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Cowal games to lose piping 'major' status

THERE are fears for the future participation of pipers in the Cowal Highland Gathering after the event withdrew its 'major' status for 2014.

Cowal is known as the fifth major, coming after the Scottish, British, European and world championships, and was one of only two – alongside the Glasgow-based world championship – to have a permanent home.

As the final championship of the season, Cowal was the venue where the champion of champions in each grade of pipe band competition was announced.

But the commonly held belief within piping circles was that the championship was becoming too big for the Dunoon event, and some had even anticipated the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) would have removed the major status, had it not been given up.

The Cowal Gathering committee made the announcement on Monday, following discussions with the RSPBA, but said it would continue to host a competition that was 'more fun and better suited to the overall event'.

Cowal Highland Gathering chairman, Ronnie Cairns said: 'We recognise that the increasing competitiveness of the event and numbers of bands attending were putting a strain on the space and resources we had available and that this was leading to unhappiness amongst some of the bands.'

'Although the number of bands will reduce, the level of competition will remain high and key elements of the pipe band event like the massed bands and the march down Argyll Street at night will remain.'

Oban Pipe Band pipe major Euan Dewar said: 'I have been going to the Cowal competition since I was a young boy and I have a soft spot for the event but the way things were going, they didn't have the facilities to support the championship and there were complaints from some bands.'

'Oban will probably still go to Dunoon in 2014 but it won't be the same.'

Council employees may face redundancy 400 could face job loss

SOME 400 council employees could be facing redundancy as Argyll and Bute Council discusses plans to shave some £6million from its annual budget.

The *Oban Times* can reveal that trade unions met with officials from the local authority last week for negotiations over the plans, which could reduce the council's workforce by 10 per cent.

If approved, it would mean the council will have shrunk by nearly 1,000 employees - to around 4,100 in recent years.

The *Oban Times* can reveal that trade unions met with officials from the local authority last week for negotiations over the plans, which could reduce the council's workforce by 10 per cent.

A council source said 'tough decisions' had to be made if services were to be protected and that other measures were still being considered.

Details of the proposed staff cuts emerged as the authority announced it is to publish its budget proposals today (Thursday), three weeks ahead of its budget decision meeting on February 14.

"We would be failing as a council if we simply chose to keep pushing the problem into the future."

James Robb, lead councillor for strategic finance

The move comes after the council agreed in October to take a new approach to the budget setting process by looking seven years ahead.

Projections show a budget shortfall of around £40million over that time, with the authority saying a longer-term approach would allow 'better management of difficult and challenging decisions.'

Lead councillor for strategic finance, James Robb, said: 'The new approach to the budget process has been widely welcomed for its transparency and because it provides a clearer picture of the challenges that we face in the longer term.'

'In October the council agreed that savings options of £5.8 million should be developed, and the proposals in the budget pack meet this requirement.'

'They do include some difficult choices, but we would be failing as a council if we simply chose to keep pushing the problems into the future.'

Feedback from the council's budget consultation will still play a part, he added.

'There is the possibility of changes to these proposals as a result of the various consultations but only on the basis that an equivalent saving will have to be found.'

To respond to the council's budget consultation, log on to argyll-bute.gov.uk/budgetconsultation2013, which includes a budget simulator to help see the types of decisions that have to be made.

Information about the budget is also available in public libraries and council offices. You can also write to: Budget Consultation 2013, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT or email budget@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Council failing heritage, culture and arts claim

ARGYLL and Bute Council has been told to re-think its priorities for the next 10 years after being accused of failing to provide a strategy for heritage, culture and the arts.

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee made the claim at a meeting of the local area community planning group (LACPG) in Oban last Wednesday following a presentation by community planning manager Eileen Wilson on the council's Single Outcome Agreement.

The Single Outcome Agreement is a statutory document agreed between the Scottish Government and Community Planning Partnerships across all 32 local authorities that aims to improve outcomes for local people.

In an impassioned email to Ms Wilson, the councillor says the presentation prompted a useful discussion but highlighted little mention of 'heritage, culture, arts and (to a lesser degree) tourism' and bemoaned an over-reliance on volunteers.

She added: 'There are no two ways about it, culture, arts, heritage and tourism needs strategic co-ordination. It's vitally important for both understanding ourselves, attracting tourists and indeed for our economic growth.'

'We have been uncommonly poor at this in the past, paying a pittance per head of population to support culture. It is ridiculous to think that in Argyll and the Isles our offering is second to none yet we are the smallest spend per head of population in Scotland.'

Councillor Glen-Lee's comments are supported by Argyll and the Isles Tourism Ltd, MSP Mike MacKenzie, Creative Scotland CEO Andrew Dixon and Catherine Gillies, chairwoman of Argyll and Bute Museums and Heritage Forum.



Eilidh MacInnes picks up her delivery of Jackson Bros haggis from butchers, from left: Sean Grant, James Paterson and Alastair Jackson. 16_104haggis01

Eilidh and haggis head for Iraqi Burns night

First Highland dancer at British Embassy

A DANCE teacher from Oban is travelling to Iraq to perform at the British Embassy's Burns Supper, becoming the first Highland dancer to do so.

And Eilidh MacInnes will have to make space in her luggage for haggis donated by Oban's Jackson Bros butchers. Eilidh, who has previously

performed for various British regiments, is to dance at the embassy in Erbil following the invitation from The Caledonian Society of Kurdistan in Northern Iraq.

Eilidh, who has her own dance school in Oban, said: 'I am told this is the first time they have had a Highland

dancer at the event, so they want me to teach them a few ceilidh dances too.'

'They also said I had to bring a ceremonial haggis!'

Eilidh planned to fly from Heathrow to Vienna yesterday, before travelling to Iraq today (Thursday) and returning on Sunday.

Faulty alarms are branded 'useless'

CONCERNS have been raised over the suitability of some remote tele-care alarms handed to Argyll and Bute residents, after a 73-year-old woman branded the system 'useless'.

Over the weekend, the Tunstall system given to Fiona MacKinnon, Kirkcubright, wrongly called medical professionals to her home eight times in one night following a repeat of a seemingly irreparable malfunction.

While Argyll and Bute Council has dispatched several engineers to the woman's house in a bid to repair the system over the past year it continues to fail, leaving Fiona – who suffers Dystonia, a crippling neurological condition that causes fits of involuntary muscle contractions – in fear for her own and others' lives.

The 49-year-old said: 'It either goes off for no reason or it doesn't work when I need it.'

'What happens if my alarm goes off wrongly and takes a doctor here, only for something to happen somewhere else on the island? It could cost someone their life.'

NHS Highland said it was aware of the issue and working with the council to resolve it, adding it would always respond if the alarm goes off.

However, the health board refused to say who met the cost of a false call out in the event of equipment failures.

Argyll and Bute Council had made no response at the time of going to press.

West Highland top cops appointed

TWO SENIOR police officers have been selected to head up the Highlands and Islands and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire areas when the single Scottish police force comes into effect.

A new team of 14 commanders has been appointed to lead local policing across the country.

Chief superintendent Russell Dunn will head up Argyll and West Dunbartonshire, while chief superintendent Julian Innes will be his Highlands and Islands counterpart.

Scotland's eight police forces are being merged into a single Scottish force from the start of April, under chief constable Stephen House.



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SAMS student killed in tragic Glencoe avalanche

THE FAMILY of Oban-based PhD student Christopher Bell say they've been overwhelmed by tributes since the tragic avalanche that took his life at Glencoe on Saturday.

A passionate cyclist and mountaineer, Chris was studying ocean mapping at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), Dunstaffnage.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* from the family home at Osbaldon, near Blackburn, on Tuesday, Christopher's father Simon Bell expressed the deep sadness his wife Alison and son Edward were feeling over the loss of the 24-year-old, who was with a party of six on Bidean Nam Bian when they were caught in an avalanche at around 2pm.

Simon said: 'We do take comfort from the fact he was doing what he loved doing and with people he

loved, when he died. He absolutely loved the whole Oban area and it would have creased him to go from that to a desk job in Manchester or somewhere like that.'

'He was so passionate about the outdoors – he's achieved more in his short life than I've managed in my 52 years. He inspired so many people in his life.'

Tributes to the popular, polite and warm character have been flooding in to his family, while friends set to participate in this weekend's Strathpuffer 24-hour bike race have raised more than £9,000 for Glencoe Mountain Rescue team in just 24 hours through a Justgiving website in Chris' name.

Friend Luke Bradley, who set up the page, said: 'Chris was very polite, very kind and a very gentlemanly person.'



Christopher Bell.

'He was also very friendly and well liked and was pretty inspirational as well. He tended to make a lot of parties happen as well, thanks to his personality.'

'He was very popular, I don't think we realised just how popular. We wanted to maybe raise a couple of hundred pounds for the mountain rescue but it was up to a thousand before the evening was out. It's an incredible response – we've had

donations from Chicago, Denmark and Florida and all just from people that knew him.'

'The outdoors was his passion and he loved the hills around Oban.'

A spokeswoman for SAMS said the institute would be paying tribute to Chris in the coming days. She said: 'Chris was with us at SAMS for a little over two years as a PhD student. He was an absolute pleasure to work with and get to know over that time. Chris is acutely missed and will be remembered in SAMS into the distant future.'

'Our thoughts are with his family and all those that were close to him. May he rest in peace.'

Luke's fundraising page for the Strathpuffer race can be found at justgiving.com/Luke-Bradley. Tragedy strikes Glencoe, see page 7.

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Lorn Lines

MEMBERS of Lorn Garden Club enjoyed an interesting and entertaining presentation entitled 'Plant Hunting in Nepal' with Maurice Wilkins, head gardener at Arduaine Gardens. Maurice made two separate expeditions with other gardeners to the north eastern area of Nepal, close to Kachengunga, the world's third highest peak. Several of the seeds collected can be seen now as flourishing plants at Arduaine. The next meeting of the club will be on Tuesday February 19 in St John's Cathedral Hall, Oban, at 7.30pm when David Rankin from Kevock Nursery will be talking about Wild, Wet and Woodland gardening and bringing plants for sale from his Chelsea award-winning nursery.

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THE LOCAL Scottish Wildlife Trust group enjoyed an informative talk recently concerning the progress of the Scottish Beaver Trial in north Knapdale. Roisin Campbell-Palmer, operations manager of the project, told members of the interest shown by the public in the trial and the success of the guided walks through which the team explains to visitors why the trial was set up. The beavers, released under controlled conditions for a five-year period, are settling in well and producing kits each year. Beavers were hunted to extinction 400 years ago for their fur and scent glands and have already been re-introduced to many countries in Europe where they are reclaiming their old habitats. The next evening lecture will be at the Scottish Marine Institute, Dunstaffnage, on Thursday February 21 at 7.30pm when Trevor Davies will speak on 'Alaska's Inside Passage', followed by refreshments. Everyone welcome.

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A GROUP of history enthusiasts has set about documenting the stories and heritage of Ardchattan Parish. Ardchattan Parish Archive held its first public event on Saturday in the Victory Hall, Benderloch, when a large collection of books, historical documents and pictures made up a display called All Our Stories. It was the first in a series of public events to be run by the group, which has been granted £9,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Group member Jill Bowis said: 'We are just starting to develop a sense of the place and get a greater appreciation of our heritage. 'We have a huge deal of literature for our collection but no catalogue of what is there, so through this project we will get archivists to train group members in how to document everything.' More than 40 members of the public joined the group at its event last Saturday. The archive will be displayed at this year's Lorn Show on August 3 but the Ardchattan Parish Archive group will be leading various public events throughout the year to encourage more participation from locals. A long-term ambition for the group is to establish a museum, with sections sited throughout the expansive parish. Another group member, Campbell Cameron, added: 'There have been some great stories of the area surfacing from this project and we want more people to get involved in this. 'We have one of the richest histories in Argyll. Kilmartin, for example, has one section of history that is brilliant and not to be underestimated but we have so much over a huge period of time.'



The Ardchattan Parish Archive group, from left: Steven Greener, Campbell Cameron, Sian Griffiths, Rob Watt, Jill Bowis and Walter Burton. Not pictured are Roddy and Caroline Campbell. 16_103ardchattan01

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AROUND £500 was raised at Oban Pipe Band's quiz in the town's Masonic Lodge, which was at capacity to accommodate all 21 teams. There was also a donation of £500 from Oban Community Council.



Community councillors Kenny MacIntyre and Marri Malloy present a £500 cheque to Oban Pipe Band Pipe Major Euan Dewar and Pipe Sergeant Iain Hurst. 15_104cheque01

Send your news from Oban and Lorn to Euan Paterson epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

Three Argyll piers to gain from £2.7 million funding package

THREE Argyll piers are set for facelifts thanks to a £2.7 million share of the Scottish Government's recently announced 'shovel ready' funding. Tobermory, Kerrera and Tarbert Loch Fyne ferry ports will benefit from an overall £205 million funding package. Maintenance work to the port at Tobermory, costing £600,000, can now begin. It will see new concrete and steelwork installed to the slipway walls as well as the masonry repointed. The Scottish Government says it has long term improvements to be made to the Isle of Kerrera ferry service and is working with Argyll and Bute Council. This includes port infrastructure

on both sides of the crossing. The second of the government's new hybrid ferry vessels, which is currently under construction at Ferguson's shipyard on the Clyde, is to be deployed on the Tarbert to Portavadie route across Loch Fyne. **Overnight** Work on the project includes adapting the port to accommodate overnight berthing of the new longer vessel. Transport minister Keith Brown said: 'Our ferry ports play a crucial role in supporting the delivery of ferry services across Scotland and are key economic drivers for some of our key industries like tourism and food and drink. 'We have already directly committed £26 million to maintaining and improving ports and harbour infrastructure since 2007 and have set out a further £73 million in our recently published ferries plan for improvements to port infrastructure over the next decade.' The exact level of funding for Tarbert harbour will depend on

the conclusion of discussions between the Tarbert Loch Fyne Harbour Authority and the Grant Management Group, which advises Scottish Ministers on pier and harbour investments. Similarly, the level of funding of works supporting the Kerrera service will depend on the final decisions on options available, said the Scottish Government.



Colonsay islanders fear the MV Lochnevis would not be able to meet the island's needs.

Colonsay casts off ferry plan option

Colonsay Community Council meeting hears concerns over Scottish Government's Final Ferries Plan proposals

COLONSAY residents have demonstrated their opposition to the Scottish Government's Final Ferries Plan with a unanimous public vote. The Colonsay Community Council meeting on January 16 was attended by 26 members of the public - almost one quarter of the island's population - and a discussion on the plan resulted in a unanimous vote to reject proposed changes to the island's ferry services. Under Transport Scotland's Ferries Plan (2013-2022), the proposals for the medium term envisage the current ro-ro vessel for the Small Isles being reassigned to provide an all year service dedicated vessel for Colonsay. Those present felt the proposed replacement boat, the MV Lochnevis, would not be able to meet the island's needs. The two boats which currently serve the island, the MV Isle of Mull and the MV Lord Of The Isles, have car-carrying capacities of 70 and 54, respectively. The likely replacement boat, the MV Lochnevis, only has the capacity to carry 16 cars. Island resident Andrew MacGregor pointed out the problems with the proposal: 'If a large articulated vehicle is on the boat, this leaves room for only three cars; there will also be more pitching with the Lochnevis.' Mike McNichol, community council secretary, said he had been told by his counterparts in Egg and Rum that the Lochnevis only successfully completed around half of its sailings during the winter and Andrew MacGregor warned that frequent cancellations could disrupt petrol, diesel and gas supplies to the island. After the discussion, there was a show of hands, which showed that no-one present thought that the proposals either represented an improvement or that they were acceptable. Community council chairwoman Sheena Nisbet was to feed these views back to Transport Scotland. A spokesman for Transport Scotland told The Oban Times: 'The recently published Ferries Plan makes clear that in the short term as a temporary step, we will introduce a service during the summer months on a Saturday from Colonsay, via Islay, to Kennacraig. 'Moving the Lochnevis to Colonsay in the medium term would provide a dedicated vessel to Colonsay to provide an increase in sailing days from four to six per week during the winter timetable period and a seven day per week service during the summer. 'In addition, it is also envisaged that the timetable for the summer period would also include one day per week where it will be possible to make a return journey to Oban, with a reasonable stop-over period, in one day. We fully recognise it is essential to ensure that vessels deployed on each route meet the needs of the community being served and are suitable for the waters in which they sail, and the operator will work closely with the community to ensure any concerns about the vessel to be deployed are fully considered and addressed.'

Bid to withdraw convicted murderer's status as registered nurse

CONVICTED murderer Malcolm Webster will be told by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) that he should have his nursing registration taken away. The council is launching a fresh bid to end the health service career of the former Lorn and Islands Hospital employee, who was jailed for 30 years last July for murdering his first wife, Claire Morris, and attempting to kill his second, Felicity Drumm, in New Zealand. The hearing is scheduled to be heard by the NMC in February. The professional body, which has already imposed a temporary sanction, insists that Webster's fitness to practice as a registered nurse has been impaired because of his crimes.

Tax return deadline

THOSE who assess their own tax and file their own returns have until the end of the month to file their accounts online or else face a fine. Self employed persons have until midnight on January 31 to complete their online self-assessments. Anyone registered as self-employed with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will need to complete the return, tell HMRC about their income and capital gains or to claim tax allowances or reliefs. Advice on completing self-assessment forms is available via the local Business Gateway team, while HMRC offers online guides to provide a step-by-step guide to filling out the forms. To access them, log on to www.hmrc.gov.uk/webinars.

Council's budget woes too complex for public to understand claims Oban businessman 'Pointless asking laymen to make such important decisions'

CONSULTING the community on Argyll and Bute Council's budget priorities is 'like asking who wants to get out of Auschwitz first', Oban's community planning group heard. The comment, from local businessman Graham MacQueen, came after the authority's executive director of development and infrastructure services Sandy Mactaggart talked to the Oban, Lorn and Isles Community Planning Group about the £40million black hole in the council's budget over the next seven years. Those members of the public in attendance were asked to respond to what services the community would like to see more or less spent on as part of the consultation, but Mr MacQueen said it was pointless asking laymen to make such important decisions. He said: 'It is a nonsense to ask us to do this. It's just like asking who wants to get out of Auschwitz first. I'd suggest the council appoint someone like Sandy to look at where the saving should be made as he is the expert.' Last week's consultation at



Graham MacQueen.

the Corran Halls was the last in a series of public consultations carried out by the council across the county, although responses can still be submitted directly to the authority. Despite Mr MacQueen's concerns, some strong views were expressed about what the council should look at. Those in attendance were split into separate groups to look at different ways to shave £6million a year from the budget, answering questions such as whether the community would rather see more low quality services or fewer high quality services. Among the opinions expressed

were that the council was inefficient and that school quality improvement officers were 'pointless', while a proposal that third sector or private companies could take on more council services needed further exploration. Oban community councillor Duncan Martin said: 'There is a feeling that the level of management is too high. Should we try to cut back on administration?' Local resident John MacKinnon warned against aggressive raising of charges to meet the shortfall. 'The council needs to look at business rates or within five years I don't see us having a town centre to visit,' he said, adding that landlords also have a role to play, with high rents not helping retailers. Chairing the meeting, councillor Louise Glen-Lee suggested discussing the subject of helping businesses more closely in future. To respond to the 2013 budget consultation, email budget@argyll-bute.gov.uk or for more details log on to the council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/budgetconsultation2013.

Oban phone scam warning

PHONE scammers have been contacting Oban residents - claiming to put an end to nuisance calls for £49. Purporting to represent a company called Safe Communications, the con-men claim their potential victim had arranged for payment some months ago, but that it had not been processed correctly. **Victim** The warning came from Oban woman Xandra Gray, who has previously fallen victim to a similar rouse. She said: 'They got quite aggressive in the end - for elderly people it really could be quite alarming. 'BT said the call probably came from outside the country and I should just ignore calls with number withheld.' She said the man had an Asian accent and phoned twice trying to ask for bank details over the past week.

'Steaming drunk' Islay man banned for five years

AN ISLAY man found with an empty bottle of whisky in his car while driving on the island has been banned from driving for five years. Duncan McPhee, of 1 Coastguard Cottages, was more than three-and-a-half times the legal limit when police found him slumped in the driver's seat in a layby on the A847 near Portmahaven on November 15. Officers on the scene described McPhee as 'steaming drunk'. The 54-year-old was also ordered to carry out 200 hours unpaid work and to attend alcohol counselling.

Argyll and Bute to clamp down on fly tipping

A CLAMPDOWN on fly tipping could see culprits fined £40,000. Fly tipping is the illegal disposal of rubbish anywhere other than an authorised waste disposal site. Argyll and Bute Council is actively seeking out offenders, who can be issued with a £50 fixed penalty notice up to a maximum penalty of £40,000 and six months in prison. You can find a list of waste disposal sites across Argyll and Bute - or report fly tipping - at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

'Facts and figures' on Oban airport to be revealed as 'days of secrets are long gone'

'THE DAYS of secrets about Oban Airport are long gone', it was claimed by a top council official at a meeting in the town last week. Speaking during a public budget consultation at the latest Oban, Lorn and Isles Community Planning Group meeting, Sandy Mactaggart, Argyll and Bute Council's executive director of infrastructure and development services, said the 'full facts and figures' regarding the airport would be presented at a future meeting. He further stated the council's desire to 'make best use' of what he called a 'real asset' to the area, adding that the authority was already looking at ways to capitalise on its potential. **Shortfall** His comments came after North Connell resident Iain MacLean put it to Mr Mactaggart that looking at the airport first would be a good way for the council to shave a significant part of the £6million annual shortfall.

'If I said revenue was £43,000 and the cost of the airport was that £1million would you dispute that?' **Under control** While admitting the cost of running the airport and the Public Service Obligation (PSO) services to the islands were 'significant', he said finances were under control, with some funding coming from Grant Aided Expenditure. He added: 'We've got a real asset there. I'm delighted we've got folks

flights out to the islands and that is a big help to those communities and their economies. That's got to be welcomed. 'The bottom line is we've got the finances in order in the last couple of years. **Asset** 'We have an asset there - it's with us now and we have to see how we can get a better return from it. 'It's certainly something I'd be delighted to come back and talk about.'

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Confusion could be blamed for BID4Oban non-payment

CONFUSION over who is due to pay towards the BID4Oban movement is being blamed for a third of the town's eligible businesses failing to pay their levy.

More than 150 of the town's 456 eligible traders failed to pay the compulsory Business Improvement District (BID) levy at the first time of asking, with some saying not meeting the bill was a conscious decision.

However, the BID4Oban company, which will use the funds to help bring greater prosperity for all local traders, says it can only succeed if the town pulls together following the majority vote to support the movement.

John Forteith, chairman of the BID4Oban board, said: 'BID4Oban expected that the first round would be challenging, there was initial confusion when bills were sent out and this is something that is new to every business.'

'We all need to pull together. By far the majority of businesses in the town are very positive about the BID.'

A letter was sent to those businesses that have so far failed to pay, warning they could potentially face court action if they maintain their stance. BID manager, Nic Jones, said: 'I do know businesses were individually contacted but I'm very aware times are very difficult for businesses in the town, the BID itself will aim to improve that as much as we can - all businesses will reap the rewards.'

'I'm sincerely hoping the council won't have to take further action and the letter will jog a lot of people's memories.'

One businessman who refused to pay and voted against the plan said: 'This isn't a case of people forgetting. Businesses don't want to pay.'

'One reason is the period of time we are living in. Money is so tight right now it is unbelievable, businesses are hanging on by their fingertips.'

Blockbuster trade-off as buyer sought

OBAN'S branch of Blockbuster will continue to trade for the time being while a buyer for the ill-fated company is sought.

The film rental store went into administration on January 16 and at the weekend announced the closure of 23 stores throughout Scotland.

The George Street store is among 43 to continue to trade for the time being.

A spokeswoman for Blockbuster said: 'We don't have any more detail with regards specific shops at the moment. Stores are still open for trade as normal.'

She added there was no timetable for closures of stores at this stage.



Pictured at the newly refurbished war memorial are volunteers Bert MacBrayne and Hugh MacCorquodale. 16_103memorial01

Help for Heroes gain from Oban war memorial campaign fund

EX-SERVICEMEN who joined forces with *The Oban Times* 17 years ago to refurbish Oban's war memorial are this week donating left-over funds from their appeal to Help for Heroes.

Campaign

Oban's previous Royal British Legion Scotland (RBL) committee and *The Oban Times* led a fundraising campaign between 1996 and 1998 to improve the state of the memorial on Oban's Esplanade, after appeals to Argyll and Bute Council fell on deaf ears.

Last week First Minister Alex Salmond announced a

£1million fund to clean and restore Scotland's memorials in readiness for next year's 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War.

Servicemen's charity

And following the creation of the Scottish Government's Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund it was decided the remaining £3,561 in the Oban war memorial bank account should be donated to the servicemen's charity.

Former RBL Oban chairman Bert MacBrayne said: 'We considered the war memorial to be in a bad state of disrepair but

the council did not agree.

'We then asked a firm of consultant engineers to carry out a survey and they confirmed what we had believed.

'We decided to raise the money off our own backs and were helped by *The Oban Times*.

'Within two years we had raised the money and carried out the work ourselves but without *The Oban Times*' help it would have taken a lot longer.

'Because the work on the memorial has been made to last and with the announcement of the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund, we thought it

was fitting to give the remaining funds to help those in active service today.'

During the campaign £11,705 was raised thanks mainly to donations from *Oban Times* readers from all over the UK.

Master stone mason Hugh MacCorquodale, Mr MacBrayne and committee secretary John MacCallum oversaw the repair work, which included pointing, letter work, cleaning and covering the memorial in sealant to protect it against the weather.

The volunteers also built a wall around it.

£80m investment in Oban and Lorn over next 10 years gets cautious welcome

'As it stands there are a lot of individual interests in Oban Bay but no single port authority'

ASPIRATIONAL plans to invest more than £80m in the Oban and Lorn area in the next 10 years have been cautiously welcomed by councillors.

At a specially convened Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee last Wednesday, councillors heard plans for the proposed Lorn Arc project, which required an estimated total investment of £46,450,000.

Council planners outlined how that money would be spent over the next 10-year period, adding that £6.9m of CHORD money and a potential £30m invested in a new Oban High School could also be available during that period.

Roughly half of the Lorn Arc funding (£23,750,000) would be applied for through the tax incremental finance (TIF) scheme, a Scottish Government loan used for economic development, which would be paid back over 25 years through additional business rates and port fees generated by the council, pending a successful business case.

Robert Pollock, the council's head of economic development, highlighted potential marine development sites at Barcaldine's Marine Resource Centre and in Connel, at the west entrance to Shore Road.

EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by EUAN PATERSON

epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

'There needs to be better engagement with the community.'

He said: 'We have done a lot of work with Scottish Power Renewables and Scottish and Southern Energy to find out their requirements. The upshot of that is there is a significant opportunity for operations and maintenance to be situated in the Lorn area.'

The TIF plan identifies a total £10.75m spend at Barcaldine to improve access and provide an industrial port to cater for 'offshore renewable facilities'.

Sandy Mactaggart, executive director for development and infrastructure, explained how £6m of TIF money could fund an extension to the North Pier in Oban, extending the berthing area, create more car parking and improve utilities at the pier.

However, the plan states any development should be linked with the CHORD plan to improve the North Pier.

Mr Mactaggart added: 'As it stands there are a lot of individual interests in Oban Bay but no single port authority. I had a meeting with various groups with an interest in the pier and one of the uniting factors was, on safety terms, to forge a single port authority.'

Further projects outlined in the TIF plan include regenerating the area of 'Oban south', an area south of the town centre, and upgrading Oban Airport.

The report was welcomed by councillors, who had a warning that the council had to 'get it right' because of them amount of money involved.

Councillor Iain MacDonald told the planners: 'There is a lot of work going on here and the likes of Oban Airport is a bit of a mystery. We need to get this information into the community so they have an understanding of what is going on.'

'There are huge concerns within the community about what this all means and I am sure it is down to people not understanding where you are going with it, because at this stage it is all very academic.'

'I now know where you are going with it and I believe you will get there but there needs to be better engagement with communities.'

Tobermory Harbour Association moves towards single port authority status

IN ITS 30th anniversary year, the Tobermory Harbour Association (THA) has taken the first major step to become the single harbour authority for the town.

'Next level'

At a recent public meeting in Tobermory, Lorna Spencer, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd's (CMAL) director of harbours said she had made recommendations that the move should take place, adding that she had found THA to be well organised and professional and, in her opinion, had the ability to take Tobermory Harbour to the 'next level'.

However for CMAL and Transport Scotland to work

with THA, the local body would have to acquire Modern Trust Port status, a process that is underway. THA would also have to successfully attain a Harbour Empowerment Order.

These legislative powers would protect the business as a community based company.

THA chairman Brian Swinbanks said: 'We are delighted with this news because it is an historical fact that Tobermory has never had statutory authorities in place, whereas the likes of Oban and Mallaig did.'

'The outside world is beginning to encroach on us, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the need for port security, and we are dealing as

the harbour authority but without the recognition of one.

'Under these changes the community would have the rights associated with any harbour authority, meaning we would have more powers.'

At the meeting, councillor Mary-Jean Devon called on the public to ask questions and raise issues to ensure that THA could deal with concerns and move things forward. Brian Swinbanks endorsed this, urging anyone who has any questions, or hears anyone else with issues, to contact THA.

No objections were raised to THA starting the process of moving toward becoming a Modern Trust Port.



Julie Fowlis, Kirsteen MacDonald, Christine Primrose, Mary Ann Kennedy and Maighread Stewart perform at the SMO@40 concert.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig celebrates with 40th anniversary concert

'It was a night for joy and thankfulness'

GLASGOW City Halls was jam-packed on Saturday night for Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's special 40th anniversary concert, SMO@40, at the Celtic Connections festival.

A host of musical stars with ties to the Gaelic college on Sleat were onstage to celebrate its contribution to the language and Scottish culture.

Musicians and singers included Gaelic singer Julie Fowlis, renowned Irish pianist and composer Professor Micheal O Suilleabhain, fiddler Alasdair Fraser, Fergie MacDonald, Christine Primrose, Margaret Stewart, James Graham, Allan MacDonald, Decker Forrest, Mary Ann Kennedy, Dàimh, Allan Henderson, Iain MacDonald, Angus Nicholson, Ingrid Henderson, Andrew MacPherson, Murdo Cameron, Alasdair White, Eilidh MacFadyen, Natalie Haas, Niall Keegan, Sandra Joyce and Ken-

neth Edge. SMO chairman, Sheriff Roddy John MacLeod, said afterwards: 'Tonight has been a terrific night here in Glasgow. We knew it would be because what you had here was a stellar line-up of many of the best musicians in Scotland - and some from abroad - who had all wanted to come together and give of their talents in celebration of what Sabhal Mòr Ostaig means to them.'

