district title in East Kilbride last week.

The 14-year-old cooked up a three-course meal from a £15 budget. He served up a smoked haddock soufflé for a starter, with a fillet of pork wrapped in pancetta as a main course, and finished with a white

chocolate and raspberry cheesecake for desert.

His father Richard Cooper told The Oban Times Fraser had 'wowed' the judges with his culinary skills.

He said: 'We're absolutely delighted. Fraser's been keen on cooking for a few years now, since he was about nine or ten and he's very keen to carry it through to a professional level. He would love one day to gain a Michelin star.'

Fraser will compete in the final in Edinburgh in March.

UHI hit right note with music courses

WEST HIGHLAND college UHI and the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music have announced a range of new courses in traditional music.

Made possible by a Scottish Government-funded partnership between the two institutions, the courses will broaden access to the Plockton-based centre, running in parallel with its existing work.

Starting in September, the full-time NC Music qualification will include performing, listening skills and harmony, sound engineering and production techniques. Studying one more modules part-time will also be possible.

A range of non-certificated instrumental and song-based evening classes will complement the main

course, hosted by some of Scotland's finest tutors.

Free 'taster' weekends

To give a flavour of both strands, two free 'taster' weekends - one on Feb 25-26 for the NC Music course and the other on March 10-11 for the evening classes, have been arranged.

NCETM director Dougie Pincock said: 'With enquiries about the NC already arriving from students based locally as well as further afield, course administrators would like to hear from anyone who could offer term-time accommodation at a reasonable rate in the Lochalsh area.'

On the evening classes he added: 'Relaxed, informal and fun, these will be ideal for anyone who would like to improve their playing skills whilst learning some great new

tunes, or who wants to explore the vast collection of Scots and/or Gaelic songs.'

Meanwhile, the centre's search for prospective students for its secondary school programme has begun.

Any secondary school age pupil resident in Scotland, who can play or sing to a good standard and who is passionate about Scottish traditional music, can apply.

Quality tuition aside, extra-curricular activities and a busy performance schedule form an integral part of the curriculum.

To introduce prospective students to the music school, two open days will be held on February 3 and 4. Applications will close on March 2 and auditions will be held in the week beginning March 19.

Throat cut threat over cigarettes leads to fines for Glasgow couple

TWO GLASWEGIANS threatened to cut the throat of a member of staff at a Fort William supermarket after being refused the sale of cigarettes.

Steven Mitchell and Claire McQuillan, both of flat 1/4, 5 Norfolk Court, Gorbals, were in Morrisons supermarket at closing time on October 19 when Mitchell attempted to buy cigarettes, but the cashier did not accept the identification card the 25-year-old produced.

Mitchell pleaded guilty to uttering threats and was fined £375, while McQuillan was fined £300 after admitting shouting, swearing and threatening violence.

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Microsoft puts 'Oban' on Xbox

COMPUTING giant, Microsoft, is understood to have named the architecture for its new Xbox console 'Oban.'

Details of the firm's new gaming device, which would replace the Xbox 360 hardware, are a closely guarded secret, but some information about the chip-set powering the device has been leaked online, including its 'Oban' code-name.

It is thought that Microsoft will launch the next Xbox in 2013.

Town's oldest man dies in 105th year

OBAN'S oldest resident, John Hoey, has died 14 weeks before his 105th birthday.

Born in Airds Crescent, the former factory worker with McCall's lemonade factory, was most recently a resident of North Argyll House, having moved there from his home at 5 Dalrigh, where he lived with his late wife Mary MacInnes, originally from Barra. Mary died aged 95 nearly nine years ago.

John Hoey's funeral will take place at St Columba's Cathedral Hall, on Saturday at 10am. Donations, if desired, will go towards the North Argyll House Residents' Fund.

Breakdown stalls train journey

A BROKEN down rail maintenance vehicle at Arrochar forced the 8.11am train from Oban to Glasgow to turn back last Saturday.

A spokesperson for Scotrail said: 'The Oban-Glasgow train was unable to continue past Arrochar, so we arranged replacement buses to transport customers to their destinations.'

Heating oil thefts on Isle of Mull

ISLANDERS on Mull have been warned to be on their guard after the theft of heating oil from a tank in Dervaig.

Police were contacted last week after a tank, filled up in December, was drained of some of its fuel. It is not known exactly when the theft occurred.

Anyone with information should contact Tormory police office.

NEWSDESK
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Rockfield's school days are numbered?

Historic Scotland status may be removed

ONE of Oban's most charismatic buildings, Rockfield Primary School, could have its protected status removed, with the council confirming it is planning talks with Historic Scotland.

The move comes as attempts by Argyll and Bute Council to sell the Stevenson Street building, originally advertised for £475,000, continue to falter, despite two bids being lodged at the tail end of last year.

The main building, boundary wall and playground shelter are all Grade B listed, meaning potential developers would have to take cognisance of its character when redeveloping it.