'It was a night for joy and thankfulness. Joy that the College has reached this milestone in such robust good health and thankfulness for the many who strove so hard over the years to make that happen.'

'Many of those were with us here tonight, many couldn't be and some, sadly, have passed away.'

'On behalf of Sabhal Mòr, our deepest gratitude to them all.'

Parking idea could reinvigorate Oban town centre

COULD a change in the way on-street parking is charged for help reinvigorate Oban's town centre?

At the Oban, Lorn and Isles planning committee in Oban's Corran Halls last Wednesday, Denise Willis, Lismore, suggested making the first hour of parking free to encourage people to stop in the town and visit local retailers. Charges for parking time thereafter would be higher than existing rates to ensure the amount taken balances overall. She said: 'It would go some way to addressing the problem of people not using the shops - it's already done all over Scotland.'

'It may be that the costs to do it are insurmountable but I think it's worth looking at.'

Argyll and Bute Council's executive director of development and infrastructure services, Sandy Mactaggart, is to look into the proposal.

He said: 'It's a very good suggestion. Parking is something we're working on now. The council in December gave me the green light to begin the process of decriminalising parking so we can enforce parking ourselves on George Street.'

'It is clear our town centres are changing and parking is an important factor in helping to better the economy. What we want is lots of throughput - we don't want lots of people parking there all day. We need the throughput to make it easier for people to stop and shop.'

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Morvern Lines

THERE is an intriguing statement in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland dated 1791, that no rats would live in Morvern.

The writer, the Rev Norman Macleod of Finarray (1745-1824), based this remark on local tradition and recorded an instance of them coming ashore in great numbers from ships anchored in Loch Aline.

According to Macleod rats were so numerous it was thought they would soon over-run the whole parish until one year for no apparent reason, they disappeared completely.

Fifty years on, Norman's son John (1801-1882), who succeeded his father as parish minister, wrote in the next Statistical Account that rats were still absent.

The movement of rats from one area to another is well known. In the parish of Gairloch there is a place called Bealach na h-Imrich where rats were seen moving from one side of the peninsula to the other.

Martin Martin in his 'Description of the Western Isles' recorded around 1700 that a great swarm of them found their way onto the Island of Rona and destroyed all the corn which, in conjunction with the arrival of some pirates, wiped out the entire human population.

Although the Macleods, whose incumbencies in Morvern lasted for more than a century, found the topic worth commenting on in two important national surveys, they offered little in the way of an explanation other than a hint of the mysterious when John, an eminent Gaelic scholar and folklorist, cautiously suggested that 'others might exercise their ingenuity in accounting for their absence'.

There is little doubt this is an oblique reference to rhyming rats to death, or causing them to migrate by incantation which, as an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, he was no doubt reluctant to admit existed.

A belief in this method was common in the past and references to it can be found throughout Gaelic literature. One of the longest and most interesting was composed at Barr in Morvern, some time before 1870 by John MacDougall (1820-1891) of Inversanda, Ardgor.

It is called 'Eachdraidh Agus Imrich Radan' and describes in great detail thousands of rats coming ashore in Montrose from a ship that had been in Russia and making their way through Morvern to the island of Mull.



THE FOLLOWING appeared in the short-lived 'Fort William News' in August 1899 and is interesting not only as record of a long-forgotten spot but for the literary style in which it was reported. Unfortunately the correspondent is not known.

'In consequence of the introduction of a house-to-house delivery of letters in the Morven (sic) district, one of the most primitive Post Offices in the United Kingdom has lately fallen into desuetude.

It never received the sanction of the Post Master-General, nor was it amenable to any of the stringent rules governing other offices.

Situated high among the lonely hills, half-way between Drimmin and Barr, and about three miles from the nearest habitation, it consisted of a simple slit in the rock, closed up by a nicely fitting stone.

In the good old times, and until quite recently, when any letters for Barr and neighbouring places, came to Drimmin Post Office, they were carried by the nearest shepherd or crofter to this convenient office in the rock.

Here they were left perhaps for days until there would happen to come the way some other shepherd or crofter who might feel inclined to deliver them at their destination.

The arrangement was generally found to work very satisfactorily, and, as far as can be ascertained, no missive ever got lost or irreparably damaged at this old-fashioned Post Office in the rock.'

Iain Thornber.

Women failing to respond to cancer screening offer in NHS Highland area

NEARLY a fifth of women in the NHS Highland area invited for cervical cancer screening fail to take up the offer.

The figure was revealed by the health board as part of a campaign to encourage more women to come forward for the test as part of Cervical Cancer Prevention Week.

While participation in the screening programme in NHS Highland is above the national target of 80 per cent, it is only just.

According to public health medicine consultant, Dr Rob Henderson, cervical cancer screening can pick up early changes in the cervix which are

associated with an increased chance of developing the disease. These changes can be treated before any problems develop.

He said: 'Women may have these changes without experiencing any symptoms, however it is possible to treat these changes, meaning many cervical cancers can be

prevented before they have a chance to develop.

'It is estimated that screening and treating early changes in the cervix prevents around three quarters of cervical cancers developing.'

Dr Henderson also stressed that while many young women have been vaccinated against the

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the vaccine does not protect against all forms of cervical cancer.

Further details on the screening programme can be had by contacting NHS Inform by phoning 0800 22 44 88 or at the website www.nhsinform.co.uk.



Community volunteers gather round the new quick-access box as Mary Colthart, left, and Lorraine Drysdale practise using the defibrillator. 15_104appinhall1

Appin community defibrillator access problems solved by rapid response box

THE CHANCES of surviving a heart attack in the Appin area increased dramatically this week after a new external store was erected for the community defibrillator.

Mounted on the wall of Appin Hall, the rapid access box could make a world of difference for anyone wishing to use the equipment, as a response within the first five minutes of an attack

can be the difference between life and death.

Previously, the automatic defibrillator was kept inside the hall, something that didn't provide instant access 24 hours a day.

Appin Medical Fund

Now, however, not only can the equipment be accessed via a password on the box - either provided by one of the

local volunteers or by 999 call handlers, but a key is accessible by a break-glass shield.

Funding for the £875 box as well as the light and sign alerting people to its presence came from the Appin Medical Fund. The defibrillator is supported by the Arrhythmia Alliance and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Local doctor Mary Drijfhout said: 'The first five minutes

after a person collapses are the most important. Here, it takes an ambulance 25 minutes to arrive and waiting for an ambulance could cost a life.

'While we had the defibrillator before it was stored on a shelf in the kitchen which wasn't a good place.'

'This new box means it is in a good place to be accessed at any time.'

Kilmallie Community Council shortlisted for award

KILMALLIE Community Council's (KCC) free quarterly newsletter has been shortlisted in the community newspaper category at the Highlands and Islands Media Awards.

Kilmallie Community News is one of only three publications in the frame for the accolade.

Michael Russell, Cabinet Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, will announce the winner at the awards ceremony in the Drumossie Hotel in Inverness on February 1.

KCC chairman Maggie Mackenzie said the nomination was 'a great achievement' for such a new, small, local enterprise.

She added: 'Together with our website, our noticeboards and our smart new suggestion boxes at Corpach and Banavie, our newsletter hugely helps our two-way communications with our whole community. We couldn't manage this without sponsorship from a number of our generous local businesses.'

Their editorial team of Christine Hutchison, Jan MacLugash, Kshama Wilmington and Mandy Ketchin produce the newsletter as well as writing articles.

A growing band of volunteers help with delivery to every address in Kilmallie.

The other two nominations in category are Claire Divine for the Black Isle Chatterbox and Hugh MacInnes with Fios from the Ness and Westside areas of the Isle of Lewis.

Chef remanded in custody after allegedly biting man's finger

AN OBAN chef has been remanded in custody after denying biting a man's finger and punching him in the face.

David Francis Killin, 30, of Flat 2C, 3 Glenshellach Terrace, appeared from custody at the town's Sheriff Court on Monday, accused of committing the assault to injury at premises in Stevenson Street, Oban on Monday January 21.

He was denied bail because of his criminal record and is due to stand trial next month.

Rescue team called to The Cobbler

ARROCHAR Mountain Rescue Team lifted a casualty off The Cobbler, also known as Ben Arthur, near Arrochar, last Saturday afternoon.

The casualty, a 46-year-old woman, had suffered a suspected fracture to her right ankle.

Arrested man allegedly had cocaine

COCAINE was allegedly found on a 24-year-old man who first attracted police attention by conducting himself in a disorderly manner on Oban's Stevenson Street in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The man has been charged with attempting to enter licensed premises while drunk and with resisting arrest.

Possession of ecstasy tablets

A MAN detained at Oban Police Station under the Misuse of Drugs Act was allegedly found to be in possession of a quantity of ecstasy tablets.

The 26-year-old was arrested last Friday and a report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Woman arrested in Oban disturbance

A 34-YEAR-OLD woman has been arrested in Oban's Queen's Park Place for conducting herself in a disorderly manner.

The incident happened at 12.20am on Sunday.

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Prizewinning baby Sean

YOUNG Sean Black is the happiest baby around, as that glorious smile will confirm.

Nine-month-old Sean, from Gribon on Mull, was the lucky baby who scooped a prize in a recent Boots portrait promotion in Oban. The photograph of Sean was chosen as the best portrait of an under five taken in the store.

Sean, who received a certificate, will now go forward to a national final in March.



New arrivals at Christmas

MAKING friends with a pair of twin Charolais lambs born at Lochnell Farm, Benderloch, on Christmas Day, is the niece of the owner, seven-year-old Diane MacLean.

The lambs form part of a flock run by Mary MacLean, Lochnell, better known as an outstanding breeder of Highland cattle.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

20 years ago

Thursday January 7 1993

GUSTS of up to 109 mph saw a stormy start to the New Year on the West Coast, forcing power cables down and disrupting ferry services.

Dr Tony Hartley, of Skye, measures wind speeds and took a recording of 109 mph at 2.14pm on Monday - the highest recorded since he started in 1988.

The Kyle/Kyleakin ferry was halted for

almost eight hours and had to take refuge from the storm at the railway pier, as it was unable to berth at either slipway.

And in Sconser, a tourist, who was taking photographs of sea spray, was blown into the sea.

The tourist, whose identity is unknown, was pulled ashore by a friend.

The Raasay ferry was blown off its

moorings on Sunday but there was no damage. Trees were blown down at Armadale, breaking power cables and blocking the road for an hour. Power cables at Braes on Skye were also blown down in the severe wind and a house conservatory was completely destroyed.

Further south, winds reaching 100 mph were recorded in Balvicar, Seil Island.



Daniel gets on his bike

EIGHT-year-old Daniel Cassell's number came up on the wheel of fortune when the young cyclist won safety gear in a Christmas draw.

Daniel's mum Linda, of Soroba, Oban, bought him a 'Free Spirit Novia Scotia' mountain bike for Christmas. His name went into a prize draw at Oban Cycles in Craigard Road and he was the winner of a safety helmet, a set of lights and a warning siren.

Left: Daniel with Oban Cycles' manager Kevin Whitehead and his mum. 101twenty02



Lets all do the charity conga

LONG 'snakes' of pupils bumped and jived their way around Portree High School on their last day of term to raise money for charity.

Lined up in their houses or year groups, the first to fourth years took part in an annual conga to raise funds for Alzheimers Disease.

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West coast lifeboats record busy 2012

Mallaig Lifeboat Station has busiest year in five years while Campbeltown lifeboat spends 765 hours at sea

WEST coast lifeboat crews were among the busiest in the country in 2012, according to figures released on Tuesday by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

A record number of people were rescued by RNLI volunteers in Scotland last year; 1,055 people were rescued in 2012, compared with the previous highest number of 1,026 in 2006.

Campbeltown
The crew at Campbeltown could claim to be the most industrious after clocking up more than 765 hours at sea, including training time – the most in the whole of Scotland, despite having only a quarter of the launches seen in Broughty Ferry, which had the highest number of callouts, but only 638 hours at sea.

Oban Lifeboat had the fourth highest number of callouts in Scotland behind Broughty Ferry, Queensferry and Troon. The Oban crew was launched 49 times in 2012, rescuing 54 people.

Mallaig Lifeboat Station had its busiest year for at least five years in 2012, when the crew attended 39 launches. This was the eighth highest figure in Scotland last year and was nine more than the previous year. Mallaig lifeboat rescued 54 people last year, which was more than the previous two years (2010 and 2011) combined.

Tobermory had 13 callouts in 2012, the same number of callouts as Aberdeen, but rescued 40 people in the process. The figures are a huge jump from

2011 when the Tobermory crew rescued nine people from 10 launches.

Tobermory also had the second highest incidence of rescues for under-18 casualties, behind Queensferry, which had a total of 163 people rescued.

However, Tobermory's unusual under-18 figure can be accounted for in one incident, when a group of young sailors on training boats got into difficulty off the south tip of Iona.

The crew on Islay also had a high number of rescues in relation to the number of callouts in 2012. The Hebrides rescued 24 people from only 13 launches, compared with 2011 when the lifeboat rescued 10 people from 22 launches.

Portree lifeboat was launched 12 times and rescued 18 people in 2012, which is more often than in 2011 but well below the previous high of 2009 when 41 people were rescued on 21 launches.

Tighnabruich had 11 rescues from 18 launches, Arran had eight rescues from 15 launches and Barra had four rescues from eight launches, which are typical figures for these stations.

The Kyle of Lochalsh Lifeboat Station was one of those to buck the national trend, having its quietest year since 2008. The Kyle crew launched 11 times, rescuing three people in 2012, compared with 15 rescues from 14 launches the previous year.

The RNLI's newest Scottish station, at Leverburgh in the Hebrides, had a busy year. The



HM Coastguard search and rescue helicopter from Stornoway took part in a joint exercise by Oban and Tobermory lifeboat crews last weekend. Photo: Sam Jones/RNLI

Missing climbers found near Bridge of Orchy

WHILE rescue services from Lochaber were dealing with the fatal climbing incident in Glencoe, Oban Mountain Rescue Team was despatched to help find missing climbers near Bridge of Orchy.

Strathclyde Police Mountain Rescue Team and the force helicopter joined in the search, as did the search and rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth.

The emergency call was made at around 7pm when two climbers became separated from their group and got lost on Beinn an Dothaid.

The two casualties, 62-year-old man and a 58-year-old woman, had managed to find shelter in a mountain hut and were eventually airlifted by the search and rescue helicopter and taken to the rendezvous point at Achalader Farm around 9.30pm.

Oban Camera Club select winner

OBAN Camera Club's popular landscape/seascape competition attracted an entry of 61 images and it was the task of visiting judge Ron Bell, LRPS, from Galashiels Camera Club to select the winner for the Gordon Sellars Trophy.

The best print was an image of Connel Bridge from Eric Shaw, while the best digital image and the overall winner of the trophy was Paddle on the Beach from David Williams, who also received a gift voucher courtesy of Oban Camera Centre.

Oban Camera Club meets each Monday at 7.30pm in the Regent Hotel and new members are always welcome.

Three men charged after Oban street police incident

A MAN who allegedly kicked a police officer after challenging him and his colleagues to a fight, has been charged with assault.

The 19-year-old is reported to have been shouting and swearing outside a pub in Oban town centre and, when approached by officers, challenged them to a fight.

He is accused of struggling violently with the officers and kicking one of them on the leg.

Another man, aged 43, allegedly attempted to prevent the officers arresting the younger man and he has been charged with obstructing officers in the course of their duty.

A third man who became involved has been fined for a breach of the peace by way of a fixed penalty.

Kilmore lunch date

A LUNCH was held in Kilmore Hall on Saturday, January 19 for the over 60's of Kilmore and Kilbride district when 26 locals enjoyed a haggis and neeps lunch followed by biscuits and cheese, cake and teas, all served by volunteers Fiona, Jane and Mary. Many thanks go to all helpers and raffle prizes donated making it a very successful community function held in the newly refurbished hall.

Transport Minister's independence plea to Lochaber businesses

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

SNP MINISTER for Transport and Veterans Keith Brown has made an impassioned plea in Fort William for a 'Yes' vote in next year's independence referendum.

Addressing Lochaber business representatives in the Alexandra Hotel, Mr Brown refuted claims that Scotland would be too poor, too small and too isolated to stand successfully on her own.

His message appeared to be well received at the Fort William Chamber of Commerce debate, the second of a series of eight being staged in the run up to the big poll.

Before Mr Brown spoke, chairman for the evening, local businessman Stewart MacLean, asked how many present were undecided. Some 15 people



Keith Brown address the audience at the Fort William Chamber of Commerce debate as chairman for the evening Stewart MacLean looks on.

raised their hands – but that number had dropped to seven when Mr MacLean asked the same question at the end.

However, as chamber chairman

Don Hind pointed out in his closing remarks, which Mr Brown had convinced some doubters to vote remained an open question.

During the two-hour debate, Mr Brown suggested Tory plans for a possible referendum on EU membership after the next General Election posed a deadly threat to Scottish interests.

A 'no' vote in autumn 2014, he suggested, would not only deal a blow to Scottish self confidence, but raised the prospect of the country being dragged out of Europe on the coat tails of English backing for an EU pull out.

That scenario, he told the audience of around 40, was entirely possible because of rampant Europhobia south of the border – evidenced by the rise of UKIP – a phenomenon almost entirely absent in Scotland.

Glenmuig Inn owner Steve MacFarlane asked: 'How do

you square the circle of taking independence from Westminster yet giving up sovereignty by trying to remain within the EU?'

Mr Brown replied: 'In the EU we are pooling and sharing sovereignty but in the UK we are not – we are having control exercised over us.'

'We would have a lot more say in the EU. Ireland offends nobody – they are everybody's friend but they need to get what they want through an alliance with other countries.'

'I think we can influence the EU more than we can influence Westminster. You do give up part of that sovereignty but I do think it is a price worth paying for what you get back in return.'

Chief secretary to the treasury Danny Alexander will make the case for a 'No' vote at the chamber's next independence debate on March 29. As *The Oban Times* went to press the venue was yet to be decided.

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SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Will your child be five years of age before 28 February 2014? Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

The next school session starts on 14 August 2013. Children who will be five on or before 28 February 2014 are eligible to be enrolled for Primary 1. Enrolment will take place week commencing 28 January 2013.

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 28 January – 1 February 2013	Local Primary School	Child's birth certificate

Am bi an leanabhagaibh còig bliadhna a dh'aoisro 28 Gearran 2014? Bidh? Ma-thà, tha an t-àmann an clàrachadhairsonnasgoile. Bidhanathsheiseansgoile a' tòiseachadh air 14 Lùnastal 2013. Faodaidh clann a bhios còig air no roan 28 Gearran 2014a bhith air an clàrachadhairson P.1. Bidhan t-seachdainn clàrachaidh a' tòiseachadh air 28 Faoilleach 2013.

Ma thasibhairson 's gun tèid an leanabhagaibh gus goileileiseach a' bhun-sgoil ionadail, feumaidh sibh an clàrachadh a' bhun-sgoil ionadail a toiseach, agus iarrtas a chur a-steach dèidh sin gu Oifis Foghlaim, Cultair agus Spòrs na Sgìre.

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PORTREE

PORTREE Gaelic parents' group Comann nam Parant Port Rìgh has been awarded £8,272 from the Communities and Family Fund of the Big Lottery. The grant will fund rent, staff training, refreshments, arts and crafts materials, Gaelic language tutor fees, play equipment, Gaelic books, and an information day to let more people know about the service. The group gives parents and children the opportunity to learn and develop Gaelic language skills through play. Local MSP Dave Thompson congratulated Faye MacNeil of CnP Port Rìgh on the 'fantastic news'. 'Gaelic is a beautiful language and we must do all we can to keep this part of our heritage alive,' he said. 'At such an early age, learning a new language is often a lot easier than it is for older children and adults. The ability to learn through fun is a great way for the language to be passed on to the younger generation.'



Barra dancers step out in style at annual show

Dancers from the Jane Douglas School of Dance brought a touch of winter magic to the island recently with their annual Barra Danna Christmas Show. Fifty boys and girls aged 3-17 performed Highland and choreographed favourites with a festive flair to a full house of family and friends, also showing off their piping, fiddle and piano talents. There was no rest for the 13 older dancers who later joined the Vatersay Boys on stage at the Barrowlands in Glasgow for a well received concert.

KILMELFORD

MELFORD Ukuleles are looking for more members to join their happy band, which ranges in age from 10 to 80 years. The band meets in Kilmelford Village Hall on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm when instruction is given by Peter Salmond. The band leader said: 'The beauty about the ukulele is that you don't require to know how to read music - but you do need to have a good singing voice!' 'Most ukuleles are inexpensive and can be bought locally. The classes in Kilmelford cost only £3 per person or £4 per couple and children are free of charge if accompanied by a parent. This way, parent and child can practise together at home.' Peter Salmond formed the band two years ago and last year had 12 registered members, including a mother and daughter from Taynuilt. Melford Ukuleles have been invited to play at several locations locally and they are hoping to increase the size of the band. Anyone interested in joining should email Peter on petersalmond@btinternet.com or attend the classes which start again next Wednesday, January 30, when a spare ukulele is normally available to try.

INVERGARRY

INVERGARRY will hold its annual Burns supper in Glangarry Community Hall tomorrow night at 8pm. Dancing to David Bowen.

SLEAT

THE FIRST of the 2013 Skye and Lochalsh local food fairs will be held at the Stables, Clan Donald Skye, on Saturday between 11am and 3pm. The fairs will be held every month throughout the season.

STRATHFILLAN

A SINGLE Scottish police force won't result in a degradation in service in the Strathfillan area, the community council has been told. Chief Superintendent Davie Flynn of Central Scotland Police wrote to the organisation this month to allay fears that the new system would result in less local accountability and focus from the new force. CI Flynn said one of his 'key priorities' in managing the changeover is ensuring the same level of service remains, while claiming the new Police and

Communities Together (PACT) model, which will see communities and elected members have a say in setting local policing priorities, will actually increase local accountability. 'I am pleased that you have an excellent relationship with local police and in line with my response to your previous questions there is no reason whatsoever that this should change,' he said. 'Though Police Scotland will be a national body, the commitment remains that local policing should be tailored to local community needs and as it has clearly worked for the past 30 years then I see no motivation to change that.'

Meanwhile, Central Scotland Police is to support moves to have a 20mph speed limit in the Mansfield area of Tyndrum as opposed to the 40mph limit that currently exists. Chief Superintendent Davie Flynn of Central Scotland Police wrote to the organisation this month to allay fears that the new system would result in less local accountability and focus from the new force. CI Flynn said one of his 'key priorities' in managing the changeover is ensuring the same level of service remains, while claiming the new Police and

CRIANLARICH

LOWER Station Yard in Crianlarich is set for yet another facelift after the Woodland Trust awarded a bundle of 450 trees and shrubs for the area. Crianlarich into Action recently cleared the yard with help from local volunteers and

hope the new shrubbery will help brighten the area further. Most of the plants given by the trust are fruiting, with berries such as rosehips and sloe berries to be grown, and includes one Royal Oak sapling. Delivery is expected in March, with a volunteer day needed for planting. Anyone interested in helping out should contact Alan Smailes.

STORNOWAY

THE STORNOWAY Library coffee shop will be closed from Monday January 28 to Saturday February 9 inclusive for essential upgrades to the kitchen.

MORAR

MORAR woman Dierdre Roberts has joined the ranks of Lochaber people publishing a book. Bound for Valparaiso: The Letters of Patrick J Murray comprises a fascinating collection of letters sent by her seafaring grandfather from his years on small coasters trading up the west coast of Scotland, then on deep-water full rigged ships and steamers

travelling to the Americas and Australia. Patrick took part in a mutiny, survived the dangers of a revolution in Brazil and made his way ashore after being shipwrecked no less than three times. His first shipwreck was at the rapids of Lora near Oban, where the ship was completely lost. One of the illustrations Dierdre uses is an extract from *The Oban Times* from 120 years ago. Publisher is the Mallaig Heritage Centre.

LISMORE

IT WAS with shock and great sadness that islanders heard of the recent death of Fay Carmichael after a short illness. Deepest sympathy goes to her husband and young family and her wide circle of relatives and friends. Fay was an active and talented member at the heart of the community and will be greatly missed. ISLANDERS celebrated the life of John Crossan with his family and friends in the Parish Church following his death on January 9 at the Lynn of Lorne. THE THIRD session of Ulpian

Gaelic lessons starts on January 21 and will run until Easter. The two classes a week, tutored by Ann MacLean Fleming, are popular as is the weekly Gaelic café which, during the winter, will be on Tuesday. Everyone welcome. THE MUSEUM is closed during the winter but the café is open every Tuesday in January and February serving lunch and snacks from noon till 3pm.

ACHARACLE

ACHARACLE Primary School will be appearing on BBC Alba on Tuesday night when they line up in Gaelic game show *Gluesta* against Iochdar Primary School from South Uist. Acharacle team members Mirran Lindsay and Fern MacGillivray, together with guest Ewen Henderson, will line up against Iochdar's Lennon MacInnes and Calum MacDonald and their guest Fiona Rennie. The programme will be broadcast at 6.35pm and be repeated on Thursday at the same time.

SKYE

SABHAL Mòr Ostaig (SMO), the Gaelic college on Skye, is to give people the chance to

learn how to create, produce and record their own radio programme. On completion of the course, students will then have an opportunity to broadcast their programmes on a local or community radio station. The first course will be held on February 16-17, and a further two weekend courses will be run on March 9-10 and April 20-21. Arthur Donald, artist in residence at SMO, is co-ordinating the courses. He said: 'I am very happy that the support from Bòrd Na Gàidhlig will allow this exciting opportunity to take place at SMO. 'It is open to anyone with an interest in radio.'

KILLIN

INTEREST in Killin is growing, if the community's website traffic is anything to go by. More than 105,000 unique visitors dropped by the killin.info website in 2012, 38,000 more than the previous record of 67,747 in 2009. The site has also relaunched its popular live webcam, which shows off the village's most famous asset, the Falls of Dochart, in all its glory. It is hoped the webcam will help boost visitor numbers further in 2013.

Around the Rurals

Inverlochry

AT THE January meeting of Inverlochry WRI all New Year resolutions went out the window when Irene Pinkett, demonstrator for the evening, set her table. Out came chocolate, butter, cream, sugar, strawberries and lots of other tasty items. With the aid of her trusty food mixer, Irene proceeded to produce a wonderful selection of beautiful sweets and desserts. She then invited the ladies to taste. After tea, Cathie Stevenson judged the competitions. Results: Fancy bracelet - 1 Kathy O'Shaughnessy; 2 Irene Pinkett; 3 May Webb. Tablet - 1 Beatrice Gibson; 2 Elizabeth Murray; 3 Irene Pinkett. The president then thanked Irene and the tea ladies, Elizabeth Rennie and Cathie MacDonald.

Taynuilt

TAYNUILT SWRI president Jessie Servant welcomed 18 members and one visitor to the meeting on January 9, held in Taynuilt Village Hall. Demonstrators for the evening were members Judith Day and Alice Campbell. Judith showed the group how to make chocolate truffles, whilst recounting amusing and informative tales of past experiences of truffle making. Alice stepped up next to demonstrate the making of fruit fondants, giving many tips on sweet making for competitions. Ann MacCallum gave a vote of thanks to the ladies for sharing their skills. Hostesses for the evening were Mary Morse and Tracey Sage. Competition: Lemon Curd - 1 Tracey Sage; 2 Marlene Stanners; 3 Jessie MacFarlane.

Arisaig

THE ARISAIG branch of the SWRI met on January 17 in the Astley Hall. Award winning pharmacist Gillian Cameron gave an informative talk on the work of a modern pharmacy. Competitions: Fruit cordial - 1 Anne Cameron; 2 Rose MacEachen; 3 Vera MacDonald. Small trinket box - 1 Helen Lamb; 2 June Cairns; Daphne Heaps. The raffle was won by Vera MacDonald.



The cast of the Easdale Island pantomime, Peter 'Gok Wan' Pan. Photograph by Colin McPherson.

'Easdale Very Amateur Dramatics' panto fun

THE ANNUAL Easdale Island panto took place on January 3 and 'Easdale Very Amateur Dramatics' entertained as always an extremely enthusiastic audience in the island's community hall. The panto chosen to kick-start 2013 was Peter 'Gok Wan' Pan and in typical Easdale tradition was performed with a fair amount of cast improvisation along with local jokes and lots of audience participation. Entry is always free to the one-off performance, however donations to escape the mayhem are always welcomed and the appreciative audience raised £272 for the island charity Eilean Eisdéal.

WYVEX MEDIA Photo of the year
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JUST one week remains for amateur photographers to get their entries in for our Photo of the Year competition – and the standard has been consistently climbing. Submissions must be in by 6pm on January 31, with the finalists to be revealed in February.

You can still vote for your favourite entry by sending us a text to 88010 using the key word POY followed by the code beneath your picture of choice. For example, if the number below your photograph is 123, your message would read POY 123.

You can also vote by completing the voting form on page 13. Photocopies will not be accepted. To submit your own photographs for the competition, log on to our website at www.obantimes.co.uk/poy Please note that photographs must be large enough to print.



Alison Clements, Tarbert: West Port Beach, 26th July 2012. T04alisonclements1no 053



Eilidh Livingstone, Taynuilt: Sunset over Loch Etive from Kelly's Pier, Taynuilt. T04eilidhlivingstone1no 054



Kim Tapper, Glencoe: Autumn colours at Glencoe Lochan. T04kimtapper1no 055



Morag Irving, tighnabruaich: Sunrise over the Kyles of Bute. T04moragirving1no 056



Milena Kusnierova, Oban: Atlantic Bridge's mirror, summer, early afternoon. T04milena kusnierovav1no 057



Mary McIsaac, Tarbert: Peacock butterfly on Michaelmas daisies in autumn at Glenbarr. T04marymcsaac1no 058

Church service prayers for victims

THE REV Moira Herkes led a service at St Munda's Church in nearby Ballachulish the day after the accident.

She told the congregation: 'We include in our prayers thoughts for the deceased in yesterday's tragic accident on the mountain and their families.'