De-listing, however, would remove this condition and open the door for substantial alterations to the school, built in 1894, or even demolition.

Proceeds from the sale would go into the authority's education budget.

Confirmation of the move comes days after a councillor contacted *The Oban Times* to say there was no truth to rumours circulating online that the building had already been de-listed.

"The sale was held up for a year and a half for the community council to get a business plan together. It didn't happen."

councillor Roddy McCuish

News of the possibility of de-listing has not been welcomed by Mairi Molloy, the chair of Oban Community Council.

Expressing her personal opinion, she said: 'I've got my own views on what it should be; I'd like to see it used for the community - I certainly wouldn't want it to be bought by a housing association, for example.'

'I understand the council has to do something because, if not, it will just be left there and it is an eyesore.'

'It would be a shame if the building had to come down.'

Martin Petrie of the Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society worries about the

town's identity if another of its instantly recognisable buildings is flattened.

He said: 'I wouldn't want to be in the way of progress but they've just knocked down one very old building in the Argyll Hotel. How many more before the character of the town changes?'

Both the community council and the historical society will discuss the proposals at their upcoming meetings.

Oban councillor and planning committee member, Roddy McCuish, said: 'De-listing is a very long process which will involve a large amount of consultation.'

'I'm quite happy to have a public meeting to debate the whole issue.'

However, any further delay to the sale to allow a community group to take the building into ownership would not be an option, he believes.

'The sale was held up for a year and a half for the community council to get a business plan together,' Mr McCuish said. 'It didn't happen. They've already had their chance and that opportunity was lost.'

MSP puts the brakes on planned A83 roadworks

FURTHER DISRUPTION on a vital main road will not go ahead after Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell intervened to have scheduled resurfacing works stalled on the A83 at Rest and Be Thankful.

The MSP has agreed with transport minister Keith Brown that the work will not go ahead as had been planned over the next few weeks.

Mr Russell pursued the case after many of his constituents

demanding that there should be no more road closures on the Rest and Be Thankful until a longer-term solution can be found for the trouble-prone road.

'Vitaly important'

Mr Russell told *The Oban Times*: 'Obviously the disruption in recent weeks has made it incredibly difficult for businesses and residents in Argyll to go about daily life. I thought it was vitaly important to limit the disruption and spoke to the

transport minister accordingly.

'Keith Brown agreed not to go ahead with the resurfacing works due for the end of this month. This is a sensible decision for all concerned. We need to limit the disruption until a long-term sustainable solution can be found.'

Mr Russell also confirmed he had signed the A83 Petition launched by political group Argyll First and fully backed their campaign for a review of the stretch of road.



Mull-based councillor, Gordon Chalmers, with Lorn Taxis' Michael Wardrop, who thinks an 18 month review period would be 'awful' for local drivers. 15_1041x12

Freeze on taxi rates causes concern

TAXI drivers across Argyll and Bute could be left counting the cost of a freeze on fare structure for at least the next 18 months.

At the local authority's planning, protective services and licensing committee last week, councillors voted to freeze fares and also opted to extend the current annual review period by six months, something that is causing concern for small businesses beset by tax and fuel price increases as well as a weakening economy in recent years.

Taxi operators have until March 1 to make their views on the proposals.

Gordon Chalmers, the Mull-based independent councillor for Oban south and the isles, who himself is a former taxi driver, believes the extension is an unwise step.

'There has been no increase in fares since the 2010/11 review, but this decision would mean no further review of fares until late 2013,' he said.

'I've spoken to some taxi drivers and they're quite unhappy about it. What happens if there is a big increase in fuel prices in the coming months?'

'The decision is not final and will be advertised for comment. I'd encourage everyone who

may be affected to have their say.'

Twelve drivers operate cabs for Lorn Taxis in Oban. Co-owner, Jean MacIntyre, said: 'Money is tight for everyone and increases aren't what our customers want just now.'

'However, 18 months is a long time to wait for a review of rates - a bit too long.'

Driver, Michael Wardrop, said: 'I think it's awful - 18 months seems a ridiculously long time.'

Jean MacIntyre said Lorn Taxis will be responding to the proposal.

Alan Robson, owner of the

Mull Taxi Service, agrees that the review period is too long, but is calling for a review of how island fares are calculated.

Not only was fuel more expensive on the islands, but the roads often take longer to navigate, dropping the driver's hourly earnings. He said: 'I'm not overly happy about the proposals. I did write a letter to the committee proposing that tariff two could be used for islands and rural communities.'

That was rejected, however. 'I think 18 months is too long as well. They should review the rates after nine months. A lot can change in 18 months.'

River Lochy shotgun trial held back until March

THE TRIAL of a Torlundy man accused of firing a shotgun over the heads of four men near the River Lochy has been put back to March 12 after he appointed a new lawyer.

John Veitch, aged 45, of The Steading, Camisky Lodge, pleaded not guilty at Fort William Sheriff Court to culpably and recklessly discharging the pump action shotgun over the heads of the men to their alarm and danger at Torcastle, near Banavie on July 1.