'Somehow life must continue. We accept the challenges of nature as part of our living. We also pray for the people who are injured, both physically and emotionally.'

'We give our thanks to those prepared to risk their lives in the saving of others, and do so with a sense of commitment and through thinking beyond themselves.'

The sole survivor said all the group loved the mountains and were experienced winter walkers.

Thanks

Expressing 'much sadness and deep regret that some of my friends have died', he said: 'My sincere thanks goes to the members of the public, mountain rescue teams and other emergency services who assisted.'

Jonathan Hart, chairman of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland said: 'Everything possible was done, as part of an outstanding multi-agency response, to increase the opportunities for survival of the casualties and take them off the mountain before the hours of darkness.'

'It is very sad that there has been such a tragic outcome,' Lochaber Chief Inspector Derek Paterson said: 'Our thoughts are with those affected and their families at this terrible time.'

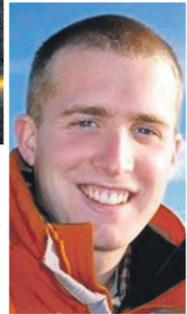
First Minister Alex Salmond said the deaths were 'an appalling tragedy'.



Dead: Dr Rachel Majumdar.



Dead: PhD student Tom Chesters.



Dead: Oban student and Nevis Cycles team member Chris Bell.



Dead: Una Rachel Finnegan from County Antrim.

Glencoe avalanche tragedy



Death mountain: Climbers descend Bidean nam Bian by torchlight on Saturday evening towards rescue vehicles at Achnambeithach. Photograph by The Write Image.

Deep shock as four friends perish

GLENCOE Mountain Rescue Team members past and present have highlighted the dangers of winter climbing in the wake of Saturday's tragedy.

Retired shepherd Alastair MacDonald said the local community had been left deeply shocked, but added the accident showed that experienced and well-equipped parties could be caught unawares - even with accurate information about avalanche risk.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I was a shepherd all of my life in those mountains but I would never go near a place like that. You don't need much of a slope to cause an avalanche.'

'There could be folk killed on the mountains one day, yet you still see more folk going up there the next.'

Mr MacDonald recalled a day in 1996 in Glen Etive after a blizzard when he was trying to

find sheep caught in the drifts when police advised him to get out.

He said: 'I just told them 'look up there - there's folk climbing the Buchaille and you aren't stopping them'. Those climbers never came back - they were killed in an avalanche that day and they never found their bodies until the spring.'

Andy Nelson, one of the 25 Glencoe MRT members called out, said the snowpack consisted of three layers - 'pretty firm' old snow at the bottom, a softer middle layer of faceted crystals and graupel - tiny rounded snow pellets - and wind blown snow, or slab on top.

The weight of the walkers on the steep slope had been enough to break the bond between the layers, triggering the huge snow slide. Rescuers had to probe an area 100m by 40m to locate the buried climbers.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a really sad accident. You have young folk out on the hill having their own adventure and suddenly things go wrong. It is probably one of the biggest incidents we have had to deal with. You don't get involved in any kind of emotion at the time - you are too busy trying to find people and save their lives. Any other things you can deal with when you get home.'

He added: 'There was absolutely no reason to avoid going into the mountains - it was an average Scottish winter day. But you still have to be conscious whether the avalanche category is high or low and on the day the avalanche risk was considerable though localised.'

'That means you could be walking on very stable snow - but 20 metres to one side it is very poorly bonded and unstable. It is very difficult to gauge that.'

Davy Gunn, of CranKitUp Gear bike shop in Glencoe, is a former Glencoe MRT leader and an expert on avalanches.

He said: 'A shallow snowpack re-frozen after the post New Year thaw, followed by dry snow from the east, then strong winds for days stripping some aspects, vapourising a lot of snow but also dumping loads into pockets in all sorts of corners and unpredictable locations in NW through to NE aspects was always likely to be a cause of trouble - much like laying random landmines in corners on these aspects. Every likelihood that nothing would happen, but always just the chance someone would stand on a mine and maybe if really unlucky it might propagate into a big slide, and if even less lucky end up over nasty terrain or in a terrain trap.'

All of those things happened on Bidean nam Bian on Saturday.

THREE West Highlands cycling clubs are to stage a memorial race to celebrate the life of Oban student Chris Bell, who died along with three friends in an avalanche in Glencoe on Saturday.

Mr Bell, 24, raced in Fort William-based Nevis Cycles colours but was also a member of West Highland Wheelers and North Argyll Cycle Club.

Nevis Cycles owner Ben Thomson, 36, a close friend of Mr Bell for two years, told *The Oban Times*: 'The three local clubs will be commemorating Chris in a fitting way. At the moment we are looking at organising memorial trials for him.'

Mr Bell died almost five years to the day when British champion cyclist Jason MacIntyre was killed on January 15 2008 by a van on the A82 only a mile from his Fort William home. An annual memorial time trial was also held in his honour.

Mr Thomson said those who knew Mr Bell had been left 'terribly numb' at news of his death.

He said: 'It takes a while for something like this to sink in. The word nice is overused but Chris was a genuinely nice person. He was very knowledgeable and the sort of guy who would never say a bad word about anyone. He had a wicked sense of humour, was great fun at a party and played the ukelele.'

'We raced together at the same time and did a lot of events together, mostly mountain bike races. He was a very good swimmer, mountain biker and hill runner and a very fit outdoors kind of guy.'

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Mr Thomson added: 'He was very enthusiastic about the outdoors. He did an event in Torridon last summer and was just blown away. He made a lot of friends up here and loved the area.'

Also killed in the 1,000-foot avalanche on 3773-foot Bidean nam Bian was Leeds woman Dr Rachel Majumdar, 29, a doctor at Harrogate District Hospital; Hull University PhD student Tom Chesters, 28, also from Leeds; and County Antrim woman Una Rachel Finnegan, 25, a junior doctor living in Edinburgh.

One woman in the six-strong party remains in a critical condition in the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow.

One man, the last in line coming off Church Door Buttress, escaped by anchoring his ice axe as the huge snow slab gave way underneath his friends.

He managed to raise the alarm at 2pm after finding a mobile phone signal.

Glencoe and Lochaber mountain rescue teams, a Royal Navy rescue helicopter and search dogs were all involved in the operation.

Glencoe MRT was called out again only 20 hours later to rescue two people from a mountain higher up the glen.

Team member Andy Nelson told *The Oban Times*: 'A couple got stuck on Sron na Lairig. They had started to get themselves down and we helped them out right at the end.'

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Talk is cheap, when money is tight

BARELY a season can pass in Oban and Lorn without Argyll and Bute Council claiming how millions will be spent improving the local infrastructure.

If only action was quite as forthcoming as promises. This week, at a special meeting of the Oban, Lorn and Isles area committee, council planners discussed how an overall £80million would be invested locally over the coming decade.

While one of the projects seems destined to go ahead, a £30million plan for a new Oban High School, plans for Tax Incremental Funding (TIF) and CHORD projects will inspire less confidence locally.

Many seasons have passed since the CHORD funding was announced and we're yet to see a penny of the fund's £6.9million spent. Some have questioned if the fund will ever be utilised. While the Lorn Arc Project identifies several projects across the area, an agreement in principle to obtain cash for much of it through TIF was announced in November 2011. Movement has not been rapid.

As the council considers plans to reduce its workforce further, it has never been more important for some of the above funding promised to be spent now. If not, there is a very real risk of the horse bolting long before the barn door is closed.

GLASGOW LETTER

Celtic Connections birthday celebrations

IF YOUR birthday or anniversary ends in a zero you deserve a special celebration and that is exactly what happened at the Opening Concert of Celtic Connections 2013 which recognised the 20th year of the festival and the 40th anniversary concert marking the opening of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye.

A packed Royal Concert Hall was quickly into Celtic Connections mode as Finlay MacDonald, Chris Stout and Ross Martin set the mood for a concert which had the audience engaged from the outset. The early theme was Scottish and, indeed much of the music was Celtic, with variety and quality characterising the whole evening. From unaccompanied solo singing to having a string orchestra, the Scottish Power Pipe Band and a multitude of musicians playing all sorts of instruments on stage at the one time. There was something to suit all musical tastes. A particularly popular item was that of the New Rose String Band whose unique entertainment of inspired silliness combined with great music had the audience in raptures.

Capercaille and Flook were in terrific form and generally those taking part were musicians who had been won over by this world renowned festival held in January in Glasgow and which has continued to surpass all expectations over the past 20 years.

Solo singers were Rod Paterson, Cara Dillon, Eddi Reader, Julie Fowlis and Archie Fisher and fresh from their flight from the States Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas joined in the fun. It was hosted in a relaxing style by Mark Stephen and perhaps summed up by Artistic Director, Donald Shaw, prior to the finale when he announced to the assembled mass of musicians on stage 'If you know how to play the tune just join in'.

'Follow that!' was the message for the rest of the festival and that's exactly what happened at the Sabhal Mòr concert in the packed City Halls. After a short speech by Roddy John MacLeod, who emphasised the importance of the next 40 years, it was on with the music with each performer having a connection with the college. Musical director was Alan Henderson and the evening was co-hosted by Mary Ann Kennedy and Kirsteen MacDonald.

Solo piping from Decker Forrest and then Alan MacDonald opened both halves and the others taking part were Christine Primrose, Margaret Stewart/Angus Nicholson, Alistair Cadona, James Graham, Julie Fowlis, Fergie MacDonald, Alasdair Fraser and Natlalie Haas, and the group Daimh. In addition Micheal O'Suilleabhain from Limerick University's World Academy was joined by some of his colleagues together with an orchestra made up of students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and for the finale all the musicians took to the stage to join House Band which comprised Angus Nicholson, Alasdair White, Iain MacDonald, Andrew MacPherson, Eilidh

MacFadyen, Murdo Cameron, Ingrid Henderson and, of course, Alan Henderson. Education should be fun and throughout the concert it was evident that in whatever capacity they had a connection with Sabhal Mòr their enjoyment of their Skye experience was evident and came across in the music.

Book launch

IT MAYBE took five years in preparation but 'Fonn, The Campbells of Greepe' has now been completed by Acair Books and it was officially launched at the Glasgow Art Club.

As well as singing from family members, in their usual top form, Boyd Robertson, Jo MacDonald and Agnes Rennie spoke of the contribution made by the family to the tradition of the area they came from. The CD Fonn has been on sale for some time now but a special addition to the book is the inclusion of a CD consisting of items of the family members taken from archive material.

Gaelic drama

AN LOCHRAN and Glaschu Beo are inviting applications from organisations involved in Gaelic drama for two separate awards of £5,000.

The money is available for projects which are aligned with Bòrd na Gàidhlig's key development for Gaelic drama and with the priorities for Gaelic drama in Glasgow. Application forms are available from linda@anlochran.com or at www.glasgowlife.org.uk or www.anlochran.com and must be returned by 5pm on Monday February 18.

Islay Pipe Band

THERE is still time to book a place at the fund raising dinner/ceilidh dance being organised by Islay Pipe Band in the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, Glasgow, on Saturday February 9.

Tickets, £50, include a drink on arrival, a three course meal with wine and dancing to the music of Deoch 'n Dorus. For tickets telephone Sheena MacMillan at 01496 860279.

Congratulations

I AM SURE readers will wish to join me in sending congratulations to Gaelic singers James Graham and Kirsteen MacDonald who recently announced their engagement.

James is the Mod Development Officer while Kirsteen is a presenter with the BBC.

Diary dates

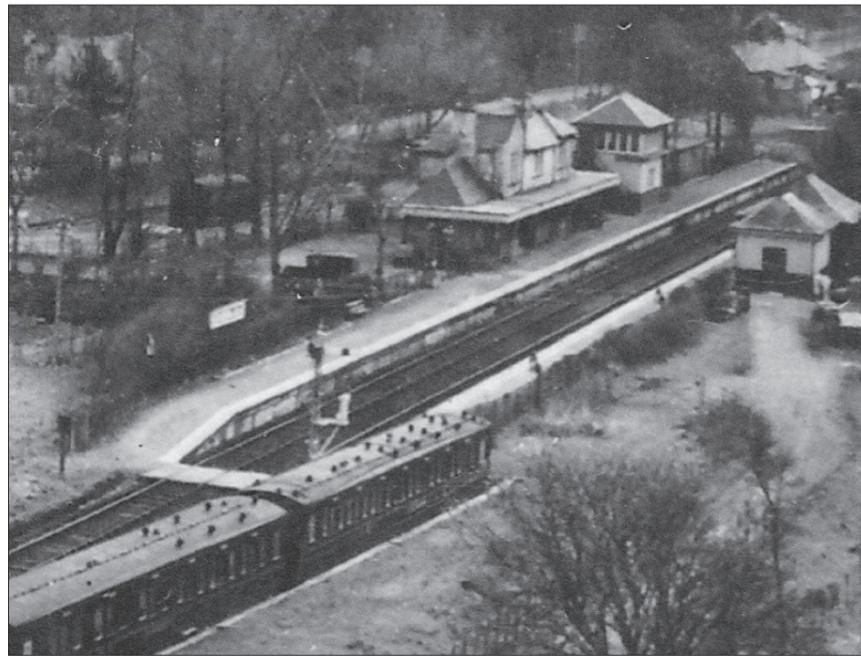
Friday January 25: Uist and Barra Association New Year Dance, Glasgow University Union, 9pm-1am.

Saturday January 26: Ceol's Craic, CCA Sauchiehall Street, from 6pm to late.

Pub scene

TRAIL West will be playing in the Park Bar on both Saturday and Sunday while Monach Isles will be there on Friday.

In the Islay Inn it will be Crooked Reel on Friday and Penny Dogs on Saturday. **Neil Murray. Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.**



Benderloch Station and holiday carriages circa 1939

This week's flashback photograph features Benderloch Station and holiday carriages circa 1939. It was submitted by Christina C Bullock of Coventry. 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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Use former Rockfield site for parking and housing

Sir, I have been somewhat amused recently to read the debate within your pages about parking in Oban and whether there is sufficient provision.

Clearly, the answer is no, otherwise the debate would never have reared its head.

Firstly, look at the provision we do have. As you come into the town from the east, you can see two car parks, both opposite the Corran Halls.

I would guess very few newcomers to the town could identify how to get in to either car park before heading down towards George Street. A simple signpost could fix this but, again, simple solutions seem to be lost on the decision makers.

On-street parking amidst pot-holed roads and scruffy pavements at the top of George Street do little to entice you to park and take a stroll, so inevitably, you drive on.

Reference has been made to the car park on Tweeddale Street.

Not only is this on a steep hill, making it difficult for children and families in parts, but its surrounds, again, are not the most welcoming.

So you trundle on, eventually to Tesco where inevitably, you park, browse the supermarket and return to the car.

It's worth mentioning too that

arriving from the south leads you to Tesco - the universal path of least resistance.

So while everyone is arguing over whether Rockfield should be a car park or housing - why has no-one suggested it can be both?

There's certainly plenty of room. Surely, too, it can make the whole area a bit more presentable.

Given recent developments on Stevenson Street to do just that, it would complete a very welcome turnaround for the area.

A Rodger, by email.

New way forward for Gaelic islands

Sir, I would like to advocate a new way forward for the Gaelic islands from the Gaelic language point of view.

Namely this; we need to have people coming forward and representing us from trades such as engineering, crofting, fishing and all physical sides of the matter which are not being truly represented at the moment.

What I am saying is at the present time we are all being represented through the academic side only - and I know for sure a lot of folks out there are not happy with just that.

They truly believe that our culture and language can only survive and be vibrant by engaging in the practical use in the physical area of the language, just as our forefathers did down

through the generations.

Now, if there are 10 good people out there with good language skills from Gaelic communities who are involved in the trades I mentioned above, perhaps they could put their names forward to *The Oban Times*?

We need to form a union as soon as possible to save - and be prepared to use - Gaelic as a working, on the spot tongue. This is, after all, the language of our native land. Tapaidh Leibh! Aonghas Eoghainn Mhoir, Ge-arraidh na Monaigh, Uibhist a Deas.

Transfer services to private sector

Sir, The only way forward for this council is to out-source all services to the private sector, for we will be no worse off.

Pay and conditions are changing, pensions also. People are having to work until they are 70. This generation will not live like the previous generation. This 'pay into a pension' scheme is nonsense as all employees working for the local authority will be saving for nothing.

So shutting Struan Lodge or any other council home will not be a hardship for the residents, they will either stay or transfer but will be looked after by the private sector rather than the council.

The only losers are the employees. Times are changing so to keep all services running and healthy, out-sourcing is the way forward and that way we keep all homes open but run by private companies who in turn pay decent wages.

The days of a decent job for life at the council are over. The high earners are draining council departments and putting pressure on council budgets to seek alternatives.

I am not the guardian of the silk purse but if in charge transferring old folks' homes would only be the beginning of a long overdue overhaul of all council services.

Stephen Johnstone, Arden-tinny.

Facebook followers speak out over Jimmy Savile's house

Last week we asked our Facebook followers what should happen to Jimmy Savile's former cottage in Glencoe - bearing in

mind that it was also home to mountaineering legend Hamish MacInnes? Demolish it or turn it into a mountaineering hut or museum? There were a lot of opinions and some of them were as follows:

Janet Brown: The cottage has a history and they shouldn't let one man destroy that.

Heather Strachan-Clark: Turn it in to a museum.

Martin Holzke: Definitely keep and bring it to good use.

Marliese Macdonald: Get rid of it and build a new hut and memorial to Hamish MacInnes.

Peter Taylor: We can't let the evil of one man control the actions of an entire population. We should use the hut for something useful - a holiday place for troubled children in a bid to redress that evil legacy perhaps?

A mountaineering hut in honour of Hamish MacInnes? A Mountaineering Museum for Scottish achievements?

Michelle Gallagher: Tear it down and build a mountaineering museum.

If it stands you never know what disgusting things may be discovered over years but building a new one makes it new and gives a few good men a job for a while.

Neil Lea: To take the knock it down proposal to its ultimate conclusion, you would have to knock down every house owned by a convicted sexual molester.

As someone who has climbed in Glencoe and has always known the house as Hamish MacInnes' house, a mountaineering museum would be the best result.

Marion Emmerson: Use it for a holiday place for ill children and their families for respite holidays and getaways? Turn something awful in to something nice.

Irena Krasinska-Lobban: It isn't a 'hut' - it's a perfectly good stone built house that has stood there for years, long before Saville had anything to do with it. It wasn't the house that committed the crimes. I've always known it as 'Hamish's House' as have many people. Stop making a fuss, sell the place and move on.

Cath Henderson: Keep it and use it for something positive. Too much hysteria surrounding this.



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

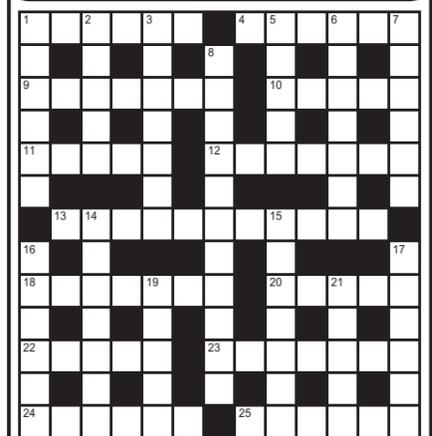
MEAL AN NAIDHEACHD air Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is dà fhichead bliadhna bho dh'fhosgail e mar Cholaiste a' teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Chaidh an ceann-bliadhna sònraichte sin aithneachadh aig cuirm-chiùil mhòr ann an Glaschu Disathairne seo chaidh, ach tha mi air leth toilichte gum bi cothroman eile tron bhliadhna gus a' chlach-mhìle chudromach seo ann an eachdraidh na Colaiste a chomharrachadh. Ged 's e uine ghoirid a th' ann an ceathrad bliadhna ann an eachdraidh ionad-foghlaim, aig an aon àm feumar aideachadh gum do choilean Sabhal Mòr adhartas iongantach thar nam bliadhnaichean bho dh'fhosgail e an toiseach le beagan oileanach, agus mòran dòchais!

"'S e beagan spòrs a bhios ann!" Sin facal a bhiodh tric aig Iain Noble nach maireann nuair a bhiodh e a' moladh innleachd neo iomairt ùr air choreigin, agus gum teagamh thuir e sin iomadh uair mun t-Sabhal! Agus ged a bha tachartasan glè aoibheach aig an ionad thar nam bliadhnaichean, bha cuideachd iomadh duilgheadas ri choinneachadh agus ri rèiteach. Bha mòran dhaoine far feadh na dùthcha nam meadhan air an rèite sin a chur an gnìomh agus saoilidh mi gum biodh e glè iomchaidh gum biodh an Sabhal a' gabhail cothrom aig an àm seo, agus fhad 's a tha cuimhne orra, air ainmean nan caraidean a chuidich an t-ionad air a shlighe a chlàradh mar bhunait eachdraidh na Colaiste. A bharrachd air Gàidheil às gach ceàrnaidh bha, agus tha fhathast, cuideachd iomadh caraid aig an t-Sabhal is aig a' Ghàidhlig aig nach eil ceangal dualchais sam bith leis a' chànain agus nach ionnsaich i gu bràth a bharrachd. Ach bha a h-uile duine a' faicinn luach cothrom oideachaidh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a bhith stèidhichte air Ghàidhealtachd. Nuair a thòisich cursaichean an t-Sabhail an toiseach bha phrìomhachas ga thoirt dha sgìlean gnìomhachais, ach an-diugh tha anllan fhoghlaim gu math nas fharsainge is an t-ionad na phàirt de dh'Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean. Mar a thuigear, tha trusadh ionmhais air a bhith na dhùbhlàn dhan t-Sabhal bho toiseach agus tha a h-uile ceum adhartais a ni e a' cur an tuilleadh cuideim air buidseat. "Chan eil fios 'm ciamaar a tha do leithid fhèin is Tormod MacIlllòsa a' cadal leis cho mi-chinnteach 's a tha ionmhais taice na Gàidhlig!" Sin an rabhadh a thug àrd-òifigear seirbheis chatharra dhomh fhìn ann an 1991, ach nach mi tha toilichte gum do dhearbhadh tuine gur ise bha ceàrr! Tha seanfhacal ag radh gum mol an t-each math e fhèin agus tha obair an t-Sabhail air cliù nach beag a chosnadh ri linn dhìchill luchd-teagaisg agus saothair oileanach. Gach soirbheachadh leis a' Cholaiste a' gleidheadh na cliù sin anns na bliadhnaichean roimhe!

CONGRATULATIONS to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on its 40th anniversary! Overcoming enormous challenges Sabhal Mòr has earned a reputation for excellence in tertiary Gaelic medium education.

Its board and staff now look forward to new opportunities, and the development and maintenance of standards. We wish them all well! **Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell) ailean@obantimes.co.uk**

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



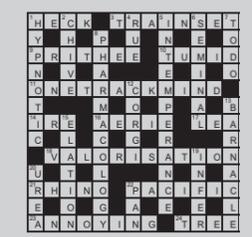
- Across**
- Appearance (6)
 - Worldwide (6)
 - Keep away from (7)
 - Be silent, in music (5)
 - Rump maybe (5)
 - As per usual! (7)
 - Fliers and catchers (5,2,4)
 - A bright metallic element used in tungsten filaments (7)
 - Man-made material (5)
 - Animal enclosure (5)
 - To stop you from going flying! (7)
 - Be scared in olden times (6)
 - Boggy (6)
- Down**
- Waylay (6)
 - One who earns (5)
 - Wonky (7)
 - Abate (5)
 - It will take you from A to B without an er but you will have to do the work (7)
 - Recently (6)
 - How you are feeling (5,2,4)
 - Rouse (7)
 - Flesh eating fish (7)
 - Continuous play in polo (6)
 - Curt (6)
 - One who does nothing (5)
 - Vitelluses (5)

We are now inviting questions for Councillor Drew Hendry, Leader of The Highland Council. Submit your questions via The Oban Times' website or email editor@obantimes.co.uk

COMING SOON YOUR SAY



Last week's solution



Harris whisky grant boost

WHISKY distilling on Harris is a step closer thanks to a Scottish Government grant of almost £2 million.

Rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead visited the site of the proposed Isle of Harris distillery at Tarbert on Monday to announce the £1.9 million cash injection. Mr Lochhead also met the team behind the project.

He said: 'I am sure that, in time, Harris whisky will develop a worldwide reputation for quality in the same way as Harris Tweed has done.'

'I look forward to enjoying a Harris dram in a few years time.'

'Delighted' Isle of Harris chairman and founder Anderson Bakewell said: 'Everyone in the islands can look forward with real excitement to the prospect of an initiative which promotes the assets of the islands throughout the world and serves as a catalyst for economic development locally.'

Work is due to begin on the distillery, which is expected to create around 20 jobs, in late 2013.

Calum's recipe for young chef success

ARDNAMURCHAN High School pupil Calum MacIver won the Springboard Scotland Young Chef local final at West Highland College in Fort William on Monday.

Calum scored 95 out of a possible 100 points with his mouthwatering menu of chicken fillet steak with a mushroom, sage and lemon sauce on a bed of garlic mashed potato and wilted spinach, followed by chocolate mousse with a vanilla crèmeux and berry compote - all produced in 1.5 hours.

Entries were judged by Brian Hume, general manager of Strathmore Hotels Ben Nevis and Alexandra, and head chef Sam Omale from the Ben Nevis Hotel.

Other finalists taking part were from Lochaber and Kinlochleven high schools.

Calum now goes onto the North of Scotland regional final in Inverness on February 19.



Top chef: Calum MacIver receives his prize from Brian Hume.

Fort FC lotto

THERE were no winners in this week's Fort William FC Lotto draw. Numbers were 3-6-8. The jackpot for the next draw on Sunday goes up to £400.



Flora McKee from Voluntary Action Lochaber presents Shopmobility chairman Keith Gadsby with the PQASSO certificate on Monday.

National award for Fort William Shopmobility

A FORT William charity set up to ensure local people with mobility issues can access local shops has been awarded national accreditation for the work it does.

Shopmobility now boasts the practical quality assurance systems for small organisations (PQASSO) quality mark.

At an informal ceremony at its base next to the An Aird bus and train transport hub on Monday, Flora McKee of Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL) presented Shopmobility chairman Keith Gadsby with their certificate.

The PQASSO system, designed specifically

for third sector organisations by the Charities Evaluation Service, will now operate at Shopmobility for three years.

Preparing for the quality mark took a year and culminated in a site visit by an assessor on November 5.

Co-ordinator Billy Ward said: 'At the end of the day we were informed we had passed the assessment, which was a huge relief for us as a lot of work had gone in to preparation for the day. We were particularly delighted to be informed by our assessor that we were the first organisation in the Highlands to achieve this accreditation.'

'Having gained our accreditation now demonstrates to funders that our charity runs efficiently and is well governed.'

'It proves that we are fit for purpose and ready to face the future with a renewed sense of achievement and value and committed to continuous improvement.'

Flora McKee from VAL said: 'We were delighted but not surprised to hear that Shopmobility had received the quality mark. They are an excellent example of good practice and are continually committed to delivering the very best for their service users.'

Pitches plagued by drainage problems

TWO NEW grass pitches at Lochaber High School are unusable because of serious drainage problems, it has emerged.

Contractors handed over the pitches to Highland Council last spring after completing groundworks but the playing surface has since deteriorated.

Local sports clubs earlier expressed fears that without proper maintenance the £250,000 pitches could suffer.

Now Lochaber Sports Association (LSA) wants the issue dealt with 'as a matter of urgency'.

Chairperson Jane Blanchard told *The Oban Times*: 'It is

taxpayers money, the school has over 800 kids and yet you have no pitches. It is a total scandal and a situation which definitely has to be got to the bottom of.'

'There has been no maintenance contract put in place for the pitches, which are unavailable for both the school and the community. Even in ideal conditions they can only be played on for a maximum of eight hours a week. With a positive outcome we would have two new pitches for the school and limited community use. Hopefully [the council] will confirm they are doing something about it.'

Lochaber High School head teacher Jim Sutherland said the

pitch problem was having 'zero impact' on the curriculum at present. However, that situation could change when outdoor sports get going later this spring.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'We had some limited use of the pitches last summer but at the moment we are not able to use them. I believe there are things in motion to address these issues but I do not know what these things are.'

Ron MacKenzie, Highland Council's head of sporting services, said: 'We are aware of the problem, which has not come as a big surprise to us. We can't do much at this time of year and

Death crash driver narrowly avoids jail

Disqualified Spean Bridge man admits causing death of biker

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

A SPEAN Bridge man has narrowly avoided imprisonment after causing the death of a pensioner biker on the A82 near Fort William by driving while banned.

Duncan Stewart was just three weeks away from getting his licence back when his fateful decision to drive his Renault Scenic cost Charles Singleton his life.

Accident investigators found the accident at Achabobane on May 8 last year happened after Mr Singleton overtook a van on a bend.

His motorbike smashed head on into the car, which Stewart had almost stopped on the verge in trying to avoid a collision.

The van driver, Lochaber Game butcher Calum MacLeod, earlier testified that a motorcyclist had been trying to overtake him for two or three miles.

However, Fort William Sheriff Court heard that under recent legislation it was Stewart, not Mr Singleton, who was at fault - because he should never have been there in the first place.

Prosecutor Alison Wylie said: 'Mr Stewart should not have been on the road because he is a disqualified driver. He caused the accident by being on the road - whose fault it was is not the issue.'

Scottish Six Days Trial fan Mr Singleton, 74, who had been heading north to meet a friend



Duncan Stewart: shown leniency by sheriff after admitting causing death of motorcyclist.

his responsibility for this incident.'

Sheriff Noel McPartlin told Stewart: 'I do accept that there was nothing that could be said to be at fault with your driving but you were disqualified and because of that, lacking in insurance. It has been pointed out you had no right to be driving on the road at all, and your presence was the cause of the death of motorcyclist Mr Singleton.'

'Up till now causes have depended on instances of bad driving, but parliament wishes to make it clear that those who are disqualified drive at their peril.'

'If they are involved in a serious accident that results in the death of someone they must face serious consequences - and that is what has happened in your case.'

After citing two character references indicating Stewart was seen as 'a good member of the community and a good family man', Sheriff McPartlin chose to set aside the usual sentence - one of imprisonment.

Stewart was appearing for sentencing after earlier admitting causing the death of Mr Singleton, of Kettering, Northamptonshire by driving while disqualified and uninsured.

Sheriff McPartlin ordered him to perform 300 hours unpaid work in the community and banned him from driving for two years. He must also pass an extended driving test after serving his ban.