Oban archers line-up for Portsmouth

OBAN AND Lorn Archers will hold their annual Portsmouth competition at Atlantis Leisure, Oban this Sunday.

There is a much reduced entry this year, possibly due to the national body running a coaching session at Largs at the same time, but there will still be several good archers coming as far as Ayr, Edinburgh and this year from North of Inverness.

The competition is scheduled to start at 1.30 pm.

Man who fought with police sent to wilderness

A FORT William man has been ordered to take part in a six-month wilderness course aimed at helping people with 'chaotic lifestyles' after admitting struggling violently with two police officers.

John Lawrie will start the course with Edinburgh-based charity Venture Trust on February 1. Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'There's no harm in trying to get him back on the straight and narrow, and I think Venture Trust might just do that.'

The 26-year-old, who has a number of previous convictions, was also ordered to attend alcohol counselling and be of good behaviour for one year.

Lawrie, of Room 2 An Caladh, Fassifern Road, pled guilty at Fort William Sheriff Court to resisting the officers at 30 Douglas Place on September 29.

Councillor calls for 'common sense' in Argyll disability benefit overpayment case

COUNCIL officers who overpaid disability benefit to three people in Argyll and Bute need to find a 'common sense' solution to recovering the monies paid.

That's the view of Oban SNP councillor Roddy McCuish, who criticised the decision to ask those overpaid an average of more than £600 each across seven months to pay it all back at once.

He believes the council should instead be asking for the money back in smaller payments, but stopped short of calling for the gaffe to be written off entirely.

Argyll and Bute Council has this week said, however, that two of the three persons affected by the error have now returned the overpayments.

Mr McCuish, who sits in opposition to the administration, said: 'We have to look for a sensible way of rectifying our mistake and it absolutely was our mistake.'

'We have to look at staggered payment spread over a number of weeks until we've got the money back when situations like this arise.'

'At the end of the day, those affected received money they shouldn't have, so it's right that they do pay it back. 'But people shouldn't have to suffer hardship because of a council mistake.'

He has now called for more rigorous checks to be carried out to ensure no over or underpayments are made in future.

In total, £1,836 was overpaid to three

individuals who receive the payments through the new Direct Payment Allowance (DPA) scheme.

One of those affected, Oban man Lawrence Nugent was told that, minus a waiver of £34.87, he had been overpaid £587.57, which would be deducted from his next monthly payment of £710.92. That would leave him with just £123 to get him through the month.

Mr Nugent believes it is imperative those who receive DPA are treated properly because they may not be able to properly scrutinise what monies are paid into their account.

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said new safeguards have been put in place to ensure there is no repeat in future.

Responding to an enquiry first submitted to the council on December 9 last year, a spokesperson on Friday said: 'All three people affected by the overpayment were sent the same letter from Argyll and Bute Council.'

'All three were asked for 100 per cent of the money back at the same time and two of them immediately returned the money.'

'A new system is in place at the council and there were mistakes made and we are sorry for any distress caused.'

'Controls have been put in place to make sure this does not happen again.'

Dalmally's dark days should be over

Islay, Jura and Colonsay hit by power cuts

DALMALLY residents should not suffer a repeat of the rolling power cuts that have been blighting the village since November.

Darkness
Problems first arose at the end of November, when a transformer failed, plunging homes and businesses into darkness.

While a repair was quickly effected, the problem was followed up by a series of storms throughout December and January, causing trees to fall on the overhead supply network.

This trend continued at the weekend when trees, already weakened by previous strong winds, shed branches during last week's moderate to strong winds.

Dalmally resident Wendi Phillips said: 'Since the end of November I don't think a week has gone past without at least one power cut - this week we have had three.'

Caol man admits threatening family

A CAOL man has admitted threatening members of his family and waving a knife at them on Christmas Eve.

Alexander Williamson, 22, of 4 Glenmallee Terrace, pled guilty and

'While I take my hat off to the lads that repair the lines and restore the power I have to say I am sick of it all - as they must be too.'

A spokesperson for Scottish Hydro Power Distribution (SHPD) said: 'Extensive tree cutting is now underway at Cladich Hill and Bovuy to protect our overhead network.'

'We're hopeful the residents of Dalmally will benefit from this preventative work.'

Meanwhile, trees on power lines in Jura caused outages to the island, Islay and Colonsay on Monday morning.

Power went off at 9.25am but was restored an hour later. Again, extensive tree cutting is taking place in a bid to prevent a recurrence.

SHPD's spokesperson said: 'We would like to apologise to all our customers affected by the faults and we are doing all we can to prevent a repeat in the future.'

Sustainable Mull and Iona

Craignure Village Hall • February 4, 2012

MULL'S second Renewables Fair takes place next weekend, giving locals a chance to find out about the latest green energy sources.

Sustainable Mull and Iona will host the event on Saturday, February 4 from 11am-4pm.