Transerv confirms five-night road closure

SCOTLAND TranServ has confirmed major road resurfacing at Onich will require the A82 to be closed to traffic for five nights.

The work will see a 1.5 mile section from the Onich Hotel north to Inchree upgraded in two phases between Sunday February 24 and Thursday March 21.

In a letter to road campaign the A82 Partnership, Scotland TranServ road

design technician Liam Black said 'unfortunately' the carriageway was too narrow to allow traffic to pass through the works safely during phase one, which covers the section to the 40 mph sign.

He said: 'These works would be carried out under a full road closure from Sunday nights to Friday mornings between the hours of 9pm and 6am.'

It is expected that this phase would take

five nights to carry out works through the narrow section. The road would open to trunk road traffic approximately every two hours, although this will depend on what operations are going ahead on site at any given time.'

Phase two will start 'immediately', Mr Black said, under a 10mph convoy system to manage traffic through the works. Access will be maintained for emergency

services at all times. Work should be completed by Friday, March 22.

The news follows last week's *Oban Times* report that the resurfacing would only go ahead if it began before March 10. BEAR Scotland replaces Scotland Transerv as trunk roads maintenance contractor in the northwest from April 1.

Dates for the overnight closures have still to be advised.

Cyclist dies following collision on A82

A 75-YEAR OLD man has died following an accident between a car and a cyclist on the A82 between Fort William and Inverness. The road was closed in both directions following the collision just south of the Highland capital on Tuesday afternoon.

The accident happened at the Dumain Straight just before 3pm and caused major disruption for several hours. Road conditions were 'pretty good' at the time, police said. Northern Constabulary advised motorists to avoid the area and put diversions in place as emergency services attended the scene. Northbound traffic was diverted after Drumadrochit onto the A833 and on to the A862 Beauly to Inverness road. Southbound traffic was diverted at Torvean through Kinmylies onto the A862 and followed the same route in the opposite direction to Drumadrochit.



The Grey Mare's waterfall at Kinlochleven: a popular attraction for walkers using the woodland path above the village.

Kinlochleven unites in bid for 'Walkers are Welcome' status
Village a key point on West Highland Way

KINLOCHLEVEN is bidding to join a UK-wide network of towns and villages providing top class facilities and paths for hikers.

The village believes 'Walkers are Welcome' status would boost its reputation as a key point on the 96-mile West Highland Way between Milngavie and Fort William.

Kinlochleven Community Trust registered an interest in joining the 92-strong network last week.

Development officer Moira Hartley told *The Oban Times*: 'We are looking to achieve membership by April. It will help us with funding applications for our local paths network and really put Kinlochleven on the map.'

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

'It will also give us the ability to put the Walkers are Welcome logo on our publicity materials and on the website. We want to set up a Kinlochleven Walkers are Welcome steering group, which will include representatives of Kinlochleven Community Trust, Kinlochleven Community Council and other interested parties.'

She added: 'We have to demonstrate strong local support for becoming part of the network. The application

asks you to summarise what makes your community special for walkers. The fact that we are on the West Highland Way will work in our favour. Kinlochleven is at the heart of some of the finest walking country in the Highlands.'

BBC broadcaster Julia Bradbury, who is backing the scheme, said: 'The Walkers are Welcome Scheme is a truly innovative project. It's such a simple concept - set up an accreditation scheme for walk-friendly towns, then encourage the towns to network together for support, advice and ideas.'

Anyone interested in joining the steering group should contact Moira Hartley on 01855 831779.

Registrar reports eight more deaths than births

THERE were eight more deaths than births in Lochaber in 2012, according to figures released this week.

Senior registrar at Fort William, Isobel MacKellaig reports that 182 babies were born last year, compared with 190 deaths over the same period.

Interestingly, marriages were well up with 245 couples tying the knot. However, in line with the national trend, of those just 116 were religious ceremonies while 129 took place in the registry office. Two same-sex couples also made their vows. Just over 200 marriages were recorded in 2012.

Ms MacKellaig couldn't come up with any boys' names which could be described as out of the ordinary.

However, she singled out Abby-Gayle as being among the more unusual choices for the girls along with Thalia - one of the three Graces in ancient Greek mythology.

The most popular girls' first name was

Anna, with Rose topping the charts for middle names. For the boys, Fergus and Joshua came out equal top, while James was by far the most popular middle name.

Ms MacKellaig, who will soon be marrying her last couples after spending 24 years in post, issued a small reminder that the registry office has been in new premises for the past 18 months.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'This is my last submission of statistics for the registration district of Highland, Fort William and Ballachulish as I retire in August.'

'Please remember, everyone, that since July 2011 we have moved from Lochaber College to Lochaber House on the High Street, back full circle to where the office was in the early 1980s.'

'It then moved a few yards down the road to Tweeddale until 2005 when it went to the college. After six years there we are now back in Lochaber House.'

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OT

Motorcycle testing reinstated on Isle of Lewis

MOTORCYCLE testing on the Isle of Lewis is to be reinstated from February 13, the Driving Standards Agency has announced.

The move means people in the islands will no longer have to travel to the mainland to sit tests. Local MSP Alasdair Allan, who raised the matter with the Driving Standards Agency, welcomed confirmation that testing would resume at Stornoway Airport.

Chef admits assaulting partner

A FORT William chef assaulted his partner after he tried to light a cigarette using a toaster.

Kevin Leahy, admitted seizing Emma Norval by the arm and pushing her on the body at 4 Achriach, Claggan, on December 28.

Ms Norval had been trying to phone police when Leahy grabbed her, prosecutor Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court.

Defending, Hamish Melrose said: 'He wants to support his partner. He is a fairly highly qualified chef.'

Sheriff Noel McPartlin told 39-year-old Leahy: 'A repeat of behaviour such as this will have very serious consequences.'

Annual Burns Supper

LOCHABER Burns Club will hold its annual Burns supper at the Alexandra Hotel in Fort William tomorrow night.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Angus Grant on fiddle and Pipe Major Sandy MacKenzie on the pipes.

Mod men's silver medal competition winner Robert Robertson will sing a selection of songs.

John Howieson from Broadford on Skye will deliver the Immortal Memory.

Police seek witnesses to cylinder theft

POLICE in Benbecula are appealing for witnesses to the theft of a black BOC oxygen cylinder from a shorebase at Loch Bayhead, Locheynort in South Uist.

The cylinder, approximately 5ft long and weighing 200kilo, was stolen sometime between 12.30pm on January 12 and 10am the following morning.

Anyone with information should contact the duty officer at Benbecula police on 01870 602374 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

First Dornie quiz night of 2013

THE FIRST Dornie quiz night of 2013 will be held in the community hall tomorrow night at 8pm.

The social evening, a popular event on the village calendar, raises money for local good causes.

Hall committee member Ann Lloyd told *The Oban Times*: 'We did two quizzes in November and December for the kids' Christmas party.'

'It's an evening out and we get a lot of regulars there who are very supportive. It's something different through the winter. It's not at all serious and it gets everybody together.'

'We normally get about 50 people there and usually make about £200 a time - people are really generous in buying the raffles.'

She added: 'There are four prizes for the winning team - if they have six players they will just have to sort it out among themselves!'



Young Fort William showboarder Keir Coupland vaults over Banavie outdoor sports enthusiast David 'Spook' Munro at Nevis Range to herald next month's Fort William Mountain Festival.

Mountain festival launched on perfect winter's day

THE 2013 Fort William Mountain Festival programme was launched at Nevis Range last Thursday - on a perfect winter's day on the snowy slopes.

The four-day event from February 21-24, which will feature inspirational speakers including top climbers, mountaineers and extreme sportsmen and women, adventure film screenings and mountain workshops, kicks off at Nevis Range on February 20 when local outdoor athletes on skis, bike and foot weave their way down Aonach Mhor by torchlight.

New features at this year's event include a Gaelic language workshop aimed at climbers, mountaineers and hillwalkers at West Highland College UHI on Fort William entitled 'Understanding our mountains through the Gaelic language'.

One major highlight will be the formal

announcement of the sixth recipient of the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture. Previous recipients include Glencoe climbing legend Hamish MacInnes.

Mike Pescod, chairman of event organisers the Highland Mountain Culture Association, billed the festival as one of the most popular in Scotland's outdoor adventure calendar.

He said: 'This celebration of mountain culture, showcasing the huge range of outdoor activity opportunities available to visitors to Fort William and Lochaber, one of Scotland's most stunning natural environments, is the vision of The Outdoor Capital of the UK, which is our presenting sponsor once again.'

'It caters for a wide spectrum of enthusiasts from armchair adventurers to climbers and mountaineers to mountain bikers and budding wildlife photographers.'



Fort Gaelic game show winners celebrate

A TEAM from Fort William RC Primary School got the better of Staffin Primary School on the Gaelic kids' game show *Ghuesta* on BBC Alba last Tuesday night.

Ruairidh Byrne and Eoghan McArthur, pictured above on set with special guest Stephanie Tinney of Portree and programme presenter Linda

MacLeod of North Uist, came out on top after a five-round battle of brains, wit and agility.

There are nine programmes left in the series, which involves primary schools from throughout Scotland.

Ghuesta goes out on BBC ALBA on Tuesdays at 6.35pm and is repeated on Thursdays at the same time.

Heart patients boosted by new drill treatment

DIAMOND-tipped drills are well known for stripping away tons of coal from underground seams in a matter of seconds.

But a tiny version has found another use - clearing narrowed arteries of heart patients at Raigmore Hospital.

Previously around 15 patients from the Highlands had to travel to Aberdeen for the treatment, known as rotablation, each year.

Now, that long journey is no longer needed after NHS Highland adopted the procedure to help people with chronic heart problems.

The microsurgery will benefit those whose coronary arteries are blocked with hard bone-like deposits too tough for stretching with simple balloon inflation and stent implantation.

Rotablation works by inserting the minuscule drill inside the arteries to bore through the blockage, safely breaking up the calcified deposit into microscopic pieces.

New bid to save Isle of Rum's Kinloch Castle

SNH needs 'significant further investment' to secure future of former stately home

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

CASH-STRAPPED Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has launched a new bid to secure the future of a leaky former stately home it owns on the Isle of Rum.

The conservation body has spent more than £1m trying to keep Kinloch Castle wind and watertight in recent years but now funding has dried up.

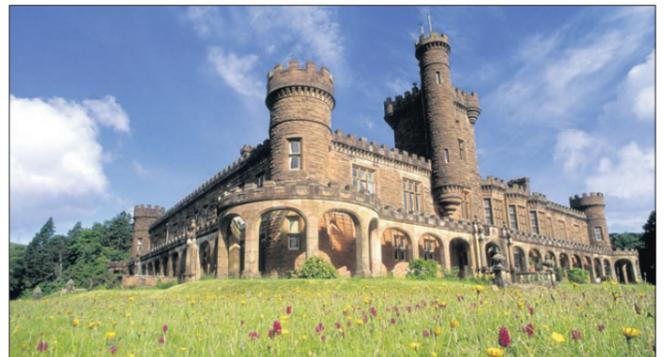
SNH recently stabilised the castle tower, repaired the oriel windows, replaced lead parapet gutters, valleys and roof ridge tiles and treated extensive dry rot.

But the rambling sandstone property - a popular visitor attraction - has deteriorated through water getting in and requires 'significant further investment' to save it.

As a first step, SNH is setting up a working group of 'experts and interested organisations' to examine how best to manage the castle and its historic contents. Those include a rare 'orchestration' - a machine made for Queen Victoria and designed to imitate an orchestra.

Sarah Bentley, SNH operations manager for Rum, said Kinloch Castle was an Edwardian time capsule that 'never ceases to amaze visitors'.

She said: 'The principal rooms



Under threat: Kinloch Castle on Rum is in poor condition - despite having £1m spent on it.

have changed little since the Bullough family left and house an extraordinary collection of artefacts.

'We have been trying for many years to secure resources to restore the castle to its former glory but the scale of funding required has not been available.'

'Recently we have produced a conservation plan detailing the actions required to make the building wind and watertight. 'We are well underway with the first phases of the plan focusing on the roof and upper walls.'

'But there is much more to do and with reduced budgets we are struggling to find the resources

needed.'

She added: 'Its future should be determined with input from local people and experts in managing historic buildings and artefacts, so we are bringing together a working group to look at the options and help us find the best way to secure a better future for the castle.'

Appreciate

Councillor Allan Henderson, chairman of the Isle of Rum Community Trust, said: 'The Isle of Rum community appreciate the restorative work SNH are doing to secure the future of Kinloch castle in these financially challenged times.'

'The castle is a very important part of the community. With its past history and invaluable collection of artefacts it is a vital tourist attraction to the island and the future growth of Kinloch village.'

The luxuriously furnished castle, built for Lancastrian industrialist George Bullough in 1897, prospered only until the First World War then went into a slow decline.

Ownership of the castle and the island passed to SNH's predecessor the Nature Conservancy in 1957.

Rum islanders now own Kinloch village and some adjacent land.

Lochaber chosen by council to trial new roadside ditch survey technique

LOCHABER has been chosen by Highland Council for a trial project to survey roadside ditches using satellite technology.

The system, called Roadex, prioritises open ditch drainage maintenance to protect road surfaces and remove the need for costly repairs.

The collaborative project, which also involves road authorities from Scandinavia and Iceland, works by using vehicle roof-mounted cameras

linked to GPS software. The video output is analysed and roadside drainage categorised as good, adequate or in need of improvement by comparison with recommended standards.

Study

Technical staff then study the map identifying areas requiring work to decide what is needed, from simple cleaning to verge height reduction, edge stabilisation or creation of a new drainage system.

The council has already pledged to inspect watercourses and cleaning gullies and ditches to avoid water undermining road surfaces.

If successful, the trial will be extended throughout the Highlands from next March.

TEC services committee chairman Graham Phillips said: 'The Roadex methodology provides a means of targeting our resources at the areas of greatest need.'



Guilds mark 125 years with lunch

Duncansburgh Macintosh and Kilmonivaig guilds celebrated the 125th birthday of their organisation at a lunch in the Alexandra Hotel Fort William last Wednesday. Guild long service awards were presented by interim moderator Dr Adrian Varwell to, left to right, Mrs Frances Haggart, Nancy MacDonald and Mary Campbell.



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Work starts on hospital accommodation facelift

KYLE Court, the patient accommodation at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, is undergoing a major refurbishment from this week.

Improvements will include provision of a number of en-suite facilities.

Kyle Court, which has 28 bedrooms within eight flats, provides accommodation for patients undergoing treatment or investigation, but who stay too far from Raigmore to travel.

The £260,000 upgrade is expected to take four months to complete.

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Call for radical community land use measures

THE ORGANISATION representing Scotland's community landowners has called for radical measures to broaden community land use and ownership.

In a submission to the Land Reform Review Group, the Scottish Government task force charged with finding ways to make it easier for communities to take a stake in land, Community Land Scotland (CLS) argues for:

- Extended rights over all land in Scotland for communities to have an absolute right to purchase land
- The creation of a land agency to facilitate 'mediated negotiations' with land-owners to achieve land transfers
- An increase in the Land Fund for community purchases to £10m a year
- A streamlining of the existing land reform act to make it less complex and easier for communities to use
- A review of charitable status of trusts which hold land and which have closed membership
- A new deal for tenant farmers with greater security of tenure and possible new rights to buy in community owned estates.

CLS chairman David Cameron said the new rights would only operate when Ministers judged it was in the public interest to see a transfer of the land in question and to further sustainable development.

Owners

He added: 'In Scotland half the country is owned by just 608 people and only 18 owners own 10 per cent of Scotland. 'We are in no doubt that the vested interests in large land holdings will oppose any further change and make the case that such further change is unnecessary, but the evidence is that change in land ownership, giving more people a stake in the land, releases new energy and enterprise in communities and brings wider public benefits than may be otherwise achieved.'

FORT William-based Nevis Radio is one of six stations in Scotland to be granted a community radio licence by industry regulator Ofcom.

As a result of being awarded the new licence, the station will be required to surrender its existing commercial radio licence.

Conditions of the licence state that services must be provided on a not-for-profit basis and focus on the delivery of specific social benefits to a particular geographical community or a community of interest.

Nevis Radio chairman Iain Ferguson told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a very positive step forward for us and it enables us to access more organisations for funding that were previously barred to us. In the past we have been classed as commercial company like Radio Clyde or Moray Firth Radio - something that we have never, ever been. It meant that we were subject to the same rules and regulations, which made it difficult to attract funding.'

The station is supported by 40 to 50 volunteers and only has two paid employees, Mr Ferguson said.



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Primary and secondary school Highland dancers perform the opening dance, supported by Oban High School Pipe Band.

Oban High School dance event success



Highland dancer Kirsty MacInnes in action.



Chelsea Higgins was part of the S4 group that choreographed and performed a Gwen Stefani mix.



Above - teachers Chris Jewell and Denise Gemmill get into the mood

A RECORD-breaking 230 Oban High School pupils took to the stage at last week's fantastic Oban High School Annual Dance Show.

The theme this year was UK v USA, with all the music originating from the two countries. There were three performances in total over the Wednesday and Thursday with well over 1,000 people in attendance.

Local primary school children also filled the Corran Halls for the matinee on Thursday, with the primary sevens no doubt looking forward to being a part of the show themselves next year.

There was a huge variety of performances: S1 to S6 dance groups, Oban High School Gymnastics Squad, Highland dancers with traditional and modern choreography, sports leaders, S6 boys, a clan Ossian dance and the teachers were even represented as they joined the dance leaders on stage for the finale of their dance.

Funding from last year's dance show was used to provide free dance lessons at Oban High School every Friday for primary six and seven pupils so they could also take part in the show.

Dance teacher Larni Wright took charge of this group from September and they were an excellent addition to the show.

Local primary Highland dancers from the Eilidh MacInnes, Isla Munro and Adele Askew schools of dance also joined the High School Highland Dancers to open the show with the superb Oban High School Pipe Band.

Ballet West, which is a great supporter of Oban High School, performed three breathtaking performances, including a very emotional piece choreographed by pupil Caitlin Taylor.

The dance to Coldplay's 'Fix You' represented people who have cancer and all the people around them that support them

at the very difficult time. More than £460 was raised for Cancer Research at the event.

Organisers thanked Amanda Sloss from Ballet West for bringing the dancers to the show and giving the school's dancers inspiration and an exceptionally high standard to aim towards.

The final performance of the night was left to the 'We Will Rock You' cast and principal dancers, which gave the audience a little taster of what is in store with an amazing live performance of Radio Gaga.

This was a very fitting end to the show, as the next big event for Oban High School will be the musical 'We Will Rock You' at Corran Halls from the June 12 - 15. Tickets will be available from the Corran Halls tomorrow (Friday).

Oban High School has 22 dance leaders teaching classes and choreographing dances for S1 - S4 pupils.

Dance show organiser Denise Gemmill said: 'The dance leaders work in teams and must be congratulated on their leadership and hard work bringing their dance groups to such a high standard.'

'Without the senior pupils working with the younger pupils a show of this scale would not be possible.'

'We are delighted with how this year's show has gone, particularly as it was on a much larger scale to previous years.'

'We have received great feedback and we are so proud of our pupils, for their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication. The talent that is in the school is unbelievable!'

'All the pupils really enjoyed themselves and some are already coming up to me with ideas for next year.'

'We would really like to thank the enormous support we have received from the local primary schools.'



Oban High School gymnastics squad in their stars and stripes.



S4 pupil and Ballet West dancer Meroula Hondrou.

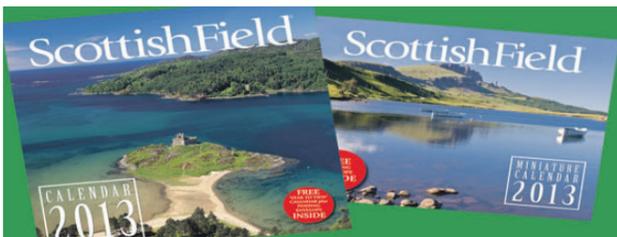


Oban High School staff perform to Scream, by Usher.



Right - Highland dancers perform modern choreography to Electric Dreams.

REPORT
by
EUAN PATERSON
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Singer Amelia MacTaggart and her teacher Janet Fergusson collected donations for CHAS in between performances. 16_103chas02

Oban's Old New Year Ceilidh comes back to help CHAS

OBAN adventurer Alex Milligan has resurrected the Old New Year Ceilidh in Oban as he bids to raise thousands of pounds for a children's charity.

Five weeks from now, Alex will begin walking 100 miles across the Sahara Desert in aid of Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS).

His fundraising has included an Old New Year Ceilidh, held in the Royal Hotel recently, which made £390.

The 67-year-old said: 'I needed a fundraising idea and I noticed a lot of organisations had stopped doing the Old New Year Ceilidh, so I decided to resurrect it this year.'

'This is me putting it back on the Oban calendar again.'

Ceilidh band Ceol an Aire were supported at the event by Janet Fergusson and her singing pupil Amelia MacTaggart, the Adele Askew Dancers and young piper Aaron Hossain.

Alex had said in 2009 that his walking days were over but inspired by the work of CHAS during Oban and Lorn Lions Club's Charities Day earlier this year, he decided he was on the road again.

It will be the eighth time Alex has taken on the desert and it could be his toughest challenge yet.

Anyone wishing to make a donation can drop into Oban Photographic in George Street or Webster of Oban in Stafford Street. Alternatively, go online to justgiving.com/alexmilliganoban-saharatrek.



The Adele Askew Dancers performed at the ceilidh. 16_103chas03

Arduaine singer is set to wow audiences at Celtic Connections

HAVING never performed professionally, an Arduaine singer is set to wow audiences at Celtic Connections – thanks to a little help from her friends.

At 52, Olwen Goulding could have been forgiven for thinking her dream of performing in front of an audience at one of Scotland's biggest music festivals would never come true.

However, thanks to gentle encouragement from her friends to make a demo CD, she has been selected to perform at the Danny Kyle Open Stage at Adelades' on Bath street on Friday, February 1.

The mother of two will have 20 minutes to impress the audience during her performance and could end up supporting a headline act at next year's event.

Olwen, who works at Melfort Village, admits to a touch of nerves ahead of her stage debut. 'It'll be the first time I will sing in front of a lot of people. I have sung in smaller venues and at local music nights and things like that but nothing like this.'

'We have regular folk music nights at Arduaine and I've got two very good friends, Ellen and Phillip Coyle, who asked if I thought about applying for Celtic Connections.'

With the help of friend Eamonn Keyes, she recorded her first ever demo disc, entitled the Enchanting Voice, which received the approval of the Celtic Connections judges.

'It hasn't hit me yet but come the Friday my stomach will be turning somersaults,' she said. 'Deep down, I know I can do it though.'

Olwen's passion for singing started with musicals, but citing singing heroines as Eddi Reader and Barbara Dixon, she says her tastes now are far more diverse.

She is set to bring that into her four song set, during which she will sing her favourite song, Busk Busk Bonnie Lassie by the Corries, as well as a comedy song she loves to perform.

Set to be supported at the concert by husband Neil and a host of friends making the trip to Glasgow, Olwen could be selected as one of six winners and asked to perform at a showcase the following day.



Olwen Goulding with the demo CD, Enchanting Voice, that helped win her a spot at this year's Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow. 16_104olwen1



Mull Gaelic Choir launches its new album at Mull Traditional Music Club's Old New Year Ceilidh.

Mull Gaelic Choir launch new album

MULL Gaelic Choir's new album was launched with a 'song and dance', literally, at an Old New Year Ceilidh in the Park Lodge Hotel, Tobermory.

The ceilidh was hosted on January 12 by Mull Traditional Music Club.

The choir's second album, entitled 'Ar Smaointean' (Our Thoughts), has been recorded over the last three years by Nick Turner at Watercolour Studios, Ardgour and by Finlay Wells of Nutshell Music, Oban, in the banqueting hall of Duart Castle.

The title of the CD comes from one of the choir's favourite songs, the poignant 'Nam Anor Le Mo Smaointean', a local song written at the time of the Falklands War but which, unfortunately, still has great relevance for the area today.

The Mull Traditional Music Club's Old New Year

Ceilidh in Tobermory was an ideal opportunity for the choir to officially mark the availability of the CD.

The music club, the brainchild of piper Calum MacLean, son of the renowned Mull accordionist Calum MacLean sr, is an occasional get-together of locals, musicians and singers over the winter season on the island.

On the night of the choir's album launch, the music was provided by Winifride Moir and Ian Elwis. Calum piped along with the band for a couple of sets of tunes and the choir its soloists completed the evening's programme.

The club's next event will be a traditional ceilidh in the Scout Hall in Tobermory on Friday, February 15.

'Ar Smaointean' is available in shops throughout the island, on the choir's website, Music In Scotland and through Highlander Music.

Oban Phoenix Cinema

Trouble with the Curve Thur 24th, 18:00

Mamma Mia Fri 25th – 19:00

Quartet Fri 25th, 16:00 • Sat 26th, 17:30, 20:00
Sun 27th, 15:00, 17:30 • Mon 28th, 18:00
Tue 29th, 20:30 • Wed 30th, 18:00 • Thur 31st, 18:00

Playing for Keeps Thur 24th, 20:30

Pirates! In An Adventure with Scientists! Sat 26th, 13:00 • Sun 27th, 13:00

Fantasia Sat 26th, 15:00

Gambit Sun 27th, 20:00 • Mon 28th, 20:30 • Tue 29th, 18:00
Wed 30th, 20:30 • Thurs 31st, 20:30

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Trouble with the Curve (12A)
Gus Lobel (Clint Eastwood) is an ailing baseball scout in his twilight years who takes his daughter, Mickey (Amy Adams) along for one last recruiting trip. Forced to spend time together for the first time in years, each make new discoveries - revealing long-held truths about their past and present.

Mamma Mia (PG)
Set on a colourful Greek island, the plot serves as a background for a wealth of ABBA songs. A young woman about to be married discovers that any one of three men could be her father. She invites all three to the wedding without telling her mother. Invite your friends for the sensuous sing along version of Mamma Mia! Whilst raising funds to open screen 2! Fancy dress is encouraged.

Quartet (12A)
The directorial debut of Dustin Hoffman, QUARTET is a high-drama comedy about temperamental divas and old grudges, passion and pride, romance and Rigoletto, starring Maggie Smith, Tom Courtenay, Billy Connolly and Pauline Collins as four retired opera singers.

Playing for Keeps (12A)
George (Gerard Butler) agrees to coach his son's football team when the previous coach proves hopeless. George, however, doesn't anticipate the hilarious bery of attractive single moms (with a cast including Catherine Zeta-Jones and Uma Thurman) who aggressively compete for his affections.

Pirates! In An Adventure with Scientists! (U)
Pirate Captain sets out on a mission to defeat his rivals Black Bellamy and Cutlass Liz for the Pirate of the year Award. The quest takes Captain and his crew from the shores of Blood Island to the foggy streets of Victorian London.

Fantasia (U)
Disney animators set pictures to Western classical music as Leopold Stokowski conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra. The Sorcerer's Apprentice, The Rite of Spring, Dance of the Hours, Night on Bald Mountain and Ave Maria

Gambit (12A)
Curator Harry Deane is an expert in fine art, but he's equally accomplished in taking abuse from his insolent boss. That's about to change. The plan - trick the avid art collector into buying a fake Monet painting. To assist in the heist, Deane hires a rowdy Texas cowgirl to help him fool the richest man in England. Hilarious comedy starring none other than Alan Rickman, Cameron Diaz and Colin Firth.

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Walk, run, row, jog around Healthy Options

OBAN is to be encouraged to walk, run, row, jog or hop its way around the world next month – as Healthy Options launches its new information point.

The community health initiative has been running for a year and will on February 4 launch a new interactive information point at Atlantis Leisure's reception on how people can make changes to their lifestyle to help them get in shape.

The launch will coincide with the group's new Oban Round the World challenge, which asks locals to contribute towards the overall 355 miles a

day target to traverse the equivalent of the world's circumference in 70 days. Those taking part can get their miles done in the gym or on the road and recording their efforts with Healthy Options.

Healthy Options' Andrea James said: 'You can walk or swim or go to the gym or whatever you prefer. You can even do it while dancing.'

Those participating in a group activity such as dancing can borrow a pedometer to record their efforts. The result from one pedometer can be multiplied by the number of people taking part, while those who go out

for a walk are encouraged to use sports tracking apps on mobile phones if possible to track their progress.

The launch of the new information point is the second phase in Healthy Options development. Established initially to help people with health or medical conditions get back in shape, the new information point is designed to help people make the right choices towards a healthier lifestyle.

Oban Round the World launches at 12noon on February 4 with an Oban Health Walk from Atlantis.

Everyone is invited and there is no need to register in advance.



Performing at St John's Cathedral on Sunday were the Kandinsky Piano Trio. They are, from left, Fenella Barton, Katy Apekisheva and Alexi Sarkissov. 15_104kandinsky1

Kandinsky Piano Trio enjoyed by large audience

OBAN Music Society welcomed the Kandinsky Piano Trio to St John's Cathedral on Sunday, with the virtuoso group wowing a large audi-

ence. Pianist Katy Apekisheva was joined by Fenella Barton on violin and Alexi Sarkissov on the cello for the concert, which saw them play-

ing works from Mozart, Fauré and Schubert.

Formed in 2002, the trio came to Oban as part of a UK tour.

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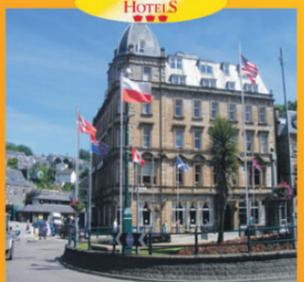


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SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY, 9.30PM DJ STEVO

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The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984
THE A828 TRUNK ROAD (DUROR VILLAGE CYCLE TRACK) (REDETERMINATION OF MEANS OF EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF PASSAGE) ORDER 2013

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Scottish Ministers have made an Order under sections 2(1) and 152(2) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. The effect of the Order is as described in the Oban Times dated 1st November 2012 and the Edinburgh Gazette Issue Number 27167 and Daily Record dated 2nd November 2012. The Order comes into force 28th January 2013. A copy of the Order as made and the relevant plan may be inspected free of charge until 8th March 2013 during normal business hours at the offices of Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF; Duror and Kentallen Community Centre, Duror, Kentallen, Highland PA38 4BS and Highland Council Service point, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William PH33 6EL.

ANY PERSON aggrieved by the Order who desires to question the validity thereof, or of any provision therein on the grounds that they are not within the powers of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 or that any requirement of the said Act has not been complied with in relation to the Order may within 6 weeks of the making of the Order make application to the Court of Session for the suspension of the operation of, or the quashing of, the Order or any provision contained therein.

R BRANNEN
A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF.

PROPOSED LET OF A CROFT/PART OF A CROFT

Angus MacDonald is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to let the tenancy of the croft at no. 1 Stronaba, Spean Bridge to Lindsay MacDonald of Ernsaig, 5 Stronaba, Spean Bridge.

If you are a crofter, shareholder or owner of a croft in the township, or if the Commission consider that you have a direct interest in this application, you may submit comments on the proposal in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW (e-mail info@croftingscotland.gov.uk) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert. Please note that any comments provided are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information Inquiry. Frivolous, vexatious or unreasonable comments cannot be accepted.

PROPOSED LET OF A GRAZING SHARE (S)

Angus MacDonald is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to let the grazing share(s) pertaining to the croft at no. 1 Stronaba, Spean Bridge to Lindsay MacDonald of Ernsaig, 5 Stronaba, Spean Bridge.

If you are a crofter, shareholder or owner of a croft in the township, or if the Commission consider that you have a direct interest in this application, you may submit comments on the proposal in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW (e-mail info@croftingscotland.gov.uk) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert. Please note that any comments provided are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information Inquiry. Frivolous, vexatious or unreasonable comments cannot be accepted.

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Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

NATIONAL FOREST LAND SCHEME

Forestry Commission Scotland wishes to notify community and environmental groups that it is proposing sale of the following woodland:

Name: Tiroran
Area: 792 ha. (approx)
Grid Ref: NM 479 302
Location: Isle of Mull

Enquiries to Forestry Commission Scotland at ronnie.lee@forestry.gsi.gov.uk Full details are being sent to the relevant Community Council and Non Government Organisations.

www.forestry.gov.uk

The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

THE NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK (ROUTE 78) FERLOCHAN TO RHUGARBH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION BY THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS UNDER SECTIONS 20A AND 55A OF THE ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS hereby give notice that they have determined that their proposal to construct the National Cycle Network (Route 78) Ferlochan to Rhugarbh is-

(a) not a project which falls within Annex I of Council Directive No. 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended by Council Directive No. 97/11/EC and Council Directive No. 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and Council;

(b) is a relevant project within the meaning of Sections 20A(9) and 55A(7) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, and falls within Annex II of the said Directive but that having regard to the selection criteria contained in Annex III of the Directive it should not be made subject to an environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Directive, and accordingly the project does not require the publication of an Environmental Statement.

R BRANNEN
A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers
Transport Scotland
Trunk Roads Network Management,
Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF.
11 January 2013

www.highland.gov.uk

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
12/04701/FUL	Lochan Gorm, Ormsaigmore, Kilchoan	Alter & extend existing garage to form self-contained accommodation
12/04733/FUL	Kinloch Castle, Isle of Rum	Construction of temporary hostel accommodation
12/04746/PI/P	Land 60m North of Faight Camusnagaul, Fort William	Erection of 2 houses
12/04753/FUL	Land 300m SE of Greenwood, Ardsleighish Acharacle	Formation of agricultural access
12/04757/FUL	Land 1.3km SE of Ardantiobairt, Morvern	Formation of access track
12/04785/FUL	Land 110m North of Hawthorn Villa, Spean Bridge	Construction of 187kW hydro-electric scheme
12/04802/FUL	Land 125m NE of Firbank Achnacarry, Spean Bridge	Construction of hydro-electric scheme
13/00019/PI/P	Land 200m South East of Former Chapel, Bracorina Morar	Erection of a house - Plot 1 (renewal of planning permission 09/00473/PI/PL0)
13/00020/PI/P	Land 230m South East of Former Chapel Bracorina Morar	Erection of a house - Plot 2 (renewal of planning permission 09/00474/PI/PL0)
13/00023/FUL	Land 2050m North of The Stalkers House, Fassfern Kinlochiel	Installation of a small scale hydro-electric scheme
13/00030/FUL	Land 460m North of Forest Gate, Mandally, Invergarry	Installation of access path to by-pass forest road and to link car park and trail
13/00031/FUL	Land 75m East of The Stalkers House, Fassfern Kinlochiel	Installation of small scale hydro-electric scheme
13/00075/PI/P	Land 70m East of Swallow Croft, Auchindarroch, Duror	Site for the erection of a house

Time period for comments is 14 days.
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

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Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/00003/PP	Partial glazing to deck to form sun room, erection of extension to dwellinghouse and erection of timber shed	Tigh Na Sith Port Appin Appin Argyll and Bute PA38 4DE	Sub Post Office Ledaig
13/00013/PPP	Site for the erection of croft house	Croft SA Kilvaree Connel Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Connel
13/00025/PP	Erection of 5 dwellinghouses, 5 self-catering holiday cottages and formation of vehicular access	Tigh Na Sith North Connel Oban Argyll and Bute PA37 1RW	Sub Post Office Ledaig
13/00033/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and removal of caravan	Croft 1 Land North West of Dummore Airds Bay Taynuilt Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Taynuilt
13/00035/PP	Erection of extension to dwellinghouse	Fairways Lodge Erray Road Tobermory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6PS	Tobermory 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
12/02736/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and installation of septic tank.	Port Mhor Lower Kilchattan Isle of Colonsay Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay
12/02829/PP	Installation of hydro-electric scheme including erection of intake weir, control building and formation of vehicular access road.	Ruantalain Estate Tarbert Isle of Jura Argyll and Bute PA60 7XH	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura
13/00054/PP	Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse (amended design proposal relative to planning permission references 08/00256/DET and 11/01692/PP).	Tigh Nan Uruisg Upper Kilchattan Isle of Colonsay Argyll and Bute PA61 7YR	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
13/00028/PP	Restoration of ruin (part retrospective)	Ruin North West of Bramble Cottage Craighouse Isle of Jura Argyll and Bute PA60 7XG	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura
13/00029/LIB	Restoration of ruin (part retrospective)	Ruin North West of Bramble Cottage Craighouse Isle of Jura Argyll and Bute PA60 7XG	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Whitegates Office Whitegates Road Lochgilphead PA31 8SY.

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.

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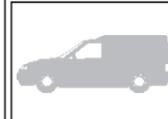
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Y plate, good all round condition, surplus to needs.

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Unfortunately must sell due to illness.
LUXURY CAR at small car price, call 07793 505401.

ONLY £6,100

S & S Services Heathfield, Ayr. John Spicer Tel: 07831 808702

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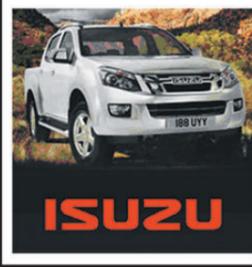
THIS SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY (9am til 5pm) AND SUNDAY 27TH JANUARY (10am til 4pm) AT TESCO CAR PARK

3 YEARS FREE SERVICING	FORESTER.	WAS £32,995 NOW £27,995	WRX STI.
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5 YEAR WARRANTY		AWD ALL WHEEL DRIVE	

SUV OF THE YEAR. £249 A MONTH.	XV. WINNER	2 YEARS INTEREST FREE CREDIT	LEGACY.
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2 YEARS INTEREST FREE CREDIT	OUTBACK.	SHOW SPECIAL PRICE THIS WEEKEND ONLY	The new BRZ Coupe
AWD ALL WHEEL DRIVE			
5 YEAR WARRANTY			find out more here

S & S Services Subaru no1 dealer for the sixth consecutive year and Scotlands best dealer for Isuzu and Great Wall.
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	New Isuzu D-MAX range From £14495 OTR + VAT
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	New Great Wall Steed Double Cab From £13998 OTR + VAT
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	3 years/ 60000 mile warranty

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September 2007, petrol, 5 door, hatchback, 26,000 miles, one year MOT.

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PEUGEOT 106, 1.1 CC ENGINE, 2002



MOT and taxed, alloy wheels and spoiler. A very nice first time car.

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BMW 116i SE



55 reg, Long MOT and tax, alloy wheels, parking sensors, BMW full service history, 1 owner from new.

Contact no: 07920804442

£4250

40 WINTERS OF SUBARU'S ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

With ice and snow returning to cause chaos on British roads once again, Subaru UK is this month celebrating the 40th anniversary of its antidote to hazardous winter driving conditions & the Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system - which has allowed Subaru owners to go almost anywhere since its introduction in 1972.

The technology was first offered as a part-time option on the estate derivative of the Subaru Leone, but was subsequently rolled-out across the Japanese brand's entire range. Today, permanent Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive is standard fit across all Subaru models in the UK range, with the exception of the rear-wheel drive BRZ sports car.

Throughout the last 40 years, All-Wheel Drive has featured on dozens of Subaru models. As well as the mainstays of the Subaru range, such as the Legacy, Outback and Forester, All-Wheel Drive has also been fitted to everything from World Rally Championship-winning cars to the brand's diminutive kei car models prominent on Japa-

nese roads. The 1983 Subaru Rex (badged the Subaru Mini Jumbo, 600 and 700 in Europe) was the first kei car ever to be offered with drive to all four wheels.

Subaru's unique All-Wheel Drive system has also featured on the brand's concept cars over the years. One of the more curious examples is the B9 Scrambler concept, shown at the 2003 Tokyo Motor Show & a futuristic two-seater electric hybrid roadster with self-levelling air suspension, Subaru's hallmark 2.0-litre Boxer engine (this time, in the form of a range-extender) and All-Wheel Drive, enabling would-be owners to continue driving through the ice and snow & something that many other sports cars are unable to offer.

"Looking back over the last 40 years, it's clear that Subaru's commitment to All-Wheel Drive has produced some of the most capable, best handling and safest all-terrain cars," comments Haydn Davies, Marketing Director at Subaru UK. "All-Wheel Drive technology remains at the heart of almost every new Subaru model produced

today, and it's one of a number of reasons why the brand has built up a loyal and passionate following not just in the UK, but across the world."

For more details on Subaru's permanent Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system, contact our sales team or visit our roadshow this weekend at Tesco Oban



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www.hopkinsgrids.co.uk



A pen of Aberdeen Angus bullocks from Ardnacross, Mull, sold to £620 at Oban on Tuesday

Heifer with calf sells to £1080 at Oban

CALEDONIAN Marts (Oban) Ltd had forward 65 store, breeding and Over 30 Month Cattle plus 731 sheep at Oban on Tuesday.

Bullocks sold to 253p for Limousins from J McNicol and Sons, Turnault, Ardfern and £700 for Highlanders from Killundie Estates.

Heifers sold to 235p per kilo for Simmental heifers from J McFarlane, Ballindore, Taynult and to £740 for Luings from M MacKinnon, Eoli-

garry, Isle of Barra. Breeding cattle sold to £1080 for a heifer with calf at foot from Poulton, lochdar and £700 for an in-calf Simmental cow from East Hynish, Tiree.

Over 30 Month cattle sold to £830 for Aberdeen Angus from Achnacreebeg, North Connel; £800 for Limousins from Ardachy, North Connel and £730 for Simmentals from East Hynish.

Lambs sold to £52 and £49.50 for

Texel crosses from I Campbell and Son, Airds, Ardfern, with Texel crosses from Ballinackillichan to £49 and Suffolks from the same home to £47. Feeding ewes sold to £41 for Continental crosses from Ensay, Isle of Mull, and to £40 for Cheviots from Callart, Ballachulish. Blackfaces sold to £30 and £28.50 from Turnault, Ardfern. Feeding tups sold to £55 for Cheviots from Cailaich, and to £44 for Suffolks from Achnacreebeg.

Howmore British Blue bullocks sell to £1055 at Lochboisdale

UNITED Auctions held their annual January sale of 208 head of cattle at Lochboisdale Auction Mart last Thursday.

All classes met a sound trade and all stock was easily sold to a good ringside of mainland buyers.

The bullocks sold to a top of £1,055 for a British Blue cross from Mr D MacKay, 11 Howmore.

Heifers sold to a top of £890 for Limousin cross from Mr Colin Morrison, 136 Stilligarry.

Leading the prices per kilo was Mr D MacDonald, 1 Airdh-mhuillin when his consignment of Limousin bullocks sold to 273pence whilst Mr MacInnes, 377 South Boisdale led with heifers when his Limousin crosses sold to 231pence. Overall, the bullocks averaged £689 per head or 215pence per kilo and the heifers averaged £588 per head or 203 pence per kilo.

Tigharry Simmental cross bullocks sell to £965 at Lochmaddy sale

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 209 store cattle, seven breeding cattle and 12 Over 30 Month cattle at Lochmaddy last Wednesday when a good show of stirks met an excellent demand.

Weaned bullocks averaged 213.2p and sold to 258.6p per kg for a 290kg Limousin cross from 3 Hougharry, Lochmaddy and £965 for a pair of 470kg Simmental crosses from 7 Tigharry, Lochmaddy.

Store bullocks averaged 195.3p and sold to 217.7p per kg and £860 for a 395kg Limousin cross from 10 Hougharry, Lochmaddy.

Weaned heifers averaged 205.3p and sold to 234.4p per kg for a 320kg Limousin cross from Baghnacraoibhe, Lochmaddy, and £810 for a 400kg Limousin cross from 7 Balranald, Lochmaddy.

Store heifers averaged 168.0p and sold to 177.8p per kg for a 360kg Limousin cross from 10 Hougharry and £830 for a 525kg Limousin cross from 7 Tigharry.

Breeding cattle sold to £1300 for a Limousin cross cow in calf to Limousin bull.

OTM cattle averaged 102.6p and sold to 144.3p per kg for a 610kg Limousin cross from 2 Hosta, Tigharry, and £1020 for a 790kg Limousin cross from 9 Clachan Sands, Lochmaddy.

Morris Leslie Monthly Auctions
Wednesday 30 January, 10.30 am
Errol Airfield, Errol, Perth PH2 7TB

ONLINE BIDDING FACILITIES AVAILABLE
In this Auction, items to include: plant, equipment and vehicles direct from councils, national plant hire companies, liquidators, farmers, contractors and national power companies.

Also, direct from liquidator - selection of Volvo, Leyland and Daf buses and from wholesaler/retailer a selection of workshop equipment.

See online catalogue for lot details and images.
www.morrisleslie.com

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www.harbrocountrystores.co.uk

* Promotion runs from 14th Jan until 28th Feb 2013. Offer subject to availability.

Market reports

LOCHBOISDALE

United Auctions

Bullocks
Aberdeen AngusX: £865 and £800 301 Kilphedar £755 11 Howmore £705 299 Kilphedar.
British BlueX: £1055 11 Howmore £955 136 Stilligarry.
LimousinX: £915 136 Stilligarry £905 5 Dunganichy £895 and £875 11 Howmore £865 136 Stilligarry £855 11 Howmore £845 and £835 136 Stilligarry £830 18 West Gerinish £825 356 South Boisdale, 6 Dunganichy and 136 Stilligarry £815 21 Griminish £800 136 Stilligarry(3) and 3 Torlum £780 18 West Gerinish £765 356 South Boisdale and 6 Dunganichy £760 18 West Gerinish and 2 Kilerivagh £755 and £740 136 Stilligarry £735 7 Eoligarry Barra £725 18 West Gerinish and 7 Eoligarry £715 377 South Boisdale and 1 Airdhmuillin £705 21 Griminish £700 6 Dunganichy.

Heifers
Aberdeen AngusX: £670 and £665(2) 299 Kilphedar.
LimousinX: £890 136 Stilligarry £845 377 South Boisdale £735(2) 136 Stilligarry £725 356 South Boisdale.

SimmentalX: £640 6 Dunganichy.

In-calf heifers £980 6 Askernish £800 Drimore farm.

Cows
£1260 11 Howmore £980 3 Torlum £940 3 Torlum £920 Drimore Farm £900 5 Milton.

Prices per kilo
Bullocks

Aberdeen AngusX: 218p 299 Kilphedar 211p 319 Kilphedar 209p 336 North Boisdale 208p(2) 301 Kilphedar 206p 299 Kilphedar 205p 336 North Boisdale(2) and 5 Milton 204p 299 Kilphedar 202p 18 West Gerinish 201p 319 Kilphedar.

British BlueX: 213p 91 Bualadubh 208p 136 Stilligarry 202p 3 Milton.

Blonde d' AquitaineX: 205p 3 Torlum.

LimousinX: 273p 1 Airdhmuillin 255p 356 South Boisdale, 377 South Boisdale and 21 Griminish 251p 1 Airdhmuillin 249p(2) 6 Dunganichy 242p 7 Eoligarry 240p 377 South Boisdale 239p 21 Griminish 238p 356 South Boisdale 237p 6 Dunganichy and 200/233 Stoneybridge 234p 136 Stilligarry 233p 7 Eoligarry 232p 6 Dunganichy, 5 Dunganichy and 136 Stilligarry 231p 5 Milton 229p 356 South Boisdale, 5 Dunganichy and 2 Grimsay Island(2) 226p(4) 6 Dunganichy 225p and 224p 439 Lochboisdale.

Heifers

Aberdeen AngusX: 204p 289 Kilphedar 203p-299 Kilphedar.

LimousinX: 231p 377 South Boisdale 228p 132 Stilligarry 227p(2) 5 Dunganichy 226p 1 Airdhmuillin 225p 224 Stoneybridge and 19 West Gerinish 224p 1 Airdhmuillin 223p 21 Griminish 222p(5) 6 Dunganichy 218p and 217p 18 West Gerinish 216p 136 Stilligarry 215p 5A Balla.

LOCHMADDY

Dingwall and Highland Marts

Weaned bullocks

201-250kg 10 Borve, Berneray, £550, 239.1p;

251-300kg 3 Hougharry, Lochmaddy, £750, 10 Hougharry, 244.4p;

301-350kg - Hastain, Bayhead, £840, No 1 Clachan Farm, Lochmaddy, 248.5p;

351-400kg 7 Balranald, Lochmaddy, £860, Glebe, Tigharry, 236.6p;

401-450kg 4 Tigharry, Lochmaddy, £920, 219.5p;

451-500kg 9 Clachan Sands, Lochmaddy, £920, 7 Tigharry, 205.3p.

Store bullocks

301-350kg 7 Middlequarter, Sollas, £580, 184.1p;

351-400kg 9 Malaglate, Lochmaddy, £730, 194.7p;

401-450kg 21 Grenitote, Sollas, £830, 200.0p.

Weaned heifers

201-250kg Hastain, £550, 2/3 Clachan Sands, Lochmaddy, 230.4p;

251-300kg No 1 Clachan Farm, £650, 14 Hougharry, Lochmaddy, 225.9p;

301-350kg Baghnacraoibhe, £760, No 1 Clachan Farm, 228.6p;

351-400kg 7 Balranald, £800, 7 Tigharry, 211.3p;

401-450kg Glebe, £790, 195.1p.

Store heifers

351-400kg 21 Grenitote, £660, 176.0p;

401-450kg 20 Knockintorran, Bayhead, £700, 164.7p.

Cow with Heifer calf

13 Knockintorran, Paiblesgarry, £1200.

Cow in calf

20 Balshare, £1080.

OTM cows:

No 1 Clachan Farm, (CharX), £900; 2 Hosta, (LimX), £880; 2 Hosta, (SimX), £810.

OTM cows:

9 Clachan Sands, (LimX), 129.1p; 14 Hougharry, (LimX), 127.0p; No 1 Clachan Farm, (CharX), 123.3p.

DRIVETIMES

HONDA PANTHEON SCOOTER, 2007

Less than 6000 miles with MOT & road tax until end of March.

For enquiries or to view call Euan on 01770700712

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VOLKSWAGEN POLO, 2006

1.2 cc, MOT Sep 2013, CDL, ABS, Power Steering, 70,000 Miles, Excellent Condition.

Contact no: 07788177060

£2550

52 REG MOTORHOME FOR SALE

Excellent condition, turbo diesel, 16,000 miles. Valued at £20,000+ reduced to £17,500 for quick sale, as owner relocating.

Telephone: 07771 520351

£17,500

ISUZU TROOPER COMMERCIAL 4X4

Aug 2002, Diesel, 173595 miles, MOT July 2013, rear seats, tow bar.

Tel: 01770 600242

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CARAVAN HOLIDAY HOMES FOR SALE!

In excellent condition. Ideal for letting or staff accommodation. Must be taken off site. View on www.invercoe.co.uk 4 Bedroomed Willerby Richmond 28x12' 2006 Caravans

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160,000 miles.

Tel: 07798631279

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MAZDA 6 ESTATE

Reg July 2003. 2 litre diesel. Manual. One Owner 126,000 miles. MOT August. V.G.C.

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£2300

MANITOU MT 1235CP

R reg. Very tidy with low hours. Any inspection welcome

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RANGE ROVER 2.5 DHSE AUTO

Oct 51 plate. Oxford Blue/Beige trim. 135,000mils. MOT March 2013. Towbar.

Telephone: 07831 569000

£3950 o.n.o.

RENAULT TRAFFIC SPORT LWB DIESEL

59 Reg, metallic silver, 6 speed, air con, cd, onboard computer

Parrot hands free phone kit, Towbar, steel bulkhead, wood lined inside. Taxed and Motd.

Contact 07500786612

£7500

SKODA OCTAVIA 1.9 TDI PD 4X4 5 DOOR ESTATE

Grey, Diesel, Manual, Trip computer, Passenger airbag, Lumber support, Front & rear electric windows, Front & rear head restraints, Heated electric door mirrors, Cruise Control, 6 CD Changer, Skoda extended warranty to May 2013, Winter & summer tyres, 2007 72000 Miles.

Tel: 07764 455859 email: enquiries@jmcn.co.uk

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2007 LANDROVER DEFENDER 110 HARD TOP

Tax and MOT for 6 months. 38000 miles on light duties round an estate. Good condition inside and out. Cairndow, Argyll.

Phone Glyn 07876 072656 or email info@ardkinglas.com

£10,950 inc VAT.

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1 year M.O.T. Taxed August 2013 Mileage 69,495 New Timing Belt & New Exhaust Fitted.

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LIVESTOCK

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Tithebarn Ltd has been manufacturing animal feed supplements at its Cheshire factory since 1935. Due to a recent bereavement we are looking to appoint a sales representative in the well established territory of Argyll. Our products are sold direct to farmers, so therefore knowledge of ruminant livestock is absolutely essential. This might have been gained on farm or in a related occupation but you must be able to speak to farmers on their level.

Previous selling experience, whilst useful, is not essential as full training and support will be provided.

We offer a competitive salary, commission, car, pension, BUPA and full business expenses.

Interested?

If you feel you have got what it takes to succeed in agricultural sales, please apply in writing to: Mrs. Julie Thomas, Tithebarn Ltd, Road Five, Industrial Estate, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 3PG, or for an informal chat contact John Dalziel on 07977 987270.

Closing date for applications: 1st February

HELP REQUIRED FOR ELDERLY COUPLE

Ideally mature couple who are caring and thoughtful and understand the needs of the elderly. Housework, cooking, washing, gardening and handyman work. Rural location in Argyll with 2 bed cottage for right applicants. For more details contact gillian@dippany.com or 01505872380

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Oban, PA34 5NA
info@oes-group.co.uk
Due to an internal promotion we require the following:

Stores Person/Buyer
Must be a team player and have a flexible approach to working. Computer literacy is essential, full training on our buying systems will be given.

Apprentice Electricians
Please send full CV's for either position to Angus MacPherson, Managing Director, OES Ltd
Closing Date Friday 1st February 2013

Argyll and Bute Women's Aid

Children & Young Person's Support Worker
Campbeltown/Kintyre Area
Refuge/Follow On/Outreach
Ref CYPW 0012
38 hours per week. Fixed Term until 31/3/2015
Salary £25,674.72

You will have a clear understanding of domestic abuse and its effects on children and young people, along with knowledge and experience of child protection issues and 2 years experience of working with children in a professional setting. You must be registered with the SSSC or be eligible to register. A current clean driving licence would be an advantage. Some evening and weekend work may be required.

For an application pack email: argyllwomensaid@btconnect.com or call 01369 70 6636. Packs can be emailed on request.
Closing date: 12th February, 2013
NB: Successful candidates will be subject to PVG membership and checks.
Women only may apply under section 9 of the Equalities Act 2010
Reg Charity No SC020012

STRATHCLYDE FIRE & RESCUE

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue are now recruiting Retained Firefighters for the retained duty system at Lochgilhead Community Fire Station.

If you are interested in joining one of the biggest fire & rescue services in Europe. For further information. Details can be found on www.myjobscotland.gov.uk

EUROFOREST LIMITED

Euroforest Ltd is the largest independent timber harvesting and marketing company in the UK. We harvest and market in excess of one million tonnes of timber per annum. This is an opportunity for a self-motivated individual to join a leading company in the forest products industry.

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Applicants should have experience of managing a small office, along with good IT skills plus the enthusiasm to learn new skills. This is a part-time post of approximately 16 hours per week with flexibility to suit a variety of applicants and includes a company pension.

For further information and a job description please contact:-
Email: arlene.dawson@euroforest.co.uk
Tel: 01466 794938
Closing date for applications: 6th February, 2013.

HygieneTeknikk

Experienced Stainless Steel Welder/Fabricator(s)

Based in Oban and established late last year, Hygiene Teknikk Ltd is the latest company in the Aquatic Concept Group, a rapidly growing specialist service provider to the international salmon farming industry with our Head Office in Lillehammer, Norway.

Due to exceptional market demand throughout our businesses, we are currently seeking experienced stainless steel welders/fabricators who are accustomed to fully meeting customer expectations in demanding "high care" environments.

You must be willing and able to regularly work away from home in customer's premises, both in Scotland & overseas. The ability to work unsupervised is also essential, as is a proactive approach to health and safety. Our working culture will suit you if you are self motivated, innovative, and if you enjoy working in small teams with varied skill-sets and a shared determination to succeed.

In return we can offer appropriately qualified candidates a competitive package of benefits. A longer term opportunity to progress further within our flat management structure is also available should that be of interest.

In the first instance please send your CV, complete with work references, and a short letter explaining why you are interested in this opportunity asap to -
Ian Armstrong, Hygiene Teknikk Ltd, Glengallan Road, Oban PA34 5DH or, preferably, to ian@aquatic.as **Interviews will be held shortly.**
For an informal chat please call Stuart on 07917 694683

ARGYLL & BUTE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Patient Adviser

Salary: £20,520 pro rata + 6% pension
Hours: 21 per week,
Based: Lochgilhead

The Patient Advice & Support Service was created to promote awareness of patient rights and responsibilities, and to provide advice and support to those wishing to give feedback or comments, or raise concerns or complaints about NHS care received.

The Patient Adviser will provide advice and information to clients in the local Health Board area, support bureau volunteers, carry out marketing and liaise with external organisations.

Driving licence essential
For further details and an application pack phone 01546 605551 or
Email: info@abcb.casonline.org.uk
Closing date: Thursday 7th February
Scottish Charity Number SC030477

CRINAN BOATYARD

is looking for a person to work with the Slipping Crew.

Boat handling skills and practical boat knowledge including painting and varnishing skills will be required.

Please apply with CV to:-
john@crinanboatyard.co.uk

Carer required for lady with MS in Lochgilhead.

Part time hours available, and bank shift staff needed. Experience is desirable but not necessary.

For more information contact Keira on 07769655519.

INVERARAY CASTLE SEASONAL STAFF REQUIRED

Full/Part-Time GUIDES
An interest in Scottish history and foreign languages an advantage

CASHIERS
Cash handling experience preferable

CLEANER - Part-time

For further information, please apply to:-
Mrs J Young, Castle Manager
Inveraray Castle, INVERARAY PA32 8XF
E-Mail - manager@inveraray-castle.com

STRATHCLYDE FIRE & RESCUE

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue (SFR) are now recruiting **Retained Firefighters** for the retained duty system at Tarbert fire station.

Fire & Rescue personnel will be circulating recruitment information at residential and work premises in the Tarbert area week commencing 4th February 2013, an SFR recruitment vehicle will be located in the Tarbert town centre area on Saturday 09th February 2013 between 10:00hrs and 16:00hrs to provide further information on recruitment for the Tarbert Community Fire Station.

If you are interested in joining one of the biggest fire & rescue services in Europe whose role is to protect the communities we serve and responds with dedication and professionalism whenever and wherever the need occurs. For further information, details can be found on www.myjobscotland.gov.uk

The Scottish Salmon Company

The Scottish Salmon Company is the leading independent producer of superior Scottish salmon. We are committed to high standards of animal welfare, sustainable operations and promoting a responsible environment policy.

Marine Site Manager
West Loch Roag, Uig, Isle of Lewis
Grade 2: Salary £35,720 - £38,872 per annum

Marine Site Managers are responsible for managing and developing their salmon sites to the highest standards and must therefore be experienced and enthusiastic salmon farmers with excellent fish husbandry skills, strong management and leadership qualities and proven organisational skills.

We currently have a vacancy at West Loch Roag, Uig. Applicants must have proven experience of automated feed systems, fish health, growth curves and feed management. The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate commitment to the safety and welfare of the staff for whom they are responsible, to the livestock within their control and to the environment in the local community and beyond.

Hours are 40 per week Monday to Friday with weekend working on a rota basis. We operate a generous company pension scheme and annual leave entitlement is 31 days. A full clean driving licence is essential.

For an application form and job description, please contact:
Dina Mackenzie, HR Assistant,
The Scottish Salmon Company,
Marybank Industrial Estate, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0DB
Tel. No. 01499 600 622
dina.mackenzie@scottishsalmon.com
Closing date for applications: Friday 8th February 2013
Visit our website www.scottishsalmon.com

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Comis Chef and Chef de Partie

Looking for hardworking, enthusiastic chefs for recently refurbished hotel.

Salary dependent on experience.

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BIRTHS

FLANNIGAN - Isabella Rose, a beautiful sister to Taylor born to proud parents Aiden and Anne-Marie on January 12, 2013. Thanks to midwives in Oban and Paisley.



ROBERTSON

Derek and Sarah (née Barnes), are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter Callie on January 14, 2013 at Glasgow Royal Hospital. A precious first grandchild for Jan, Adele and John.

ENGAGEMENTS

BROWN-GRANT

The engagement is announced between Isobel, younger daughter of Johnny and the late Jane Brown, Kilchrenan, and Douglas, son of Tom and Christine Grant, West Lothian.

MARRIAGES

GRAY-STEPHENS

(Auchenblae) Malcolm and Clare are delighted to announce their marriage on Clare's birthday, the 24th December 2012 at Wanaka, New Zealand (by helicopter!)