The group's chairman, Nigel Burgess, says the event gives everyone a chance to discover how they can reduce their energy bills and carbon footprint.

He said: 'For those who are seeking solutions to rising energy bills, or simply a desire to reduce their carbon footprint, this event will have something of interest.'

'Exhibitors will be on hand to discuss wind, wood fuel, solar and hydro technologies, as well as advisors on energy efficiency.'

'At present, the west coast of Scotland is the focus of a number of multinational corporations scabbling to get their hands on the rich renewable resources around our coastline.'

'This event will also help identify a way of working together to harvest these resources for local benefit.'

Keynote speaker at the fair will be Alastair MacIntosh, professor of human ecology, author of *Soil and Soul*, protagonist in the Harris super-quarry story and co-founder of the Isle of Eigg Trust.

The afternoon theme will be introduced by Barry Edmunson of Abernethy Community Hydro electric.

For more information about the event can be found at Mull and Iona Community Trust's website at mict.co.uk.

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Oban area heats held at Atlantis

Ben sets three new records at indoor athletics

THE Sports Hall Athletics competition for the Oban area was held at Atlantis Leisure last Saturday. This event was the third of 4 local area competitions held in Argyll this winter promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club and sponsored by a Communities 2014 Lottery Grant.

Ben Coates, from Kilmore, an S1 pupil at Oban High School was without any doubt the outstanding athlete on the day. Ben's performance in seven of the eight events was exceptional with his only weak event being the shot putt.

Ben set three new Argyll age records starting with the standing triple jump clearing 7.44 metres and adding 7 cm to the record set by David Clunie ten years ago. Ben then proceeded to break the two lap record held by Stuart Tomison from Mull since 2007 trimming only 0.1 seconds off the record with 22.8seconds.

Speed Bounce
The Kilmore boy then broke the speed bounce record completing an incredible 90 jumps in 30 seconds adding one jump to the mark held for many years by another Oban boy Colin Maxwell. Ben also excelled in the high jump clearing 1.45 metres, standing long jump and vertical jump and is arguably the most exciting young athletic talent in Argyll at the moment.

Daniel Teape from Taynuilt Primary was the under 9 champion dominating the competition winning all eight events. Daniel Colthart from Strath of Appin primary was runner up in this section.

Boys from Park primary filled the first three places in the under 11 age group with Rory Dowd the overall winner ahead of Sam Coates and Alasdair Trafford third.

Rory won the high jump, javelin and vertical jump while Sam won both the two lap and four lap races in addition to the standing long jump. Finbar Dunne from Rockfield won the triple jump and Cameron Hill from Park won the speed bounce.

Seven boys entered the under 15 competition and Jamie Kilorn was the overall winner thanks to wins in the two lap and four lap races, high jump and triple jump. Runner-up Alan Colthart won the long jump and shot putt with a promising 9.10 metres throw. Scott Black won the speed bounce with a count of 80 and Malcolm Alloway, from the Isle of Iona, won the vertical jump.

The under 15 girls category was the most keenly contested with only 4 points between first and fourth place.

Alison MacVicar was the champion thanks to wins in the long jump, shot putt and speed bounce. Rhona MacIntyre and Iona Young were not far behind sharing second place on overall points. Iona won the vertical jump reaching up to 55 cm only 3 cm below the Argyll age record. Rhona won the four lap race and Anna Garvin was 4th overall thanks to wins in the triple jump and high jump. Rebecca Bruce won the two lap race in this category.

In the youngest age group, Paul Carmichael came back for his first appearance in 2012, he partnered Kris Gillies up front and it was Paul who broke the deadlock on 34 minutes.

A fine ball through the middle from Scott Maitland put Paul through and from a tight angle finished with a well placed shot in the bottom left hand corner.

At the other end Knightwood had one chance in the first half with Copeland through one on one with Pollock but a truly magnificent save kept Taynuilt ahead.

In the second half Taynuilt were right up against it with Knightswood dominating and using the strong wind to their advantage.

The equaliser was a poor goal to lose. A throw in from the right found their centre half who flicked the ball in from a tight angle. The lead wasn't to last long though, as Taynuilt re-took

ATHLETICS

under 9s, Caitlin Curran from Rockfield won six out of the eight events to ensure victory.

Other individual winners were Lucy Black from Rockfield and Arianna McLellan all the way from Bunnass on Mull.

Family Double

Grace and Emma Thompson completed a family double success with Grace the under 11 winner and older sister Emma the under 13 champion. Grace, from Rockfield Primary, won the high, long and triple jumps to finish three points ahead of another Rockfield girl Fi Keys who won the javelin and shared first place with Holly Robertson in the speed bounce.

Holly, from Easdale but now at Rockfield primary impressed in winning both the two lap race in 27.8 and four lap race in 61.4seconds. Hannah Teape from Taynuilt won the vertical jump in this age group.