DEATHS

BRECKENRIDGE - Peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on January 19, Muriel Jean, loved wife of the late Jim, mother of Anne, Donald, Linda, Una and Andrew, grandmother of Scott, Kylie, Jim, Flo, Archie, Abbie, Alfie, Nell and Jem, sister of Edie Lindsay and the late Donald MacLaren, aunt and great aunt and friend to Clara, Joanne, Rod and Richard. Funeral service at Church of Scotland, Glenclutritan Road, Oban on Thursday January 24 at 1.30 pm. Thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery, to which all are respectfully invited.

DOW - Suddenly at home on Saturday, January 19, 2013, Jim beloved husband of the late Molly, much loved father of James, dear father-in-law of Laura and cherished grandpa of Jamie and Christopher. Funeral at St John's Church, Ballachulish on Wednesday, January 30 at 12 noon, thereafter to Duror Cemetery.

EARL - Peacefully at Islay Hospital on January 9, 2013, Michael Pawley Earl aged 96 years, beloved husband of the late Margaret McCallum (Peggy) and the late Betty Collis. Interred in Kilnaughton Cemetery, Islay on Tuesday January 15, 2013.

LEWKOWICZ - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on Friday, January 11, 2013, in her 95th year, Renee Hazel nee Pentycross. Interment will take place at Pennyfuir Cemetery, Oban on Monday January 28, at 2 pm. Thereafter a service of thanksgiving will be held at St. Oran's Church, Connel. All friends are respectfully invited to attend. No Flowers please. Retiring collection/donations if desired for Cancer Research.

MACKENZIE - Peacefully in his own home, Fern Cottage, Oban after a short illness, on Tuesday, January 22, 2013, Alexander Angus Cameron MacKenzie (Alex), aged 90 years. Youngest son of the late Johnnie and Lucy MacKenzie and dear brother of the late Donald and the late Catherine (Bunty). Fondly remembered by family and friends. Funeral service to be held in The Church of Scotland, Glenclutritan Road, Oban on Monday, January 28, 2013 at 12 noon thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiral collection for ABCD.

OWENS - Peacefully on January 18, 2012 at St Francis Hospice, Essex, with her much loved daughters at her side. Heather Owens (née Drummond) in her 65th year, youngest daughter of the late Arthur and Lottie Drummond, mother of Kim and Tracie, sister of Chattie and Margaret, grandma of Christopher, mother-in-law of Allan, sister-in-law of Kevin. Will be sorely missed.

SCOTT - Suddenly but peacefully, at home on January 21, 2013, Pauline Scott aged 53 years, beloved wife of Keith, devoted mother of Wendy and Jay and mother-in-law of Davie and Kris, much loved granny of Eva and Marley. Cherished daughter of Margaret, loving sister of Elaine, Yvonne, Sandra, Marcia and Dawn. Adored by Aunty Helen, Steven and Yvonne. Funeral service at Caol Church of Scotland on Monday, January 28, 2013 at 2.30pm. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Telephone 01397 702128

WHELAN - Margaret (nee MacLeod) peacefully at Lorn & Islands hospital on 22nd January 2013. Precious mum of Noreen, granny and great granny to Kevin, Carolyn and Mason and much loved sister, sister inlaw and aunt. Funeral to be held at Oban Parish Church on Tuesday 29, January at 1.30pm. Family flowers only, donations welcome for the Oban Hospice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CLARK - Alison and Rhuaridh would like to thank all family and friends for your kindness and support throughout Kirsty's illness and also thank you for your cards, letters and visits which have been a great source of comfort to us during this sad and difficult time, your love and friendship is so greatly appreciated. We wish to extend our thanks to all the doctors and nurses at the Beatson Oncology Centre, Lucy, Donna and the Macmillan nurses in Oban and Dr Michael Boyle for their outstanding care and compassion. A grateful thank you to the Rev Liz Gibson and all who shared in such a special service, Guido for a lovely eulogy, Janice and Jeanette for the beautiful flowers and to our piper Jamie MacGregor. Thanks also to Ian MacInnes and staff at D&A Munn for their excellent professional and caring arrangements and to everyone who paid their last respects to Kirsty at the church and at the graveside and who gave so very generously to Cancer Research and Macmillan Nurses the sum of £1,936.90. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

MACINNES - The family of the late Duncan (Eriskey) of Kinlochleven wish to thank all friends and family who came to pay their last respects and for the telephone calls, flowers, letters and sympathy cards received. Sincere thanks to doctors and nurses who cared for Duncan (Dad) in the Belford A & E and HDU, to Father MacKinnon for his comforting service. Grateful thanks to Mike McFall and colleagues for their compassionate handling of Duncan (Dad's) funeral. Thanks also to the MacDonald Hotel for their catering arrangements. Thanks for the donations of £1,170 that will be divided between Abbeyfield House, Belford Hospital and the RNLI. The family would like to express their special thanks to Effie, Allan, Auntie Mary, Griogair and Jimmy, May and John MacCallum. To family and friends who travelled from afar. Moran Taing Giobh Uile.

MACKINNON - The family of Nancy Mackinnon 2 Sandaig Isle of Tiree would like to sincerely thank all family friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy and support following their sad loss grateful thanks to the islands doctors and nursing staff for all their help. Sincere thanks to Rev Elspeth Maclean for a lovely personal church service and to Lachie Mackinnon for his gaelic prayer. Finally to all who paid their last respects and kindly donated over £300 to the surgery and church funds. Thank you one and all

MACLEAN - Hugh and family would like to thank most sincerely their family, friends and neighbours for the many cards, calls and lovely flowers received on the recent and very sad loss of Violet. Great thank you to all the home care team, Jet and Joanne from Carers Direct and nurses who all cared so lovingly; The Tarbert Bowling Club and Isobel for coping so well with the numbers we under estimated for the lovely purvey. Many thanks to the Rev Tom Bryson for a perfect service, which was a great comfort to all; Stan Lupton for the dignified personal supervision of the funeral arrangements and to all who paid their respects at Tarbert Free Church. A retiral collection of £1085 was sent to the Waverley Preservation Society.

MACPHAIL - William and Christine, the family of the late Christina, would like to thank all the doctors, nurses and staff of Tobermory surgery for their care and attention throughout all her years. We thank all our relations and friends, who came to pay their respects in the church and the graveside. Our grateful thanks to the Rev Duncan MacDonald for his spiritual and comforting services in the church and graveside, also to Nick Reed, the organist for his beautiful music. Thank you all who honoured our mother in the church and graveside, and also to Catherine Duffy and Elizabeth MacPhail for respecting our wishes in the church. Many thanks to Billy McClymont for his great help and efficient funeral arrangements. Special thank you to you all who sent flowers, telephone calls, letters and cards, they are much appreciated at this sad time. Thank you to Gerry and Claire of Salen Hotel for their hospitality, food and refreshments. Once again thank you to everyone who made the day special. Ensay Farm, Calgary.

McLENNAN - Duncan, Donald and Maureen would like to thank all relatives and friends for their kind expressions of sympathy following the sad loss of their father, John, (Clink). Sincere thanks to Rev Dugald Cameron for his comforting service and to D&A Munn Ltd for their professionalism in handling funeral arrangements. Thanks also to staff of Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital and the Macmillan nurses for their care and support. Special mention to good neighbour, Maggie May for all her kindness. Thanks to the Rowan Tree Hotel for providing the refreshments. Finally, to all who travelled, near and far, to pay their last respects at the Parish Church and kindly donating £580.01 to Macmillan Cancer Service.

SHAW - Mr Joop Miener and relatives of the late Ian, wish to express their thanks to all friends, neighbours and colleagues for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards and support at this sad time. They would also like to thank Ian's carers for their excellent care and compassion during his long period of ill health. Special thanks are extended to Dr Michael Boyle and all staff at the Lorn Medical Centre. Special thanks to Rev Dugald Cameron, Oban for a very touching and comforting memorial service and Rev Archibald Robertson for conducting the service in Glasgow. Sincere thanks to Ian MacInnes of D&A Munn for his efficient and sensitive arrangements. The sum of £394.92 was donated and gratefully acknowledged by ABCD

MEMORIAMS

GALBRAITH - In loving memory of George, of Langamull and of Drumfingal, Dervaig, Isle Of Mull who died January 20 1995 - Brenda and Family.

HOGG - In loving memory of my mother Anne, who died January 26, 2012. I lost you mam one year ago A life linked with my own And day by day, I miss you more As I walk through life alone. All my love to you and dad. - Sandra. xxxx

HOGG - In loving memory of our beautiful gran. Can't believe it's been a year Since we had to say goodbye Now you're watching over us From high up in the sky Love and miss you always. - Moreen, Lisa, Caroline and Marion. Gentle Jesus up above Please give gran all our love. - David, Alexander and Arran xxx

KENNEDY - In loving memory of Sandy, father, grandfather and great grandfather who died January 21, 1990. Also in memory of Eva Kennedy who died December 6, 2003. We miss you both in a million ways. We spent with you such happy days. You left a place no one can fill. We love and miss you and always will. Emily and Ken, Kathleen and Roddy, Iain and Louise, Bruce and Mairi, Jenna and Norman.

KIRSOP - Treasured memories of John, who died January 25, 2007, a much loved husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather. Always in our hearts and thoughts. - Mary and family.

MACBETH - Lizzie. Unforgettable mother, granny and great granny, died January 24, 2010. The roses will bloom again. - Mima and family, Fort William, Arbroath and Darlington.

MACDONALD - Kate. In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, who sadly passed away on January 27, 2009. Always in our thoughts Sadly missed. - John, Morag and families.

MACDONALD - Precious memories of David Hepburn (Davie), who passed away on January 26 2001. Miss you and love you always. - Margaret, Elspeth, David, Roslyn and Ewan.

Gentle Jesus up above, Please give Grandpa all our love. - Kyle, Emma and Ally.

MACPHAIL - Treasured memories of a very special husband, father and grandfather Norman who died on January 25 1988. Always in our hearts. - Penny and family.

McCULLOCH - In loving memory of my dear father and grandpa Pat, who died January 24, 2012. We miss you in so many ways we miss the things you used to say and when old times we do recall its then we miss you most of all Always in our thoughts. Frank, Mae, Kevin, Tracey, Fran and Ben xx

McLACHLAN - In loving memory of my dear husband Ian. 8 years have passed since the day we lost you Remembered and sadly missed every day. - Christine and family xx

PEARSON - Treasured memories of our precious son Jamie, tragically taken from us on January 24, 1996 aged 27. They say in time you do forget But no morning dawns, no night returns Without a thought of you. - Loved always Mum and Dad xx In memory of Jamie, a loving brother, brother-in-law and uncle. Remembered and missed every day. - Audrey and Gregor xx Love and miss you loads. - Gemma xx and Ashleigh xx

POTTER - 12th Anniversary of our youngest daughter and sister Jennifer Jane, tragically killed on January 20, 2001 aged 17. Loved and missed. - Mum, Dad and family at home and away. xxx

POTTER - Fond memories of Jennifer, a lovely girl who died tragically in January 2001. - Auntie Irene and family.

TURNBULL - John MacKenzie, 10th Anniversary. In loving memory of Ian (Dell), loving husband, father and grandfather, who passed away on January 20, 2003. The hands of time keep turning. And years may slip away, But memories are the keepsake. No one can take away. Always remembered and loved forever. - by Mary and family.

WILMER - In memory of Bert Wilmer, 9 years on and the loss gets no smaller God bless mate - Lee

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Reverend Cliff Acklam donning his sideburns for Sideburns Night.

Rev dons 70s style sideburns for charity

THE POPULAR reverend Cliff Acklam has been reviving the 70s look, when sideburns were a man's greatest fashion accessory, this month as he aims to raise cash for charity. The reverend of Kilmartin Parish Church, Cliff has been growing his sideburns for Burns Night as part of the Marie Curie Cancer Care Sideburns Night fundraising campaign. Having seen first hand the work carried out by Marie Curie nurses, Rev Acklam was compelled to grow his sideburns



Packed congregation attends opening of New Free Church at Caol

The Rev Christopher MacRae, minister of Kilmallie Free Church, welcomes the packed congregation to the opening of the new Free Church at Caol on Friday night. Rev David Meredith minister of Smithton-Culloden Free Church, Rev Iain MacAskill minister of Roskskens Church and Free Church member Colin Murray also took part in the opening service. The imaginatively designed building cost £700,000.

Mary's Meals gain £37,500 from Who Want To Be A Millionaire appearance

AN APPEARANCE by Duncan Bannatyne on the celebrity edition of the television show Who Wants To Be A Millionaire has raised £37,500 for Mary's Meals. Olympic gold medalist The businessman and Dragon's Den television star teamed up with Olympic gold medalist Greg Rutherford on the popular quiz show to win a shared £75,000. Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, chief executive of Mary's Meals, said: 'Duncan is a long-standing supporter of Mary's Meals and we are delighted at what he has managed to achieve for our work by taking part in the TV show. 'Given it costs just £10.70 to feed a hungry child for an entire school year with Mary's Meals, this will go a long way towards helping us reach many more impoverished children, giving them hope and allowing them to realise their dreams.'

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Thought for the Week

Life with lits path before us lies Hymn 517

RECENTLY we have heard how the battlefield of Bannockburn is to be reconstructed to show us how careful planning and preparation can give you the advantage when faced with a severe challenge. Life itself sometimes does not afford us the luxury of awareness and when we find ourselves engulfed by an unexpected WHAMMY it is much more likely to be overwhelming. In response we need to dig deep into our resourcefulness to sustain the enormity of what has happened alas we would rarely be the only one to in these situations. Sharing the genuine unfolding of our deepest emotions, can be a starting point from where we can rebuild our confidence, seek a light at the end of the tunnel and gradually move forward to restoring that inner strength and eventually the peaceful character we used to be. Those of us who know the strength of God in our lives usually feel we have got the edge but take it from me it can be hard to remember that He sees the bigger picture and to wait for its unfolding The phrase I recall to help me out; In those times which to us can seem very grievous God often has plans that are very gracious. Remember the victorious King Robert the Bruce was reported to have lain in a cave doubting his future and upon observing that wee spider eventually overcoming adversity on its seventh attempt went on to do amazing things With every good wish for a calm 2013. Pam Gibson, Treasurer for the Presbytery of Argyll.

The Oban Times
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Fort's Martin Groat takes to the air to get the better of Thistle's Jordan Wardrope 20_104footie02



This heavy challenge on Ryan MacDonald earned Thistle's Grant Fraser a booking. The afternoon went from bad to worse for Fraser - he was later carried off with a serious looking injury 20_104footie07



Ryan MacDonald put in a solid shift for Fort all afternoon 20_104footie05



All eyes on the ball: Martin Groat and Terry Swinton battle it out 20_104footie04



Penalty! Davis Forbes goes down in the box after being fouled by Scott Hendry 20_104footie09



Dave Forbes, a willing runner throughout, spins away from Jordan Wardrope 20_104footie03

Fort record first win of the season

REPORT BY STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

FORT WILLIAM head for Deveronvale this weekend buoyed by Saturday's priceless win against Strathspey Thistle, which took the Claggan Park men to within striking distance of Lossiemouth and Rothes in the Highland League.

16-man squad at his disposal for the 1-0 victory, but is already two men down for the 'Vale clash as Sean Grant and Andy MacLean have work commitments.

Confidence Nevertheless, Fort must have renewed confidence after posting their first win in 14 months and 42 games, not least because their high-flying opponents have yet to win in 2013.

FOOTBALL

The win was 'just what we needed' and hoped his embattled team could upset the odds on Saturday. He added: 'Deveronvale are blowing a bit hot and cold at the moment but they thumped us 7-1 down here earlier this season. 'We did have Dave Forbes sent off after 10 minutes but they



Priceless: Darren Quigg cleverly sends Strathspey keeper Ridgers the wrong way to earn Fort William their first win of the season 20_104footie01

still gave us a bit of a trouncing after that.

'They are a good quality side, granted over the festive season they have not been too hot but we are expecting a really difficult game.'

He added: 'The club is not having a very good time at the moment and we are running the team on a shoestring and with a small squad.

'We need anybody and everybody who can help us out to do so. All we are looking for is one or two people with a few spare hours to come along and give us a hand.

'SFA standards have to be met and we need a bit more support to continue to develop football in the area.'

Against Jags, new Fort keeper Daniel Bell excelled early on,

saving first from Ritchie and then MacKenzie before Ridgers pulled off a great double stop from Andy Maclean at the other end.

Bell was in action again to deny Bobrowski from 10 yards and performed heroics just before the break to save Ritchie's effort.

After 20 scrappy second half minutes Fort looked the likelier

to score and did just that - from the penalty spot. Scott Hendry's 65th-minute challenge on Dave Forbes looked pretty innocuous but Darren Quigg wasn't caring as he sent Ridgers the wrong way to claim three vital points for the Fort.

The win was Fort's first at Claggan Park since they beat Turriff United 3-1 on May 7, 2011.



New kit for Caol Primary School

Caol Primary School P1-P3 shinty team really looked the part at a shinty night at Lochaber High School on Friday after they were presented with brand new strips by local painter and decorator Dougie Duncan. Dougie had another good reason for sponsoring the team - his two boys Gordie and Kian, pictured third left and left in front row, both play for the team. Captain is Kyle Nolan, back left. The indoor event is being run by Highlife Highland. Each age group - P1-3, P4-5 and P5-6 - gets two sessions each of round robin games over the next six weeks.

'The Battle of the Little Big Men'

LOCHABER Phoenix ABC continued their busy schedule last weekend when they welcomed Hayfield ABC from Glasgow for a training weekend.

Hayfield, perhaps the most successful club in Scotland at present, brought their top squad consisting of a Scottish youth champion, a Scottish senior intermediate champion and three Scottish open champions.

Coach Niall Clark said: 'While the sparring was undoubtedly hard due to the quality of our visitors and the fact that some of our boxers are just back after a Christmas break some of the lessons learned and information gathered on the attributes of our members will prove invaluable in the future.'

The visit comes as senior heavyweight Chris Donnelly and youth light welterweight Igor Sliwinski attempt to win their respective national Intermediate titles at Ravenscraig Sports Centre in Motherwell this weekend. Igor is also in action the follow-

ing Sunday when the club holds its first ever afternoon show at the Ben Nevis Hotel.

'The Battle of the Little Big Men' will see boxers aged 16 and under compete as the club

welcomes opponents from all over Scotland to Fort William.

Doors will open at 1pm with the boxing scheduled to begin around 1.30pm. Tickets, priced at £10 for over 16s and £5 for

BOXING

under 16s, are available from Niall Clark (07554994744), Steve Docherty (07767069532) and Vince Lopez (07979321025).



Igor Sliwinski takes advice from coach Stevie Lopez: the talented young Lochaber Phoenix boxer will be in action over the next two weekends. 20_104igor01

Alleycats still lead the way

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER WEEK six of The Lochaber Building Supplies 10 pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre Alleycats lead the scratch division with 28 points followed by Rotavators in second place with 22 points, while Splitheads and Council share third place with 21 points.

Alleycats also lead the handicap division with 25 points. Rotavators are in second spot with 22 points whilst Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are in third place with 19 points.

The top individual scratch games this week came from Tony Whitelocke of Alleycats with 185 and 170, Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 183, Tim Attack (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) with 180 and Colin Pinkett (Council) with 176. David Ogg of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio had the top handicap game of 228.

Tony Whitelocke rolled the top two-game scratch series of 355 whilst Stewart Duncan (Splitheads) had the top two-game handicap series with 435.

Top team games of the week were 612 scratch from Alleycats and 810 handicap from Council. The best scratch two-game game team series was 1176 from Alleycats whilst the best handicap two-game series was 1557 from Council.

Top individual scratch averages are held by Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 174, followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 157 and Rossamy Wareing (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) on 150.

Achintore lose in shock defeat

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LOCHABER Leisure joined longtime leaders Achintore FC at the top of the All Young Premier indoor football league with a 6-2 win over Old Codgers at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

Achintore lost their pole position after going down to a shock 3-1 defeat at the hands of Ballachulish, who move up to third.

Goon Squad consolidated their fourth spot by thumping All Blacks 8-4 while Caol FC are up to fifth courtesy of their 3-0 victory over AA Young.

Elsewhere, Portoway continued their recent improvement in form with a 6-2 win over HW Energy No Stars.

Fort take on Oban Camanachd

SHINTY

FORT WILLIAM Shinty Club will play a pre-season friendly against newly promoted Oban Camanachd at An Aird on Saturday.

Throw-up for the match - the Fort's first warm-up fixture ahead of the new season getting underway on March 2, is at 1pm.

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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.

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Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. 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.

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£3,000 grant awarded to youth rugby in Oban

YOUTH RUGBY

A GRANT of more than £3,000 has been donated to Oban Lorne Rugby Football Club to buy training equipment for youth members.

Nearly 100 boys and girls aged between six and 18 are currently members of Oban Lorne RFC and the money will be used to buy a scrum machine, tackle bags and a new coaching aid that allows players to improve their reactions.

Calum MacAlpine, operations manager at Scottish Sea Farms, said: 'The rugby club is a true focal point for the community and we are delighted to help the young players develop for the future.'

Tight at the top in Atlantis Leisure five-a-side league

INDOOR FOOTBALL

RESULTS: RM Builders 9, Glenorchy 2; Carpet Fitters 5, The Handy Men 1; OES 'B' 0, Atlantis Leisure 19; Oban High School 4, Stobbarts T&T 4.

All results regarding OES 'A' have been declared null and void as they have dropped out of the league. The table has been adjusted.

Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
Atlantis	5	5	0	0	15
Carpet Fitters	6	5	0	1	15
RM Builders	6	5	0	1	15
High School	5	4	1	1	13
Oban Times	6	4	0	2	12
Stoddarts	5	2	1	2	7
Handy Men	7	2	0	5	6
Royal Hotel	5	1	0	4	3
Glenorchy	7	1	0	6	3
OES 'B'	6	1	0	5	3

Colonsay Golf Club

GOLF

WINTER League returns from Colonsay Golf Club: 1 D MacAllister 45 gross, 37 nett; 2 D Binnie 53, 41; 3 C Nisbet 53, 42; 4 S MacAllister 45, 44.

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Muileach's looking for revenge

'We are really up for it and looking forward to giving Oban a hard game'

ISLE of Mull Rugby Club will go into the second derby of the season this Saturday against Oban Lorne with renewed optimism, despite a heavy defeat in the first encounter in Oban.

Mull travelled to Oban with a weakened team for the first game of the season in September last year and left Oban Bay having suffered a 34-3 defeat.

But the island club turns host at Garmony and although Oban's reception will be a warm one, that will all change when Mull's players cross the white line onto the pitch.

Speaking ahead of the West Division Three tie, Mull Rugby Club president Tom Nelson said: 'We fully expect it to be a closer match this time around.'

'We are really up for it and looking forward to giving Oban a hard game.'

'I am expecting a lot of players who missed the game in Oban to be back playing, because they are making an extra effort to be involved in this game.'

Mull claimed a share of the spoils in a hard-fought 15-15 draw with Lanark last Saturday; their opponents had beaten league leaders Loch Lomond the weekend before.

Postponed

Some members of the Oban Lorne team, whose game against Clydesdale last Saturday was postponed because of the weather, were on Mull to support their fellow Argyll players against Lanark.

But despite the obvious links between the clubs, Saturday's match is expected to be a fiercely contested encounter.

Mr Nelson added: 'It was nice to have the Oban boys over to

RUGBY

watch the game and we have a good relationship with the club.

'But when they step onto the pitch there will be no love lost between the two teams.'

Both teams are in a rich vein of form at the moment and each have ambitions to win West Division Three.

Oban Lorne's well-oiled Green Machine will be a stern test for the Mull forwards, who will hope to secure enough possession for the islanders' dangerous back-line.

Buoyed

Mull will be buoyed by the return of talented youngster David Black, who managed to play 20 minutes last weekend after being sidelined with a hamstring injury since May last year.

Dramatic penalty shoot-out win for Under 17s

YOUTH FOOTBALL

OBAN SAINTS Under 17s played Eastwood in the 3rd round of the West Regional Cup at the Community Pitch last Saturday in what was a cracking game of football.

The local side equalised with almost the last kick of the ball to make the final score 3-3 which meant the game went to a penalty shoot-out.

Saints won the shoot-out 3-2 mainly due to a superb display by keeper Craig Maitland who saved three of the Eastwood penalties.

Netting for Saints during the 90 minutes were Aidan Campbell (2) and Donald McCallum.

Saints now play Harmony Row in the last 16 of

the competition. The game is due to be played in Oban on Saturday, February 9.

Other Saints youth team results: PFD United 6, Under 13s 2. Scoring for Saints were Scott Rowley and Couper Munt. Clydebank v Under 14s postponed; Under 15s 1, Milngavie 8. On target for Saints was Stewart MacLean. Lenzie Colts Thistle v Under 16s postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: Riverclyde v Under 13s; Under 14s v Blair Thistle; Under 15s v Morton BC; Milngavie v Under 16s.



Oban Saints Under 15s took on Milngavie in a Dumbarton Development League match at Oban Community Pitch last Saturday. Unfortunately the local team ended up on the wrong end of an 8-1 scoreline which was a bit harsh as the Oban boys played well and should have scored four or five goals themselves. Our picture shows Jamie MacPherson getting to grips with a Milngavie defender.

Saints away on Scottish Cup duty

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints senior team will be hoping the weather improves to allow their Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup 5th round tie against Burntisland United to go ahead this Saturday.

Last weekend's game against Burntisland due to be played at Myers Park, Kinghorn, was called off on the Friday when an inspection found the pitch to be frozen.

Manager Iain Jackson should have a full squad to choose from for this important cup tie.

The winners of the Burntisland v Saints game have been drawn at home in the last 32 of the national competition against top Caledonian League team Cambusbarron Rovers.

Cambusbarron knocked Saints out of the competition last season so if the Oban lads were to get past Burntisland, which will be a difficult tie for Saints, then it would be a great opportunity for them to gain revenge over the Stirling outfit.

Taynuilt looking for players

FOOTBALL

THE NEWLY-reformed Taynuilt Amateurs had no game at the weekend after their tie with Crown Park fell victim to the weather.

However, manager Callum Fox said he would have only had a threadbare squad for the trip, had the game gone ahead, and has called for reinforcements.

He told The Oban Times: 'I am happy with how things have started. The boys have shown more commitment, but that I need more players.'

'Our game was off last weekend due to a frozen pitch, however we would have travelled with a depleted squad due to work and family reasons.'

Players interested in joining the team can go to Oban Community Pitch at the high school on a Thursday night from 8pm - 9pm or contact Callum on 07799 215 006.

Scottish Amateur League - results and fixtures

FOOTBALL

SATURDAY'S results: Scottish Cup 5th round - Burntisland United v Oban Saints postponed; West of Scotland Cup 4th round - Craignuk 2, Dunoon 0; West of Scotland Cup, 3rd round - Lochgilhead Red Star 0, Giffnock North 5; Premier Division 2 - Campbeltown Pupils 2, Centre 2; Division 1A - Tarbert 2, Strathaven Dynamo 4. This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Cup 5th round - Burntisland United v Oban Saints; Jimmy Marshall Cup, 1st round - Dunoon v Aikenhead Thistle; 2nd round - Centre v Campbeltown Pupils; Division 1A - East Kilbride v Tarbert; Division 1B - Lochgilhead Red Star v Inverkip Thistle.

Triallists and Taynuilt at the top

OVER 35 FOOTBALL

Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
Triallists	4	4	0	0	12
Taynuilt	5	4	0	1	12
WC Massive	4	3	0	1	9
Emergency	4	2	1	1	7
Clements	4	2	0	2	6
Spartak	5	1	1	3	4
Hydro	4	1	1	3	3
Sail TC	4	1	0	3	3
Teachers	4	0	0	4	0

Recent Scores: Clements 2, Taynuilt 7; Emergency 2, Sail Trim Coach 0; Spartak 3, Teachers 1.

Golf results

GOLF

ISLAY Golf Club Winter League - Week 7 - played Sunday 20 January: 1 Alexander MacLean 34pts; 2 Samuel Graham 33 pts; 3 Ian MacCuaig 31 pts. C572.

MENS 9-hole Stapleford played at Tobermory Golf Club on Sunday 20 January: 1 Tom Nunn 20 points; 2 Mike Campbell 18 Points; 3 Paul Brown 18 Points.



Action from the match between Oban Hockey Club and Glasgow University.

University prove too strong for Oban in plate semi-final

HOCKEY

West District Plate semi-final Oban 1

Glasgow University 3rds 8

THE FLEDGLING Oban Hockey Club played Glasgow University on Sunday and were on the wrong end of a 8-1 scoreline, despite a promising performance.

Glasgow proved to be the stronger side in the first half, although Oban restricted their opponents to three goals and Tara Pollock scored for the home side.

But on the astroturf pitch at the Lochgilhead campus, which is still unfamiliar to the 'home' team, the floodgates opened in the second half as Oban tired.

Goal scorer Pollock said after the match: 'The ladies all played

very well and are excited about the new challenges that are approaching in the new season.'

The team is currently looking for an additional coach to help progress the club, because of the growing numbers of male and female players.

Interested

The club is hosting a six-a-side indoor mixed tournament on March 16 at Atlantis Leisure and is inviting any team interested in joining.

Anyone interested in coaching, or entering the club tournament can contact Tara Pollock via email at t.pollock@hotmail.co.uk.



Some of the adult competitors are pictured after Glencruitten Golf Club's 'night golf' competition last Saturday but it was a team of juniors who took top honours. The team was: Finlay Sinclair, Daniel MacMillan, Innes McColl and Aiden Cuish.

Friendlies organised for this weekend

SHINTY

OBAN Camanachd and Lochside Rovers begin their pre-season fixtures this weekend with tough ties in Oban and Fort William.

Camanachd, who have returned to the premier league for this season, travel to An Aird to take on Fort William.

The match will be a stern test and give manager Gussie Campbell a guide as to how his team

Weather

Thursday Sunny intervals
Winds light, south easterly
Temperatures 0C to 1°C

Friday Heavy rain
Winds strong, southerly
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.

Weekend Heavy rain

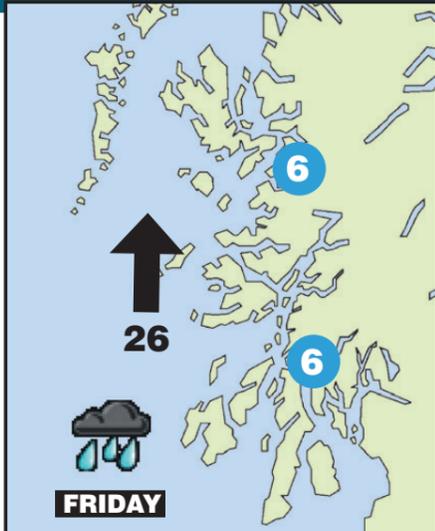
Outlook Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 6°C to 6°C.

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 24, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	03.56 3.3 10.52 1.7 16.31 3.4 22.32 1.4	
Fri	04.37 3.5 11.27 1.5 17.08 3.6 23.11 1.2	
Sat	05.16 3.7 11.58 1.3 17.44 3.8 23.47 1.0	
Sun	05.53 3.9 12.28 1.2 18.19 3.9 *** **	
Mon	00.21 0.9 06.56 4.0 12.59 1.1 18.50 3.9	
Tues	00.54 0.8 07.24 4.0 13.29 1.1 19.16 3.9	
Wed	01.25 0.8 07.24 4.0 13.56 1.1 19.43 3.8	

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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The following pages are from the Fort William (Northern) Edition of The Oban Times.

The Oban Times prints two editions of the paper. There is the main edition as well as the Fort William (Northern) Edition.

Sometimes pages that appear in the Fort William edition do not appear in the main edition (and vice versa).

As an electronic subscriber you get the main edition plus the pages that appear in the Northern edition.

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SCOTTISH **SEALIFE** SANCTUARY

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Church service prayers for victims

THE REV Moira Herkes led a service at St Munda's Church in nearby Ballachulish the day after the accident.

She told the congregation: 'We include in our prayers thoughts for the deceased in yesterday's tragic accident on the mountain and their families.'

'Somehow life must continue. We accept the challenges of nature as part of our living. We also pray for the people who are injured, both physically and emotionally.'

'We give our thanks to those prepared to risk their lives in the saving of others, and do so with a sense of commitment and through thinking beyond themselves.'

The sole survivor said all the group loved the mountains and were experienced winter walkers.

Thanks

Expressing 'much sadness and deep regret that some of my friends have died', he said: 'My sincere thanks goes to the members of the public, mountain rescue teams and other emergency services who assisted.'

Jonathan Hart, chairman of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland said: 'Everything possible was done, as part of an outstanding multi-agency response, to increase the opportunities for survival of the casualties and take them off the mountain before the hours of darkness.'

'It is very sad that there has been such a tragic outcome.'

Lochaber Chief Inspector Derek Paterson said: 'Our thoughts are with those affected and their families at this terrible time.'

First Minister Alex Salmond said the deaths were 'an appalling tragedy'.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 75.5% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 2004



Dead: Dr Rachel Majumdar.



Dead: PhD student Tom Chesters.

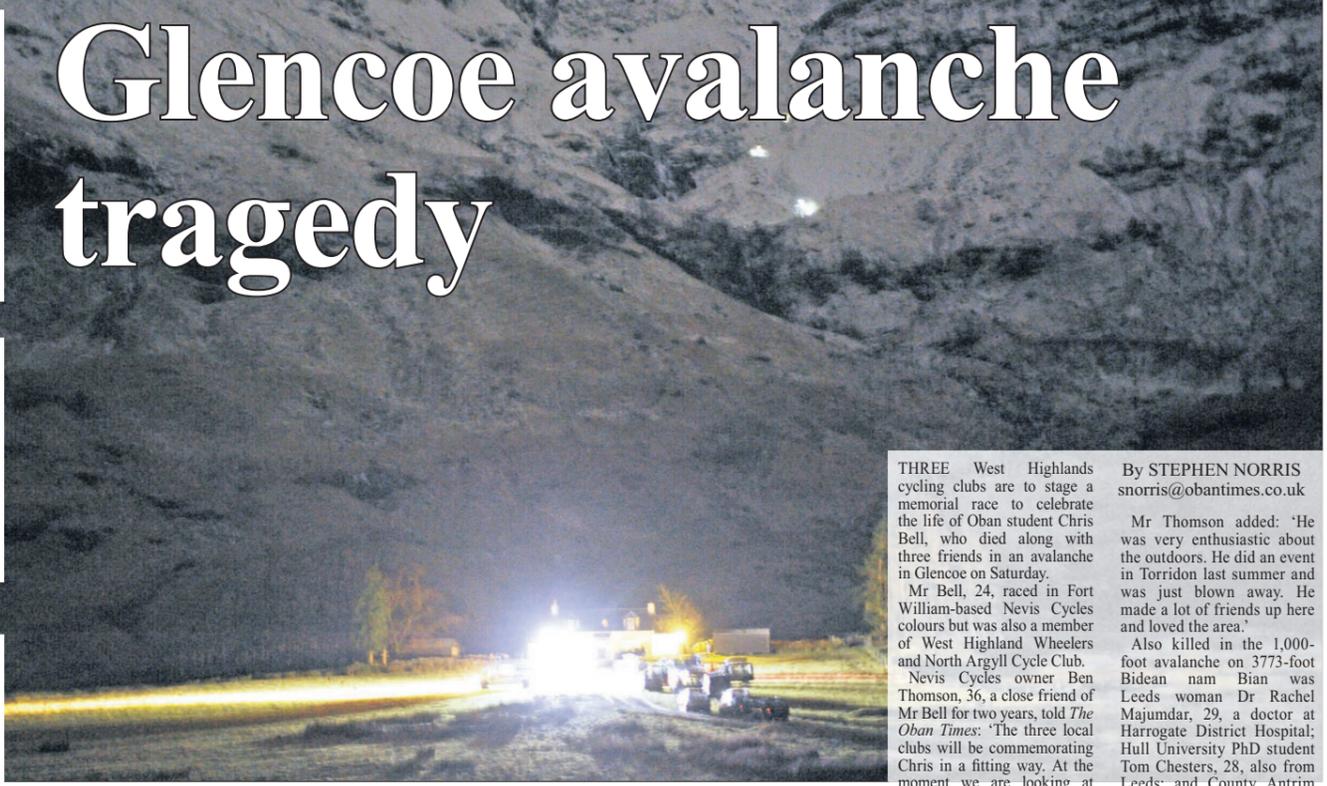


Dead: Oban student and Nevis Cycles team member Chris Bell.



Dead: Una Rachel Finnegan from County Antrim.

Glencoe avalanche tragedy



Death mountain: Climbers descend Bidean nam Bian by torchlight on Saturday evening towards rescue vehicles at Achnambeithach. Photograph by The Write Image.

Deep shock as four friends perish

GLENCOE Mountain Rescue Team members past and present have highlighted the dangers of winter climbing in the wake of Saturday's tragedy.

Retired shepherd Alastair MacDonald said the local community had been left deeply shocked, but added the accident showed that experienced and well-equipped parties could be caught unawares - even with accurate information about avalanche risk.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I was a shepherd all of my life in those mountains but I would never go near a place like that. You don't need much of a slope to cause an avalanche.'

'There could be folk killed on the mountains one day, yet you still see more folk going up there the next.'

Mr MacDonald recalled a day in 1996 in Glen Etive after a blizzard when he was trying to

find sheep caught in the drifts when police advised him to get out.

He said: 'I just told them 'look up there - there's folk climbing the Buchaille and you aren't stopping them'. Those climbers never came back - they were killed in an avalanche that day and they never found their bodies until the spring.'

Andy Nelson, one of the 25 Glencoe MRT members called out, said the snowpack consisted of three layers - 'pretty firm' old snow at the bottom, a softer middle layer of faceted crystals and graupel - tiny rounded snow pellets - and wind blown snow, or slab on top.

The weight of the walkers on the steep slope had been enough to break the bond between the layers, triggering the huge snow slide. Rescuers had to probe an area 100m by 40m to locate the buried climbers.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a really sad accident. You have young folk out on the hill having their own adventure and suddenly things go wrong. It is probably one of the biggest incidents we have had to deal with. You don't get involved in any kind of emotion at the time - you are too busy trying to find people and save their lives. Any other things you can deal with when you get home.'

He added: 'There was absolutely no reason to avoid going into the mountains - it was an average Scottish winter day. But you still have to be conscious whether the avalanche category is high or low and on the day the avalanche risk was considerable though localised.'

'That means you could be walking on very stable snow - but 20 metres to one side it is very poorly bonded and unstable. It is very difficult to gauge that.'

Davy Gunn, of CranKitUp Gear bike shop in Glencoe, is a former Glencoe MRT leader and an expert on avalanches.

He said: 'A shallow snowpack re-frozen after the post New Year thaw, followed by dry snow from the east, then strong winds for days stripping some aspects, vapourising a lot of snow but also dumping loads into pockets in all sorts of corners and unpredictable locations in NW through to NE aspects was always likely to be a cause of trouble - much like laying random landmines in corners on these aspects. Every likelihood that nothing would happen, but always just the chance someone would stand on a mine and maybe if really unlucky it might propagate into a big slide, and if even less lucky end up over nasty terrain or in a terrain trap.'

All of those things happened on Bidean nam Bian on Saturday.

THREE West Highlands cycling clubs are to stage a memorial race to celebrate the life of Oban student Chris Bell, who died along with three friends in an avalanche in Glencoe on Saturday.

Mr Bell, 24, raced in Fort William-based Nevis Cycles colours but was also a member of West Highland Wheelers and North Argyll Cycle Club.

Nevis Cycles owner Ben Thomson, 36, a close friend of Mr Bell for two years, told *The Oban Times*: 'The three local clubs will be commemorating Chris in a fitting way. At the moment we are looking at organising memorial trials for him.'

Mr Bell died almost five years to the day when British champion cyclist Jason MacIntyre was killed on January 15 2008 by a van on the A82 only a mile from his Fort William home. An annual memorial time trial was also held in his honour.

Mr Thomson said those who knew Mr Bell had been left 'terribly numb' at news of his death.

He said: 'It takes a while for something like this to sink in. The word nice is overused but Chris was a genuinely nice person. He was very knowledgeable and the sort of guy who would never say a bad word about anyone. He had a wicked sense of humour, was great fun at a party and played the ukelele.'

'We raced together at the same time and did a lot of events together, mostly mountain bike races. He was a very good swimmer, mountain biker and hill runner and a very fit outdoors kind of guy.'

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Mr Thomson added: 'He was very enthusiastic about the outdoors. He did an event in Torridon last summer and was just blown away. He made a lot of friends up here and loved the area.'

Also killed in the 1,000-foot avalanche on 3773-foot Bidean nam Bian was Leeds woman Dr Rachel Majumdar, 29, a doctor at Harrogate District Hospital; Hull University PhD student Tom Chesters, 28, also from Leeds; and County Antrim woman Una Rachel Finnegan, 25, a junior doctor living in Edinburgh.

One woman in the six-strong party remains in a critical condition in the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow.

One man, the last in line coming off Church Door Buttress, escaped by anchoring his ice axe as the huge snow slab gave way underneath his friends.

He managed to raise the alarm at 2pm after finding a mobile phone signal.

Glencoe and Lochaber mountain rescue teams, a Royal Navy rescue helicopter and search dogs were all involved in the operation.

Glencoe MRT was called out again only 20 hours later to rescue two people from a mountain higher up the glen.

Team member Andy Nelson told *The Oban Times*: 'A couple got stuck on Sron na Lairig. They had started to get themselves down and we helped them out right at the end.'

Lochaber Camanachd honoured at civic reception



Spean Bridge stars: Lochaber players were honoured at a civic reception in Lochaber House. Proud club chieftain Ann Ferguson is pictured front centre. 20_104lochaber01

LOCHABER Camanachd was honoured at a civic reception in Fort William on Friday night after a sensational season.

Local councillor Eddie Hunter congratulated the Spean Bridge outfit on behalf of Highland Council at the celebratory evening in the Council Chambers. Councillor Hunter, deputising as host for Provost of Lochaber Allan Henderson, praised Lochaber's 'tremendous achievements' which included taking the first division north title undefeated, winning 16 games and drawing two.

The team also won the Balliemore Cup and the Joe Toal sixes, and reached the MacFavish Cup final. Players from both the women and men's junior and senior teams also won selection to regional and national squads. Councillor Hunter said: 'I am proud and privileged to be congratulating a team from Lochaber which has done so well. You must all be very proud of your players, coaches, committee and many loyal supporters.'

Councillor Hunter was setting aside personal loyalties to do the honours - he is well known locally as a die-hard Kilmalie supporter.

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Motorcycle testing reinstated on Isle of Lewis

MOTORCYCLE testing on the Isle of Lewis is to be reinstated from February 13, the Driving Standards Agency has announced.

The move means people in the islands will no longer have to travel to the mainland to sit tests. Local MSP Alasdair Allan, who raised the matter with the Driving Standards Agency, welcomed confirmation that testing would resume at Stornoway Airport.

Chef admits assaulting partner

A FORT William chef assaulted his partner after he tried to light a cigarette using a toaster.

Kevin Leahy, admitted seizing Emma Norval by the arm and pushing her on the body at 4 Achriach, Claggan, on December 28.

Ms Norval had been trying to phone police when Leahy grabbed her, prosecutor Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court.

Defending, Hamish Melrose said: 'He wants to support his partner. He is a fairly highly qualified chef.'

Sheriff Noel McPartlin told 39-year-old Leahy: 'A repeat of behaviour such as this will have very serious consequences.'

Annual Burns Supper

LOCHABER Burns Club will hold its annual Burns supper at the Alexandra Hotel in Fort William tomorrow night.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Angus Grant on fiddle and Pipe Major Sandy MacKenzie on the pipes.

Mod men's silver medal competition winner Robert Robertson will sing a selection of songs.

John Howieson from Broadford on Skye will deliver the Immortal Memory.

Police seek witnesses to cylinder theft

POLICE in Benbecula are appealing for witnesses to the theft of a black BOC oxygen cylinder from a shorebase at Loch Bayhead, Locheynort in South Uist.

The cylinder, approximately 5ft long and weighing 200kilo, was stolen sometime between 12.30pm on January 12 and 10am the following morning.

Anyone with information should contact the duty officer at Benbecula police on 01870 602374 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

First Dornie quiz night of 2013

THE FIRST Dornie quiz night of 2013 will be held in the community hall tomorrow night at 8pm.

The social evening, a popular event on the village calendar, raises money for local good causes.

Hall committee member Ann Lloyd told *The Oban Times*: 'We did two quizzes in November and December for the kids' Christmas party.'

'It's an evening out and we get a lot of regulars there who are very supportive. It's something different through the winter. It's not at all serious and it gets everybody together.'

'We normally get about 50 people there and usually make about £200 a time - people are really generous in buying the raffles.'

She added: 'There are four prizes for the winning team - if they have six players they will just have to sort it out among themselves!'



Young Fort William showboarder Keir Coupland vaults over Banavie outdoor sports enthusiast David 'Spook' Munro at Nevis Range to herald next month's Fort William Mountain Festival.

Mountain festival launched on perfect winter's day

THE 2013 Fort William Mountain Festival programme was launched at Nevis Range last Thursday - on a perfect winter's day on the snowy slopes.

The four-day event from February 21-24, which will feature inspirational speakers including top climbers, mountaineers and extreme sportsmen and women, adventure film screenings and mountain workshops, kicks off at Nevis Range on February 20 when local outdoor athletes on skis, bike and foot weave their way down Aonach Mhor by torchlight.

New features at this year's event include a Gaelic language workshop aimed at climbers, mountaineers and hillwalkers at West Highland College UHI on Fort William entitled 'Understanding our mountains through the Gaelic language'.

One major highlight will be the formal

announcement of the sixth recipient of the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture. Previous recipients include Glencoe climbing legend Hamish MacInnes.

Mike Pescod, chairman of event organisers the Highland Mountain Culture Association, billed the festival as one of the most popular in Scotland's outdoor adventure calendar.

He said: 'This celebration of mountain culture, showcasing the huge range of outdoor activity opportunities available to visitors to Fort William and Lochaber, one of Scotland's most stunning natural environments, is the vision of The Outdoor Capital of the UK, which is our presenting sponsor once again.'

'It caters for a wide spectrum of enthusiasts from armchair adventurers to climbers and mountaineers to mountain bikers and budding wildlife photographers.'



Fort Gaelic game show winners celebrate

A TEAM from Fort William RC Primary School got the better of Staffin Primary School on the Gaelic kids' game show *Ghuesta* on BBC Alba last Tuesday night.

Ruaridh Byrne and Eoghan McArthur, pictured above on set with special guest Stephanie Tinney of Portree and programme presenter Linda

MacLeod of North Uist, came out on top after a five-round battle of brains, wit and agility.

There are nine programmes left in the series, which involves primary schools from throughout Scotland.

Ghuesta goes out on BBC ALBA on Tuesdays at 6.35pm and is repeated on Thursdays at the same time.

Heart patients boosted by new drill treatment

DIAMOND-tipped drills are well known for stripping away tons of coal from underground seams in a matter of seconds.

But a tiny version has found another use - clearing narrowed arteries of heart patients at Raigmore Hospital.

Previously around 15 patients from the Highlands had to travel to Aberdeen for the treatment, known as rotablation, each year.

Now, that long journey is no longer needed after NHS Highland adopted the procedure to help people with chronic heart problems.

The microsurgery will benefit those whose coronary arteries are blocked with hard bone-like deposits too tough for stretching with simple balloon inflation and stent implantation.

Rotablation works by inserting the minuscule drill inside the arteries to bore through the blockage, safely breaking up the calcified deposit into microscopic pieces.

New bid to save Isle of Rum's Kinloch Castle

SNH needs 'significant further investment' to secure future of former stately home

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

CASH-STRAPPED Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has launched a new bid to secure the future of a leaky former stately home it owns on the Isle of Rum.

The conservation body has spent more than £1m trying to keep Kinloch Castle wind and watertight in recent years but now funding has dried up.

SNH recently stabilised the castle tower, repaired the oriel windows, replaced lead parapet gutters, valleys and roof ridge tiles and treated extensive dry rot.

But the rambling sandstone property - a popular visitor attraction - has deteriorated through water getting in and requires 'significant further investment' to save it.

As a first step, SNH is setting up a working group of 'experts and interested organisations' to examine how best to manage the castle and its historic contents. Those include a rare 'orchestration' - a machine made for Queen Victoria and designed to imitate an orchestra.

Sarah Bentley, SNH operations manager for Rum, said Kinloch Castle was an Edwardian time capsule that 'never ceases to amaze visitors'.

She said: 'The principal rooms



Under threat: Kinloch Castle on Rum is in poor condition - despite having £1m spent on it.

have changed little since the Bullough family left and house an extraordinary collection of artefacts.

'We have been trying for many years to secure resources to restore the castle to its former glory but the scale of funding required has not been available.'

'Recently we have produced a conservation plan detailing the actions required to make the building wind and watertight. 'We are well underway with the first phases of the plan focusing on the roof and upper walls.'

'But there is much more to do and with reduced budgets we are struggling to find the resources

needed.'

She added: 'Its future should be determined with input from local people and experts in managing historic buildings and artefacts, so we are bringing together a working group to look at the options and help us find the best way to secure a better future for the castle.'

Appreciate

Councillor Allan Henderson, chairman of the Isle of Rum Community Trust, said: 'The Isle of Rum community appreciate the restorative work SNH are doing to secure the future of Kinloch castle in these financially challenged times.'

'The castle is a very important part of the community. With its past history and invaluable collection of artefacts it is a vital tourist attraction to the island and the future growth of Kinloch village.'

The luxuriously furnished castle, built for Lancastrian industrialist George Bullough in 1897, prospered only until the First World War then went into a slow decline.

Ownership of the castle and the island passed to SNH's predecessor the Nature Conservancy in 1957.

Rum islanders now own Kinloch village and some adjacent land.

Lochaber chosen by council to trial new roadside ditch survey technique

LOCHABER has been chosen by Highland Council for a trial project to survey roadside ditches using satellite technology.

The system, called Roadex, prioritises open ditch drainage maintenance to protect road surfaces and remove the need for costly repairs.

The collaborative project, which also involves road authorities from Scandinavia and Iceland, works by using vehicle roof-mounted cameras

linked to GPS software. The video output is analysed and roadside drainage categorised as good, adequate or in need of improvement by comparison with recommended standards.

Study

Technical staff then study the map identifying areas requiring work to decide what is needed, from simple cleaning to verge height reduction, edge stabilisation or creation of a new drainage system.

The council has already pledged to inspect watercourses and cleaning gullies and ditches to avoid water undermining road surfaces.

If successful, the trial will be extended throughout the Highlands from next March.

TEC services committee chairman Graham Phillips said: 'The Roadex methodology provides a means of targeting our resources at the areas of greatest need.'



Guilds mark 125 years with lunch

Duncansburgh Macintosh and Kilmonivaig guilds celebrated the 125th birthday of their organisation at a lunch in the Alexandra Hotel Fort William last Wednesday. Guild long service awards were presented by interim moderator Dr Adrian Varwell to, left to right, Mrs Frances Haggart, Nancy MacDonald and Mary Campbell.

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Work starts on hospital accommodation facelift

KYLE Court, the patient accommodation at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, is undergoing a major refurbishment from this week.

Improvements will include provision of a number of en-suite facilities.

Kyle Court, which has 28 bedrooms within eight flats, provides accommodation for patients undergoing treatment or investigation, but who stay too far from Raigmore to travel.

The £260,000 upgrade is expected to take four months to complete.

Call for radical community land use measures

THE ORGANISATION representing Scotland's community landowners has called for radical measures to broaden community land use and ownership.

In a submission to the Land Reform Review Group, the Scottish Government task force charged with finding ways to make it easier for communities to take a stake in land, Community Land Scotland (CLS) argues for:

- Extended rights over all land in Scotland for communities to have an absolute right to purchase land
- The creation of a land agency to facilitate 'mediated negotiations' with land-owners to achieve land transfers
- An increase in the Land Fund for community purchases to £10m a year
- A streamlining of the

existing land reform act to make it less complex and easier for communities to use

□ A review of charitable status of trusts which hold land and which have closed membership

□ A new deal for tenant farmers with greater security of tenure and possible new rights to buy in community owned estates.

Cameron said the new rights would only operate when Ministers judged it was in the public interest to see a transfer of the land in question and to further sustainable development.

Owners

He added: 'In Scotland half the country is owned by just 608 people and only 18 owners own 10 per cent of Scotland.'

'We are in no doubt that the vested interests in large land holdings will oppose any further change and make the case that such further change is unnecessary, but the evidence is that change in land ownership, giving more people a stake in the land, releases new energy and enterprise in communities and brings wider public benefits than may be otherwise achieved.'

Nevis Radio station granted community licence

FORT William-based Nevis Radio is one of six stations in Scotland to be granted a community radio licence by industry regulator Ofcom.

As a result of being awarded the new licence, the station will be required to surrender its existing commercial radio licence.

Conditions of the licence state that services must be provided on a not-for-profit basis and

focus on the delivery of specific social benefits to a particular geographical community or a community of interest.

Nevis Radio chairman Iain Ferguson told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a very positive step forward for us and it enables us to access more organisations for funding that were previously barred to us. In the past we have been classed as com-

mercial company like Radio Clyde or Moray Firth Radio - something that we have never, ever been. It meant that we were subject to the same rules and regulations, which made it difficult to attract funding.'

The station is supported by 40 to 50 volunteers and only has two paid employees, Mr Ferguson said.

Harris whisky grant boost

WHISKY distilling on Harris is a step closer thanks to a Scottish Government grant of almost £2 million.

Rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead visited the site of the proposed Isle of Harris distillery at Tarbert on Monday to announce the £1.9 million cash injection. Mr Lochhead also met the team behind the project.

He said: 'I am sure that, in time, Harris whisky will develop a worldwide reputation for quality in the same way as Harris Tweed has done.'

'I look forward to enjoying a Harris dram in a few years time.'

'Delighted' Isle of Harris chairman and founder Anderson Bakewell said: 'Everyone in the islands can look forward with real excitement to the prospect of an initiative which promotes the assets of the islands throughout the world and serves as a catalyst for economic development locally.'

Work is due to begin on the distillery, which is expected to create around 20 jobs, in late 2013.

Calum's recipe for young chef success

ARDNAMURCHAN High School pupil Calum MacIver won the Springboard Scotland Young Chef local final at West Highland College in Fort William on Monday.

Calum scored 95 out of a possible 100 points with his mouthwatering menu of chicken fillet steak with a mushroom, sage and lemon sauce on a bed of garlic mashed potato and wilted spinach, followed by chocolate mousse with a vanilla crèmeux and berry compote – all produced in 1.5 hours.

Entries were judged by Brian Hume, general manager of Strathmore Hotels Ben Nevis and Alexandra, and head chef Sam Omale from the Ben Nevis Hotel.

Other finalists taking part were from Lochaber and Kinlochleven high schools.

Calum now goes onto the North of Scotland regional final in Inverness on February 19.



Top chef: Calum MacIver receives his prize from Brian Hume.

Fort FC lotto

THERE were no winners in this week's Fort William FC Lotto draw. Numbers were 3-6-8. The jackpot for the next draw on Sunday goes up to £400.



Flora McKee from Voluntary Action Lochaber presents Shopmobility chairman Keith Gadsby with the PQASSO certificate on Monday.

National award for Fort William Shopmobility

A FORT William charity set up to ensure local people with mobility issues can access local shops has been awarded national accreditation for the work it does.

Shopmobility now boasts the practical quality assurance systems for small organisations (PQASSO) quality mark.

At an informal ceremony at its base next to the An Aird bus and train transport hub on Monday, Flora McKee of Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL) presented Shopmobility chairman Keith Gadsby with their certificate.

The PQASSO system, designed specifically

for third sector organisations by the Charities Evaluation Service, will now operate at Shopmobility for three years.

Preparing for the quality mark took a year and culminated in a site visit by an assessor on November 5.

Co-ordinator Billy Ward said: 'At the end of the day we were informed we had passed the assessment, which was a huge relief for us as a lot of work had gone in to preparation for the day. We were particularly delighted to be informed by our assessor that we were the first organisation in the Highlands to achieve this accreditation.'

'Having gained our accreditation now demonstrates to funders that our charity runs efficiently and is well governed.'

'It proves that we are fit for purpose and ready to face the future with a renewed sense of achievement and value and committed to continuous improvement.'

Flora McKee from VAL said: 'We were delighted but not surprised to hear that Shopmobility had received the quality mark. They are an excellent example of good practice and are continually committed to delivering the very best for their service users.'

Pitches plagued by drainage problems

TWO NEW grass pitches at Lochaber High School are unusable because of serious drainage problems, it has emerged.

Contractors handed over the pitches to Highland Council last spring after completing groundworks but the playing surface has since deteriorated.

Local sports clubs earlier expressed fears that without proper maintenance the £250,000 pitches could suffer.

Now Lochaber Sports Association (LSA) wants the issue dealt with 'as a matter of urgency'.

Chairperson Jane Blanchard told *The Oban Times*: 'It is

taxpayers money, the school has over 800 kids and yet you have no pitches. It is a total scandal and a situation which definitely has to be got to the bottom of.'

'There has been no maintenance contract put in place for the pitches, which are unavailable for both the school and the community. Even in ideal conditions they can only be played on for a maximum of eight hours a week. With a positive outcome we would have two new pitches for the school and limited community use. Hopefully [the council] will confirm they are doing something about it.'

Lochaber High School head teacher Jim Sutherland said the

pitch problem was having 'zero impact' on the curriculum at present. However, that situation could change when outdoor sports get going later this spring.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'We had some limited use of the pitches last summer but at the moment we are not able to use them. I believe there are things in motion to address these issues but I do not know what these things are.'

Ron MacKenzie, Highland Council's head of sporting services, said: 'We are aware of the problem, which has not come as a big surprise to us. We can't do much at this time of year and

are preparing to carry out work when the growing season begins. We will be slitting the ground and infilling with coarse sand which will allow water to flow from the surface down to lateral drains underneath.'

'That should provide a long term solution and we will maintain the pitches thereafter on an annual basis in spring and autumn.'

Mr MacKenzie added artificial '3G' pitches were the way forward. 'It's a no-brainer,' he said. 'There's a long lead time before grass pitches are properly ready. There are also significant maintenance costs as well as limited usage.'

Transerv confirms five-night road closure

SCOTLAND TranServ has confirmed major road resurfacing at Onich will require the A82 to be closed to traffic for five nights.

The work will see a 1.5 mile section from the Onich Hotel north to Inchree upgraded in two phases between Sunday February 24 and Thursday March 21.

In a letter to road campaigner the A82 Partnership, Scotland TranServ road

design technician Liam Black said 'unfortunately' the carriageway was too narrow to allow traffic to pass through the works safely during phase one, which covers the section to the 40 mph sign.

He said: 'These works would be carried out under a full road closure from Sunday nights to Friday mornings between the hours of 9pm and 6am.'

It is expected that this phase would take

five nights to carry out works through the narrow section. The road would open to trunk road traffic approximately every two hours, although this will depend on what operations are going ahead on site at any given time.'

Phase two will start 'immediately', Mr Black said, under a 10mph convoy system to manage traffic through the works. Access will be maintained for emergency

services at all times. Work should be completed by Friday, March 22.

The news follows last week's *Oban Times* report that the resurfacing would only go ahead if it began before March 10. BEAR Scotland replaces Scotland TranServ as trunk roads maintenance contractor in the northwest from April 1.

Dates for the overnight closures have still to be advised.

Death crash driver narrowly avoids jail

Disqualified Spean Bridge man admits causing death of biker

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

A SPEAN Bridge man has narrowly avoided imprisonment after causing the death of a pensioner biker on the A82 near Fort William by driving while banned.

Duncan Stewart was just three weeks away from getting his licence back when his fateful decision to drive his Renault Scenic cost Charles Singleton his life.

Accident investigators found the accident at Achabobane on May 8 last year happened after Mr Singleton overtook a van on a bend.

His motorbike smashed head on into the car, which Stewart had almost stopped on the verge in trying to avoid a collision.

The van driver, Lochaber Game butcher Calum MacLeod, earlier testified that a motorcyclist had been trying to overtake him for two or three miles.

However, Fort William Sheriff Court heard that under recent legislation it was Stewart, not Mr Singleton, who was at fault - because he should never have been there in the first place.

Prosecutor Alison Wylie said: 'Mr Stewart should not have been on the road because he is a disqualified driver. He caused the accident by being on the road - whose fault it was is not the issue.'