Emma Thompson was a clear winner in the under 13s winning seven out of the eight events and excelling in the high jump with a 1.25metres clearance. The other individual winner in this section was Fiona Maclean in the shot putt throwing 6.60metres.

Successful athletes from Saturday will now qualify to take part in the Argyll Final to be held at Atlantis Leisure on Saturday, 25th February. The final will start at 1pm with registration from 12noon. Qualifiers from the Oban competition will be advised by letter through their schools in February.



Oban Lorne and Strathendrick players prepare for a scrum during last Saturday's match at Glenclutten.

Lorne make league leaders fight all the way for victory

OBAN Lorne welcomed league leaders Strathendrick to Glenclutten last week, looking for a much required win in the battle against the drop. The home team were looking to replicate their good performance from the previous week in the defeat at Cumbernauld.

With the woeful conditions of gale-force winds and heavy rain it was always going to be a game of few incidents worth mentioning. Both sides however adapted well to the conditions in the first half using the wind at times to their advantage. Neither side made any clear cut chances for the line with the only notable event being a missed penalty attempt from Oban's Craig Wright. The score at half time stood at 0-0.

The home defence kept the league leaders out for over an hour

RUGBY

but eventually succumbed to a soft try, the first score of the game. The Endrick scrum half tapped a penalty from five metres out and managed to touch down himself out wide. The resulting conversion meant they stretched their lead to 7-0.

Oban gave away another score shortly after from a five metre scrum allowing the visitors to double their advantage to 14-0 which was the final score. The result leaves Oban only two points above bottom place in the league with a very winnable game away to fellow strugglers Strathaven next Saturday, 2pm.

Spectators turn out in force to watch Fun 4s

THE early stormy conditions on Sunday led to a cancellation of the senior fixtures at the Community Pitch and meant all eyes were firmly focused on the Fun 4s in the comfort of Atlantis Leisure sports hall with record numbers turning up to watch the eight teams at Primary 1 to Primary 3 level continue with their SYFA recognised player pathway development at 4-a-side games.

One of the early games Swifts 1 against Spartak 1 was a really tight affair and Swifts went in front when Kyle MacLennan and Thomas McKindle exchanged passes in midfield leaving Kyle in the clear to score from close

range with a well worked goal. However Spartak soon got a foot in the game when Lewis Campbell won the ball in midfield threading an accurate pass through to Gregor Warnock to thump the ball into the net from ten yards.

The youngest team in the juniors, Chaos 1, were next up against Ben Lora 1 and they had Innes MacCallum fearlessly tackling everyone on the pitch allowing Callum McMillan time and space to score a great individual goal which was just reward for his hard work and industry on the day. Ben Lora were not to be outdone however and scored a fine goal of their

own when Rosie Howe won a throw in which was taken quickly allowing Murray Scott to score a great goal from long range.

Swifts 2 and Spartak 2 was no less rewarding to watch and Spartak's Sorley Cameron provided two great defence splitting passes both of which found Cooper MacIntyre in the clear to dispatch into the net with aplomb. Swifts dug in and thanks to outstanding displays of individual skill by Cameron McMillan and Neil MacSween got themselves back into the game and ensured honours were even at the end.

In another of the mornings exchanges Chaos 2 took on Ben Lora 2 with Chaos' Gabriel Tisdar a class above the rest in midfield setting up Nichol Clark for a memorable goal curled into the top corner.

Ben Lora had a star of their own in Dylan Howe who was tackling like his life depended on it and having won the ball it broke free to Karyn Black who scored with a shot almost from one end of the pitch to the other.

The teams meet up again next week at the sports hall for their next round of fixtures and the seniors will be back in action at the high school pitch.

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

Team P W D L Pts
Kilmore 7 42
Cairnbaan 7 32
Easdale 5 20
North Connell 5 20
Connell 6 19
Taynuilt 7 18
Benderloch 5 17

Team P W D L Pts
Carpenter 6 6 0 0 18
Oban Times 7 6 0 1 15
Atlantis 5 4 0 1 12
RM Builders 6 3 0 3 9
High School 6 3 0 3 9
Emergency 6 1 0 5 3
Hotels 6 1 0 5 3
Oban Electrics 6 0 0 6 0

5-a-side football

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LATEST results: RM Builders 13, Hotels 1; OHS 5, Emergency Services 2; Oban Times 10, Oban Electrics 0.

ISLAY GOLF CLUB

Winter League Week 9: 1 David Livingstone 28pts; 2 Sammy Graham 27pts; 3 Alister Blair 27pts

GOLF

Taynuilt settle for a draw in difficult conditions

Central Scottish Welfare League Taynuilt Amateurs 2 Knightwood 2

THIS fixture was played in poor weather conditions and never going to be pretty and to be fair Taynuilt never really deserved to take anything from the game with keeper Ben Pollock earning the team a share of the points with an outstanding display between the sticks.

The first 20 minutes was a real struggle trying to keep the ball in

play and on the deck. Paul Carmichael came back for his first appearance in 2012, he partnered Kris Gillies up front and it was Paul who broke the deadlock on 34 minutes.

A fine ball through the middle from Scott Maitland put Paul through and from a tight angle finished with a well placed shot in the bottom left hand corner.

At the other end Knightwood had one chance in the first half with Copeland through one on

one with Pollock but a truly magnificent save kept Taynuilt ahead.

In the second half Taynuilt were right up against it with Knightswood dominating and using the strong wind to their advantage.

The equaliser was a poor goal to lose. A throw in from the right found their centre half who flicked the ball in from a tight angle. The lead wasn't to last long though, as Taynuilt re-took

FOOTBALL

the lead with the best move of the match. Stevey Kelly exchanged passes with Kris Gillies and quick feet from Kris beat his marker before drilling the ball across the box to find McGrath for an easy tap in.

The game started to get a bit tasty as Knightswood fought for an equaliser. Tackles were flying in left, right and centre with Stevey Kelly being kicked off the ball but the referee didn't see the incident.

The equaliser did eventually come and was well worked when the Knightswood No 8 found the net from outside the box giving Pollock no chance.

Knightswood should have won the game near the end when the ball broke to their No 2 but he missed an open goal.

Next week Taynuilt are away to Clydebank who are second bottom of the league, so they will be expecting to pick up all three points in this match.

The following Saturday Knightswood come to Oban again in the quarter final of the Wilson Cup.

Saints miss chance to progress in amateur cup

Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup 5th Round Oban Saints 2 Echt 2

A HOST of missed chances nearly proved costly for Saints as they took on Aberdeenshire Premier League outfit Echt in the 5th round of the Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup at Glenclutten last Saturday.

Although the playing surface at Glenclutten was in excellent condition the weather was shocking with a strong swirling rain and sleet showers making things difficult for the players.

Credit to both teams though they turned in an excellent show for the hardy band of supporters who came up to watch.

The home team, with the elements in their favour, should have taken the lead in the first minute of the match when Ross Maitland had a gilt edged opportunity to score but he fluffed his shot from 10 yards.

Donald Campbell had the ball in the net in the third minute, but the 'goal' was chalked off for a high challenge by the Saints striker.

The opening goal came in the 11th minute when Ross Maitland and Craig MacEwan combined to set up Donald Campbell who raced through and slotted the ball past a helpless Echt keeper Lewis Milne.

Saints were playing well, but that elusive second goal would not come and in the 36th minute another glorious opportunity went begging when Donald Campbell crossed to the far post for Paul Kerr, but the wee midfielder only succeeded in slicing the ball past the post.

The Oban side were pressing hard, but the Echt boys were defending as though their lives depended on it, throwing themselves into challenges stopping two rebound efforts on the line.

Two Chances
With half time approaching Saints created another two chances, a fine shot from Ryan Campbell while Willie Gemmill will be disappointed that he wasted a good chance by firing the ball over the bar.

As the teams turned round for the second half the local lads must have been wondering if

those missed chances would come back to haunt them as Echt would now have the advantage of the strong blustery wind.

Saints came out strongly and Craig MacEwan was unlucky with a good effort in the 49th minute, but the Aberdeen team came roaring back into the game and drew level in the 52nd minute when a harmless looking ball came into the box, fell to the unmarked Alan Douglas who made no mistake from six yards - a bad goal for Saints to lose.

This reversal seemed to stun the Oban side for a ten minute spell, but credit to them they came back into the game and had Echt pinned back, but they were finding it difficult to get through a well drilled visiting defence.

The home side were dealt a cruel blow in the 70th minute when Echts top scorer Paul Presslie found himself unmarked in the box and the prolific goalscorer wasted no time in slotting the ball home to put his team 2-1 in front against the run of play.

The Oban side had 20 minutes to retrieve the situation, and this they did with seven minutes of the match remaining, when

FOOTBALL

central defender Alex Craik, for the second week in a row, was on hand to steer the ball past Lewis Milne to level the score at 2-2.

Both teams battled hard for a winner, but in the end had to settle for a replay which will take place in Echt this Saturday.

Early Start
It will mean a 7.15am start for the Oban team as the game has an early kick-off with extra time and penalties, if required, to see who faces Cambusbaron Rovers away from home in the last 32 of the competition.

Manager Iain Jackson was frustrated at the performance. He said: 'We played well enough in difficult conditions and should have won the game. We created several gilt edged chances, but didn't take them and we lost two poor goals, so we've only got ourselves to blame.'

'Echt are a well drilled side and they will fancy their chances in the replay, but I'm quietly confident and more importantly the players are confident that we can go to Echt and get a result that will take us through.'

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We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

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Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

I enclose £1 for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

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Key players set to leave Fort William next month

'It's two of our more experienced players we're losing so it's certainly a blow' - Danny Conlon

REPORT BY
RICHARD HADDOCK
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Fort William Football Club manager Danny Conlon.

FOOTBALL

FORT WILLIAM manager Danny Conlon says he may be forced to rebuild his team after the news two key players are to leave the club next month.

Star forward Sean Ellis and his cousin Michael are moving to Australia in mid-February, leaving Conlon with big gaps in an already misfiring frontline which has only scored eight goals in 16 games this season.

Conlon told The Oban Times their departures, along with a growing number of call-offs and injuries, could force him to rethink his player selection.

Talented

He said: 'Sean is without question one of the most talented players in the league - he is a match winner on his own. It's

two of our more experienced players we're losing so it's certainly a blow.

Settled Side

'Maybe we've got to look at getting a more settled side out there, and get the same players playing every week even if they're not necessarily the best players. Rather than just trying to get points on the board we need to start looking long-term and bringing some of the younger players into the side more regularly.'

Fort have also been hit with the news experienced defender Graeme Bamber may need an operation on a hernia problem



Out of action: experienced defender Graeme Bamber is set to be out for a number of weeks with a hernia. 10_1046r101

which will keep him out of action for a number of weeks.

Fort will be looking for revenge when they take on Wick Academy at Claggan Park this Saturday. Wick ran out 8-1 winners when the sides met at Harmsworth Park in September, and the Lochaber men will be keen to avoid another heavy defeat.

Good Side

Conlon said: 'They are a really good side - one of the better footballing sides in the league. We'll try and stop them from playing and maybe do something ourselves at the other end.'

Sean Grant, Jonathan Hewitt and Michael Ellis are among the players who will miss the game.

A weakened Fort side suffered a heavy 6-0 defeat at the hands of Deveronvale in Banff last weekend. The away side had chances through Sean Ellis and Danny Mackintosh in the first

Leanachan Forest race on Sunday

ATHLETICS

LOCHABER Athletic Club's winter league competition continues this Sunday with a 10-mile race through Leanachan Forest at Nevis Range.

Around 60 runners are expected to tackle the forest trail, with a children's race also planned for the day.

Race organiser Stuart Gray said: 'It's quite a tough race, but it's one most people enjoy because it's a very variable course, with different terrains and views along the way.'

LAC's Mike Bossard currently has a narrow lead in the men's winter league with 87 points after four races. Fellow local runner Allan Ross sits in joint second with Peter Davenport on 85 points. In the ladies competition, LAC's Lyndsay Shaw currently has a 20 point lead over club-mate Nicola Meekin.

Rugby boys hoping for dry weather

RUGBY

LOCHABER will be hoping for some dry weather this week as they get ready to welcome Moray to Banavie on Saturday.

The club's tie with Banff was called off last weekend after rain left the home pitch unplayable - Lochaber's fifth postponement of the season so far.

Winter league

CYCLING

WEST Highland Wheelers will stage the fifth round of its Alpine Bikes-sponsored winter league competition this weekend.

Competitors will tackle a tricky course at Glenlyon on Sunday, with the race due to get underway at 11am. The last event held two weeks ago at Barcaldine was won by Ben Thompson.

Open doubles

TABLE TENNIS

KENNY Gillespie and Jim Hinchley claimed Fort William Table Tennis Club's open doubles championship at the Nevis Centre last Monday night.

The duo took the title after a hard fought match against Neil Feggans and Deek Cameron in the final. Players from as far as Glenborrodale and Spain completed.

Leisure still on top

INDOOR FOOTBALL

RUNAWAY leaders Lochaber Leisure stretched their lead at the top of the Ali Young Premier League to nine points with a 3-1 win over Goon Squad at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night. Second placed TNF United lost ground after drawing 2-2 with second bottom side AA Young, while Steaua Sookabreast moved to within two points of second by beating winless Bayern Bru 6-2.

Balachulish missed the chance to underline their title credentials losing a high scoring game with Stroke City 6-4.

Meanwhile, Achintore FC moved into sixth place after beating The Granite House 5-3 and Livercaol defeated HWEnergy No Stars 3-0.

Alleycats are still up to scratch

TEN PIN BOWLING

THE SCRATCH division leaders of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre, Fort William remain unchanged after week nine - the halfway point of the season.

The top four teams all ran out 5-0 winners - Alleycats kept ahead of the pack with 43 points, followed by Council in second on 40, while Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are third on 32.

Alleycats are the new leaders in the handicap division with 30 points with Council in second on 29 points, with last week's leaders Underdogs dropping to third, also on 29 points, after losing 3-2 to British Legion Scotland.

The highest team games of the week came from Council with 598 scratch, 809 handicap. Council also had the highest two-game scratch total with 1175.

Individually, the best game came from Council's Brian Stewart with 190 scratch, 238 handicap. Rossamy Wareing of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio also had a good game with a 177 scratch, 237 handicap. Brian Stewart also rolled the best two-game scratch series with 352.



Nether Lochaber Boxing Club coaches and members are looking forward to their first show this year.

Kinlochleven to host first boxing show this summer

KINLOCHLEVEN will play host to its first boxing show this summer after the local club were granted to permit by Highland Council.

Nether Lochaber Amateur Boxing Club, which moved into new premises at Kinlochleven Business Park last summer, will hold the show in the village's high school on Saturday June 2. Lochaber young chef of the year winner and high school pupil Erin Mills will provide a three-course meal for spectators.

Head Coach Martin Glenesk said: 'These are really exciting times for the club. We have worked hard to get the club into a position to host a show and will continue working hard over the coming months to ensure all our boxers put on a fantastic display of their talents for the local community.'

BOXING

For tickets, call the hotline on 07799 705742, email netherlochaberc@yahoo.co.uk or go to the club's gym.

Meanwhile, the club is preparing to send a team of boxers to the Northern Area Schoolboys Championships in Peterhead next Saturday.

Last weekend saw a group of nearly forty boxers from Ayrshire and Lanarkshire attend a sparring session in Kinlochleven. Boxers from Forsyth's ABC (Hamilton) and Northwest ABC (Kilmarnock) put on a fine display in the ring, and coaches from both clubs said they were impressed by the facilities at the gym in Kinlochleven Business Park.

Isle of Skye 10k race runners face tough conditions

ATHLETICS

A HOWLING headwind awaited the runners who lined up for the annual pilgrimage up Glenmore in the Isle of Skye 10k on Saturday.

However, 28 runners took to the field and fought their way up the undulating Struan Hill Road before turning up towards Glenmore and a little respite from the wind as the gradient increased.

The return leg brought some relief with the wind at their heels all the way back to Portree.

The race was won by John MacLean in 43 minutes 45 seconds, followed by the championship leader, Phil Dewar, in 46.16 and Lee Mather in 47.51.

The ladies' race was won by Sarah Stephenson in 51 minutes 48 seconds, with the youngest competitor, Sofie Macdonald, in second place in 52.35, followed by Wilma MacRuary, in 53.59.

Leaders in the male and female championships remain the same, with Phil Dewar and Wilma MacRuary both on 28 points.

The championship standings are as follows: Phil Dewar (28), Lee Mather (14), Alasdair Mac-

ATHLETICS

Sween and Niall Till (12), John MacLean (10), Neil Turner (8), Paul Davidson (4) and Robert MacAskill (2). Ladies championship: Wilma MacRuary (28), Janette Tasker (20), Sarah Stephenson (18).

Full Race Results:
John MacLean 43:45; Phil Dewar; 46:16; Lee Mather 47:51; Niall Till 48:26; Neil MacVicar 50:18; Robert MacAskill 51:23; Sarah Stephenson 51:48; Sofie Macdonald 52:35; Paul Davidson 53:07; Ally MacLeod 53:44; Alistair Danter 53:55; Wilma MacRuary 53:59; Niall Tasker 53:59; David Knowles 54:00; Richard McGuire 54:50; Calum Gibb 55:00; Heckie Cormack 55:05; Brendan Clancy 56:15; Ian Stewart 56:16.

Krissie Lothian 56:36; Stephen Cormack 57:26; Andy O'Grady 58:11; Janette Tasker 58:12; Sandra Mather 58:12; Vicki Clark 58:19; Ann Gillies 62:13; Ian Macpherson 62:48; Morag Macdonald 64:03.

Weather

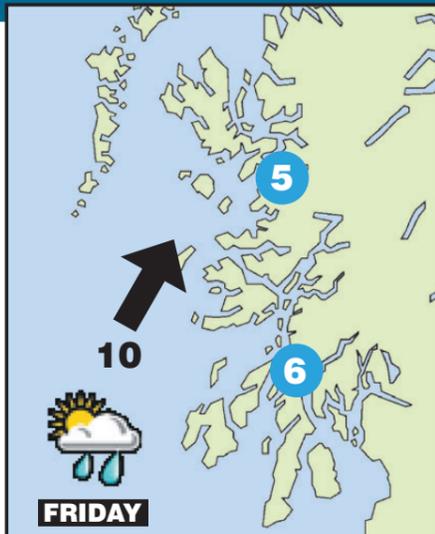
Thursday Sunshine and showers
Winds light, south, south westerly
Temperatures 0°C to 3°C

Friday Sunshine and showers
Winds light, westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

Weekend Light rain
Outlook Winds light, east, north easterly
Temperatures 7°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 26, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	01.34 0.7 07.27 4.1 13.58 1.0 19.35 3.8	
Fri	02.10 0.9 08.00 4.0 14.32 1.2 20.05 3.7	
Sat	02.43 1.1 08.33 3.6 15.06 1.3 20.35 3.6	
Sun	03.18 1.3 09.06 3.6 15.43 1.5 21.08 3.4	
Mon	03.55 1.6 09.43 3.4 16.27 1.7 21.45 3.2	
Tues	04.39 1.8 10.26 3.1 17.20 1.9 22.32 3.0	
Wed	05.35 2.0 11.36 2.9 18.23 2.0 23.45 2.9	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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