Scottish Six Days Trial fan Mr Singleton, 74, who had been heading north to meet a friend



Duncan Stewart: shown leniency by sheriff after admitting causing death of motorcyclist.

at the Spean Bridge Commando Memorial, died at the scene.

Stewart, 63, was taken to the Belford Hospital suffering from shock but needed no treatment.

Defending, Gordon Williams said Stewart 'took a chance' on driving after his friend, who usually drove him to work, had a medical appointment.

'It is a move he bitterly regrets,' he said. 'It is a tragedy for the family the poor motorcyclist left behind.'

'The accused's GP reports he is troubled with anxiety and depression, suffers from regular flashbacks and has lost his spark ever since.'

He added: 'He has not shirked

his responsibility for this incident.'

Sheriff Noel McPartlin told Stewart: 'I do accept that there was nothing that could be said to be at fault with your driving but you were disqualified and because of that, lacking in insurance. It has been pointed out you had no right to be driving on the road at all, and your presence was the cause of the death of motorcyclist Mr Singleton.'

'Up till now causes have depended on instances of bad driving, but parliament wishes to make it clear that those who are disqualified drive at their peril.'

'If they are involved in a serious accident that results in the death of someone they must face serious consequences - and that is what has happened in your case.'

After citing two character references indicating Stewart was seen as 'a good member of the community and a good family man', Sheriff McPartlin chose to set aside the usual sentence - one of imprisonment.

Stewart was appearing for sentencing after earlier admitting causing the death of Mr Singleton, of Kettering, Northamptonshire by driving while disqualified and uninsured.

Sheriff McPartlin ordered him to perform 300 hours unpaid work in the community and banned him from driving for two years. He must also pass an extended driving test after serving his ban.

Cyclist dies following collision on A82

A 75-YEAR OLD man has died following an accident between a car and a cyclist on the A82 between Fort William and Inverness. The road was closed in both directions following the collision just south of the Highland capital on Tuesday afternoon.

The accident happened at the Dumain Straight just before 3pm and caused major disruption for several hours. Road conditions were 'pretty good' at the time, police said. Northern Constabulary advised motorists to avoid the area and put diversions in place as emergency services attended the scene. Northbound traffic was diverted after Drumadrochit onto the A833 and on to the A862 Beauly to Inverness road. Southbound traffic was diverted at Torvean through Kinmylies onto the A862 and followed the same route in the opposite direction to Drumadrochit.



The Grey Mare's waterfall at Kinlochleven: a popular attraction for walkers using the woodland path above the village.

Kinlochleven unites in bid for 'Walkers are Welcome' status
Village a key point on West Highland Way

KINLOCHLEVEN is bidding to join a UK-wide network of towns and villages providing top class facilities and paths for hikers.

The village believes 'Walkers are Welcome' status would boost its reputation as a key point on the 96-mile West Highland Way between Milngavie and Fort William.

Kinlochleven Community Trust registered an interest in joining the 92-strong network last week.

Development officer Moira Hartley told *The Oban Times*: 'We are looking to achieve membership by April. It will help us with funding applications for our local paths network and really put Kinlochleven on the map.'

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

'It will also give us the ability to put the Walkers are Welcome logo on our publicity materials and on the website. We want to set up a Kinlochleven Walkers are Welcome steering group, which will include representatives of Kinlochleven Community Trust, Kinlochleven Community Council and other interested parties.'

She added: 'We have to demonstrate strong local support for becoming part of the network. The application

asks you to summarise what makes your community special for walkers. The fact that we are on the West Highland Way will work in our favour. Kinlochleven is at the heart of some of the finest walking country in the Highlands.'

BBC broadcaster Julia Bradbury, who is backing the scheme, said: 'The Walkers are Welcome Scheme is a truly innovative project. It's such a simple concept - set up an accreditation scheme for walk-friendly towns, then encourage the towns to network together for support, advice and ideas.'

Anyone interested in joining the steering group should contact Moira Hartley on 01855 831779.

Registrar reports eight more deaths than births

THERE were eight more deaths than births in Lochaber in 2012, according to figures released this week.

Senior registrar at Fort William, Isobel MacKellaig reports that 182 babies were born last year, compared with 190 deaths over the same period.

Interestingly, marriages were well up with 245 couples tying the knot. However, in line with the national trend, of those just 116 were religious ceremonies while 129 took place in the registry office. Two same-sex couples also made their vows. Just over 200 marriages were recorded in 2012.

Ms MacKellaig couldn't come up with any boys' names which could be described as out of the ordinary.

However, she singled out Abby-Gayle as being among the more unusual choices for the girls along with Thalia - one of the three Graces in ancient Greek mythology.

The most popular girls' first name was

Anna, with Rose topping the charts for middle names. For the boys, Fergus and Joshua came out equal top, while James was by far the most popular middle name.

Ms MacKellaig, who will soon be marrying her last couples after spending 24 years in post, issued a small reminder that the registry office has been in new premises for the past 18 months.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'This is my last submission of statistics for the registration district of Highland, Fort William and Ballachulish as I retire in August.'

'Please remember, everyone, that since July 2011 we have moved from Lochaber College to Lochaber House on the High Street, back full circle to where the office was in the early 1980s.'

'It then moved a few yards down the road to Tweeddale until 2005 when it went to the college. After six years there we are now back in Lochaber House.'

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Cowal games to lose piping 'major' status

THERE are fears for the future participation of pipers in the Cowal Highland Gathering after the event withdrew its 'major' status for 2014.

Cowal is known as the fifth major, coming after the Scottish, British, European and world championships, and was one of only two - alongside the Glasgow-based world championship - to have a permanent home.

As the final championship of the season, Cowal was the venue where the champion of champions in each grade of pipe band competition was announced.

But the commonly held belief within piping circles was that the championship was becoming too big for the Dunoon event, and some had even anticipated the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) would have removed the major status, had it not been given up.

The Cowal Gathering committee made the announcement on Monday, following discussions with the RSPBA, but said it would continue to host a competition that was 'more fun and better suited to the overall event'.

Cowal Highland Gathering chairman, Ronnie Cairns said: 'We recognise that the increasing competitiveness of the event and numbers of bands attending were putting a strain on the space and resources we had available and that this was leading to unhappiness amongst some of the bands.'

'Although the number of bands will reduce, the level of competition will remain high and key elements of the pipe band event like the massed bands and the march down Argyll Street at night will remain.'

Oban Pipe Band pipe major Euan Dewar said: 'I have been going to the Cowal competition since I was a young boy and I have a soft spot for the event but the way things were going, they didn't have the facilities to support the championship and there were complaints from some bands.'

'Oban will probably still go to Dunoon in 2014 but it won't be the same.'

Council employees may face redundancy 400 could face job loss

SOME 400 council employees could be facing redundancy as Argyll and Bute Council discusses plans to shave some £6million from its annual budget.

The Oban Times can reveal that trade unions met with officials from the local authority last week for negotiations over the plans, which could reduce the council's workforce by 10 per cent.

If approved, it would mean the council will have shrunk by nearly 1,000 employees - to around 4,100 in recent years.

News of the discussions come weeks after it emerged the authority was to cut cleaning hours at local schools by 20 per cent.

A council source said 'tough decisions' had to be made if services were to be protected and that other measures were still being considered.

Details of the proposed staff cuts emerged as the authority announced it is to publish its budget proposals today (Thursday), three weeks ahead of its budget decision meeting on February 14.

"We would be failing as a council if we simply chose to keep pushing the problem into the future."

James Robb, lead councillor for strategic finance

The move comes after the council agreed in October to take a new approach to the budget setting process by looking seven years ahead.

Projections show a budget shortfall of around £40million over that time, with the authority saying a longer-term approach would allow 'better management of difficult and challenging decisions.'

Lead councillor for strategic finance, James Robb, said: 'The new approach to the budget process has been widely welcomed for its transparency and because it provides a clearer picture of the challenges that we face in the longer term.'

'In October the council agreed that savings options of £5.8 million should be developed, and the proposals in the budget pack meet this requirement.'

'They do include some difficult choices, but we would be failing as a council if we simply chose to keep pushing the problems into the future.'

Feedback from the council's budget consultation will still play a part, he added.

'There is the possibility of changes to these proposals as a result of the various consultations but only on the basis that an equivalent saving will have to be found.'

To respond to the council's budget consultation, log on to argyll-bute.gov.uk/budgetconsultation2013, which includes a budget simulator to help see the types of decisions that have to be made.

Information about the budget is also available in public libraries and council offices. You can also write to: Budget Consultation 2013, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT or email budget@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Council failing heritage, culture and arts claim

ARGYLL and Bute Council has been told to re-think its priorities for the next 10 years after being accused of failing to provide a strategy for heritage, culture and the arts.

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee made the claim at a meeting of the local area community planning group (LACPG) in Oban last Wednesday following a presentation by community planning manager Eileen Wilson on the council's Single Outcome Agreement.

The Single Outcome Agreement is a statutory document agreed between the Scottish Government and Community Planning Partnerships across all 32 local authorities that aims to improve outcomes for local people.

In an impassioned email to Ms Wilson, the councillor says the presentation prompted a useful discussion but highlighted little mention of 'heritage, culture, arts and (to a lesser degree) tourism' and bemoaned an over-reliance on volunteers.

She added: 'There are no two ways about it, culture, arts, heritage and tourism needs strategic co-ordination. It is vitally important for both understanding ourselves, attracting tourists and indeed for our economic growth.'

'We have been uncommonly poor at this in the past, paying a pittance per head of population to support culture. It is ridiculous to think that in Argyll and the Isles our offering is second to none yet we have the smallest spend per head of population in Scotland.'

Councillor Glen-Lee's comments are supported by Argyll and the Isles Tourism Ltd, MSP Mike MacKenzie, Creative Scotland CEO Andrew Dixon and Catherine Gillies, chairwoman of Argyll and Bute Museums and Heritage Forum.



Eilidh MacInnes picks up her delivery of Jackson Bros haggis from butchers, from left: Sean Grant, James Paterson and Alastair Jackson. 16_104haggis01

Eilidh and haggis head for Iraqi Burns night

First Highland dancer at British Embassy

A DANCE teacher from Oban is travelling to Iraq to perform at the British Embassy's Burns Supper, becoming the first Highland dancer to do so.

And Eilidh MacInnes will have to make space in her luggage for haggis donated by Oban's Jackson Bros butchers. Eilidh, who has previously

performed for various British regiments, is to dance at the embassy in Erbil following the invitation from The Caledonian Society of Kurdistan in Northern Iraq.

Eilidh, who has her own dance school in Oban, said: 'I am told this is the first time they have had a Highland

dancer at the event, so they want me to teach them a few ceilidh dances too.'

'They also said I had to bring a ceremonial haggis!'

Eilidh planned to fly from Heathrow to Vienna yesterday, before travelling to Iraq today (Thursday) and returning on Sunday.

Faulty alarms are branded 'useless'

CONCERNS have been raised over the suitability of some remote tele-care alarms handed to Argyll and Bute residents, after a 73-year-old woman branded the system 'useless'.

Over the weekend, the Tunstall system given to Fiona MacKinnon, Kirkcubbin, wrongly called medical professionals to her home eight times in one night following a repeat of a seemingly irreparable malfunction.

While Argyll and Bute Council has dispatched several engineers to the woman's house in a bid to repair the system over the past year it continues to fail, leaving Fiona - who suffers Dystonia, a crippling neurological condition that causes fits of involuntary muscle contractions - in fear for her own and others' lives.

The 49-year-old said: 'It either goes off for no reason or it doesn't work when I need it.'

'What happens if my alarm goes off wrongly and takes a doctor here, only for something to happen somewhere else on the island? It could cost someone their life.'

NHS Highland said it was aware of the issue and working with the council to resolve it, adding it would always respond if the alarm goes off.

However, the health board refused to say who met the cost of a false call out in the event of equipment failures.

Argyll and Bute Council had made no response at the time of going to press.

West Highland top cops appointed

TWO SENIOR police officers have been selected to head up the Highlands and Islands and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire areas when the single Scottish police force comes into effect.

A new team of 14 commanders has been appointed to lead local policing across the country.

Chief superintendent Russell Dunn will head up Argyll and West Dunbartonshire, while chief superintendent Julian Innes will be his Highlands and Islands counterpart.

Scotland's eight police forces are being merged into a single Scottish force from the start of April, under chief constable Stephen House.

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Confusion could be blamed for BID4Oban non-payment

CONFUSION over who is due to pay towards the BID4Oban movement is being blamed for a third of the town's eligible businesses failing to pay their levy.

More than 150 of the town's 456 eligible traders failed to pay the compulsory Business Improvement District (BID) levy at the first time of asking, with some saying not meeting the bill was a conscious decision.

However, the BID4Oban company, which will use the funds to help bring greater prosperity for all local traders, says it can only succeed if the town pulls together following the majority vote to support the movement.

John Forteith, chairman of the BID4Oban board, said: 'BID4Oban expected that the first round would be challenging, there was initial confusion when bills were sent out and this is something that is new to every business.'

'We all need to pull together. By far the majority of businesses in the town are very positive about the BID.'

A letter was sent to those businesses that have so far failed to pay, warning they could potentially face court action if they maintain their stance. BID manager, Nic Jones, said: 'I do know businesses were individually contacted but I'm very aware times are very difficult for businesses in the town, the BID itself will aim to improve that as much as we can - all businesses will reap the rewards.'

'I'm sincerely hoping the council won't have to take further action and the letter will jog a lot of people's memories.'

One businessman who refused to pay and voted against the plan said: 'This isn't a case of people forgetting. Businesses don't want to pay.'

'One reason is the period of time we are living in. Money is so tight right now it is unbelievable, businesses are hanging on by their fingertips.'

Blockbuster trade-off as buyer sought

OBAN'S branch of Blockbuster will continue to trade for the time being while a buyer for the ill-fated company is sought.

The film rental store went into administration on January 16 and at the weekend announced the closure of 23 stores throughout Scotland.

The George Street store is among 43 to continue to trade for the time being.

A spokeswoman for Blockbuster said: 'We don't have any more detail with regards specific shops at the moment. Stores are still open for trade as normal.'

She added there was no timetable for closures of stores at this stage.



Pictured at the newly refurbished war memorial are volunteers Bert MacBrayne and Hugh MacCorquodale. 16_103memorial01

Help for Heroes gain from Oban war memorial campaign fund

EX-SERVICEMEN who joined forces with *The Oban Times* 17 years ago to refurbish Oban's war memorial are this week donating left-over funds from their appeal to Help for Heroes.

Campaign

Oban's previous Royal British Legion Scotland (RBL) committee and *The Oban Times* led a fundraising campaign between 1996 and 1998 to improve the state of the memorial on Oban's Esplanade, after appeals to Argyll and Bute Council fell on deaf ears.

Last week First Minister Alex Salmond announced a

£1million fund to clean and restore Scotland's memorials in readiness for next year's 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War.

Servicemen's charity

And following the creation of the Scottish Government's Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund it was decided the remaining £3,561 in the Oban war memorial bank account should be donated to the servicemen's charity.

Former RBL Oban chairman Bert MacBrayne said: 'We considered the war memorial to be in a bad state of disrepair but

the council did not agree.

'We then asked a firm of consultant engineers to carry out a survey and they confirmed what we had believed.

'We decided to raise the money off our own backs and were helped by *The Oban Times*.

'Within two years we had raised the money and carried out the work ourselves but without *The Oban Times*' help it would have taken a lot longer.

'Because the work on the memorial has been made to last and with the announcement of the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund, we thought it

was fitting to give the remaining funds to help those in active service today.'

During the campaign £11,705 was raised thanks mainly to donations from *Oban Times* readers from all over the UK.

Master stone mason Hugh MacCorquodale, Mr MacBrayne and committee secretary John MacCallum oversaw the repair work, which included pointing, letter work, cleaning and covering the memorial in sealant to protect it against the weather.

The volunteers also built a wall around it.

£80m investment in Oban and Lorn over next 10 years gets cautious welcome

'As it stands there are a lot of individual interests in Oban Bay but no single port authority'

EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by

EUAN PATERSON

epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

'There needs to be better engagement with the community.'

ASPIRATIONAL plans to invest more than £80m in the Oban and Lorn area in the next 10 years have been cautiously welcomed by councillors.

At a specially convened Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee last Wednesday, councillors heard plans for the proposed Lorn Arc project, which required an estimated total investment of £46,450,000.

Council planners outlined how that money would be spent over the next 10-year period, adding that £6.9m of CHORD money and a potential £30m invested in a new Oban High School could also be available during that period.

Roughly half of the Lorn Arc funding (£23,750,000) would be applied for through the tax incremental finance (TIF) scheme, a Scottish Government loan used for economic development, which would be paid back over 25 years through additional business rates and port fees generated by the council, pending a successful business case.

Robert Pollock, the council's head of economic development, highlighted potential marine development sites at Barcaldine's Marine Resource Centre and in Connel, at the west entrance to Shore Road.

He said: 'We have done a lot of work with Scottish Power Renewables and Scottish and Southern Energy to find out their requirements. The upshot of that is there is a significant opportunity for operations and maintenance to be situated in the Lorn area.'

The TIF plan identifies a total £10.75m spend at Barcaldine to improve access and provide an industrial port to cater for 'offshore renewable facilities'.

Sandy Mactaggart, executive director for development and infrastructure, explained how £6m of TIF money could fund an extension to the North Pier in Oban, extending the berthing area, create more car parking and improve utilities at the pier.

However, the plan states any development should be linked with the CHORD plan to improve the North Pier.

Mr Mactaggart added: 'As it stands there are a lot of individual interests in Oban Bay but no single port authority. I had a meeting with various groups with an interest in the pier and one of the uniting factors was, on safety terms, to forge a single port authority.'

Further projects outlined in the TIF plan include regenerating the area of 'Oban south', an area south of the town centre, and upgrading Oban Airport.

The report was welcomed by councillors, who had a warning that the council had to 'get it right' because of them amount of money involved.

Councillor Iain MacDonald told the planners: 'There is a lot of work going on here and the likes of Oban Airport is a bit of a mystery. We need to get this information into the community so they have an understanding of what is going on.'

'There are huge concerns within the community about what this all means and I am sure it is down to people not understanding where you are going with it, because at this stage it is all very academic.'

'I now know where you are going with it and I believe you will get there but there needs to be better engagement with communities.'

Tobermory Harbour Association moves towards single port authority status

IN ITS 30th anniversary year, the Tobermory Harbour Association (THA) has taken the first major step to become the single harbour authority for the town.

'Next level'

At a recent public meeting in Tobermory, Lorna Spencer, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd's (CMAL) director of harbours said she had made recommendations that the move should take place, adding that she had found THA to be well organised and professional and, in her opinion, had the ability to take Tobermory Harbour to the 'next level'.

However for CMAL and Transport Scotland to work

with THA, the local body would have to acquire Modern Trust Port status, a process that is underway. THA would also have to successfully attain a Harbour Empowerment Order.

These legislative powers would protect the business as a community based company.

THA chairman Brian Swinbanks said: 'We are delighted with this news because it is an historical fact that Tobermory has never had statutory authorities in place, whereas the likes of Oban and Mallaig did.'

'The outside world is beginning to encroach on us, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the need for port security, and we are dealing as

the harbour authority but without the recognition of one.

'Under these changes the community would have the rights associated with any harbour authority, meaning we would have more powers.'

At the meeting, councillor Mary-Jean Devon called on the public to ask questions and raise issues to ensure that THA could deal with concerns and move things forward. Brian Swinbanks endorsed this, urging anyone who has any questions, or hears anyone else with issues, to contact THA.

No objections were raised to THA starting the process of moving toward becoming a Modern Trust Port.



Julie Fowlis, Kirsteen MacDonald, Christine Primrose, Mary Ann Kennedy and Maighread Stewart perform at the SMO@40 concert.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig celebrates with 40th anniversary concert

'It was a night for joy and thankfulness'

GLASGOW City Halls was jam-packed on Saturday night for Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's special 40th anniversary concert, SMO@40, at the Celtic Connections festival.

A host of musical stars with ties to the Gaelic college on Sleat were onstage to celebrate its contribution to the language and Scottish culture.

Musicians and singers included Gaelic singer Julie Fowlis, renowned Irish pianist and composer Professor Micheal O'Suilleabhain, fiddler Alasdair Fraser, Fergie MacDonald, Christine Primrose, Margaret Stewart, James Graham, Allan MacDonal, Decker Forrest, Mary Ann Kennedy, Dàimh, Allan Henderson, Iain MacDonal, Angus Nicholson, Ingrid Henderson, Andrew MacPherson, Murdo Cameron, Alasdair White, Eilidh MacFadyen, Natalie Haas, Niall Keegan, Sandra Joyce and Ken-

neth Edge. SMO chairman, Sheriff Roddy John MacLeod, said afterwards: 'Tonight has been a terrific night here in Glasgow. We knew it would be because what you had here was a stellar line-up of many of the best musicians in Scotland - and some from abroad - who had all wanted to come together and give of their talents in celebration of what Sabhal Mòr Ostaig means to them.'

'It was a night for joy and thankfulness. Joy that the College has reached this milestone in such robust good health and thankfulness for the many who strove so hard over the years to make that happen.'

'Many of those were with us here tonight, many couldn't be and some, sadly, have passed away.'

'On behalf of Sabhal Mòr, our deepest gratitude to them all.'

Parking idea could reinvigorate Oban town centre

COULD a change in the way on-street parking is charged for help reinvigorate Oban's town centre?

At the Oban, Lorn and Isles planning committee in Oban's Corran Halls last Wednesday, Denise Willis, Lismore, suggested making the first hour of parking free to encourage people to stop in the town and visit local retailers. Charges for parking time thereafter would be higher than existing rates to ensure the amount taken balances overall. She said: 'It would go some way to addressing the problem of people not using the shops - it's already done all over Scotland.'

'It may be that the costs to do it are insurmountable but I think it's worth looking at.'

Argyll and Bute Council's executive director of development and infrastructure services, Sandy Mactaggart, is to look into the proposal.

He said: 'It's a very good suggestion. Parking is something we're working on now. The council in December gave me the green light to begin the process of decriminalising parking so we can enforce parking ourselves on George Street.'

'It is clear our town centres are changing and parking is an important factor in helping to better the economy. What we want is lots of throughput - we don't want lots of people parking there all day. We need the throughput to make it easier for people to stop and shop.'

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Lorn Lines

MEMBERS of Lorn Garden Club enjoyed an interesting and entertaining presentation entitled 'Plant Hunting in Nepal' with Maurice Wilkins, head gardener at Arduaine Gardens. Maurice made two separate expeditions with other gardeners to the north eastern area of Nepal, close to Kachengunga, the world's third highest peak. Several of the seeds collected can be seen now as flourishing plants at Arduaine. The next meeting of the club will be on Tuesday February 19 in St John's Cathedral Hall, Oban, at 7.30pm when David Rankin from Kevock Nursery will be talking about Wild, Wet and Woodland gardening and bringing plants for sale from his Chelsea award-winning nursery.



THE LOCAL Scottish Wildlife Trust group enjoyed an informative talk recently concerning the progress of the Scottish Beaver Trial in north Knapdale. Roisin Campbell-Palmer, operations manager of the project, told members of the interest shown by the public in the trial and the success of the guided walks through which the team explains to visitors why the trial was set up. The beavers, released under controlled conditions for a five-year period, are settling in well and producing kits each year. Beavers were hunted to extinction 400 years ago for their fur and scent glands and have already been re-introduced to many countries in Europe where they are reclaiming their old habitats. The next evening lecture will be at the Scottish Marine Institute, Dunstaffnage, on Thursday February 21 at 7.30pm when Trevor Davies will speak on 'Alaska's Inside Passage', followed by refreshments. Everyone welcome.



A GROUP of history enthusiasts has set about documenting the stories and heritage of Ardcattan Parish. Ardcattan Parish Archive held its first public event on Saturday in the Victory Hall, Benderloch, when a large collection of books, historical documents and pictures made up a display called All Our Stories. It was the first in a series of public events to be run by the group, which has been granted £9,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Group member Jill Bowis said: 'We are just starting to develop a sense of the place and get a greater appreciation of our heritage. 'We have a huge deal of literature for our collection but no catalogue of what is there, so through this project we will get archivists to train group members in how to document everything.' More than 40 members of the public joined the group at its event last Saturday. The archive will be displayed at this year's Lorn Show on August 3 but the Ardcattan Parish Archive group will be leading various public events throughout the year to encourage more participation from locals. A long-term ambition for the group is to establish a museum, with sections sited throughout the expansive parish. Another group member, Campbell Cameron, added: 'There have been some great stories of the area surfacing from this project and we want more people to get involved in this. 'We have one of the richest histories in Argyll. Kilmartin, for example, has one section of history that is brilliant and not to be underestimated but we have so much over a huge period of time.'



The Ardcattan Parish Archive group, from left: Steven Greener, Campbell Cameron, Sian Griffiths, Rob Watt, Jill Bowis and Walter Burton. Not pictured are Roddy and Caroline Campbell. 16_103ardcattan01



AROUND £500 was raised at Oban Pipe Band's quiz in the town's Masonic Lodge, which was at capacity to accommodate all 21 teams. There was also a donation of £500 from Oban Community Council.



Community councillors Kenny MacIntyre and Marri Malloy present a £500 cheque to Oban Pipe Band Pipe Major Euan Dewar and Pipe Sergeant Iain Hurst. 15_104cheque01

Send your news from Oban and Lorn to Euan Paterson epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

Three Argyll piers to gain from £2.7 million funding package

THREE Argyll piers are set for facelifts thanks to a £2.7 million share of the Scottish Government's recently announced 'shovel ready' funding. Tobermory, Kerrera and Tarbert Loch Fyne ferry ports will benefit from an overall £205 million funding package. Maintenance work to the port at Tobermory, costing £600,000, can now begin. It will see new concrete and steelwork installed to the slipway walls as well as the masonry repointed. The Scottish Government says it has long term improvements to be made to the Isle of Kerrera ferry service and is working with Argyll and Bute Council. This includes port infrastructure

on both sides of the crossing. The second of the government's new hybrid ferry vessels, which is currently under construction at Ferguson's shipyard on the Clyde, is to be deployed on the Tarbert to Portavadie route across Loch Fyne. **Overnight** Work on the project includes adapting the port to accommodate overnight berthing of the new longer vessel. Transport minister Keith Brown said: 'Our ferry ports play a crucial role in supporting the delivery of ferry services across Scotland and are key economic drivers for some of our key industries like tourism and food and drink. 'We have already directly committed £26 million to maintaining and improving ports and harbour infrastructure since 2007 and have set out a further £73 million in our recently published ferries plan for improvements to port infrastructure over the next decade.' The exact level of funding for Tarbert harbour will depend on

the conclusion of discussions between the Tarbert Loch Fyne Harbour Authority and the Grant Management Group, which advises Scottish Ministers on pier and harbour investments. Similarly, the level of funding of works supporting the Kerrera service will depend on the final decisions on options available, said the Scottish Government.



Colonsay islanders fear the MV Lochnevis would not be able to meet the island's needs.

Colonsay casts off ferry plan option

Colonsay Community Council meeting hears concerns over Scottish Government's Final Ferries Plan proposals

COLONSAY residents have demonstrated their opposition to the Scottish Government's Final Ferries Plan with a unanimous public vote. The Colonsay Community Council meeting on January 16 was attended by 26 members of the public - almost one quarter of the island's population - and a discussion on the plan resulted in a unanimous vote to reject proposed changes to the island's ferry services. Under Transport Scotland's Ferries Plan (2013-2022), the proposals for the medium term envisage the current ro-ro vessel for the Small Isles being reassigned to provide an all year service dedicated vessel for Colonsay. Those present felt the proposed replacement boat, the MV Lochnevis, would not be able to meet the island's needs. The two boats which currently serve the island, the MV Isle of Mull and the MV Lord Of The Isles, have car-carrying capacities of 70 and 54, respectively. The likely replacement boat, the MV Lochnevis, only has the capacity to carry 16 cars. Island resident Andrew MacGregor pointed out the problems with the proposal: 'If a large articulated vehicle is on the boat, this leaves room for only three cars; there will also be more pitching with the Lochnevis.' Mike McNichol, community council secretary, said he had been told by his counterparts in Egg and Rum that the Lochnevis only successfully completed around half of its sailings during the winter and Andrew MacGregor warned that frequent cancellations could disrupt petrol, diesel and gas supplies to the island. After the discussion, there was a show of hands, which showed that no-one present thought that the proposals either represented an improvement or that they were acceptable. Community council chairwoman Sheena Nisbet was to feed these views back to Transport Scotland. A spokesman for Transport Scotland told The Oban Times: 'The recently published Ferries Plan makes clear that in the short term as a temporary step, we will introduce a service during the summer months on a Saturday from Colonsay, via Islay, to Kennacraig. 'Moving the Lochnevis to Colonsay in the medium term would provide a dedicated vessel to Colonsay to provide an increase in sailing days from four to six per week during the winter timetable period and a seven day per week service during the summer. 'In addition, it is also envisaged that the timetable for the summer period would also include one day per week where it will be possible to make a return journey to Oban, with a reasonable stop-over period, in one day. We fully recognise it is essential to ensure that vessels deployed on each route meet the needs of the community being served and are suitable for the waters in which they sail, and the operator will work closely with the community to ensure any concerns about the vessel to be deployed are fully considered and addressed.'

Bid to withdraw convicted murderer's status as registered nurse

CONVICTED murderer Malcolm Webster will be told by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) that he should have his nursing registration taken away. The council is launching a fresh bid to end the health service career of the former Lorn and Isles Hospital employee, who was jailed for 30 years last July for murdering his first wife, Claire Morris, and attempting to kill his second, Felicity Drumm, in New Zealand. The hearing is scheduled to be heard by the NMC in February. The professional body, which has already imposed a temporary sanction, insists that Webster's fitness to practice as a registered nurse has been impaired because of his crimes.

Tax return deadline

THOSE who assess their own tax and file their own returns have until the end of the month to file their accounts online or else face a fine. Self employed persons have until midnight on January 31 to complete their online self-assessments. Anyone registered as self-employed with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will need to complete the return, tell HMRC about their income and capital gains or to claim tax allowances or reliefs. Advice on completing self-assessment forms is available via the local Business Gateway team, while HMRC offers online guides to provide a step-by-step guide to filling out the forms. To access them, log on to www.hmrc.gov.uk/webinars.

Council's budget woes too complex for public to understand claims Oban businessman

'Pointless asking laymen to make such important decisions'



Graham MacQueen.

CONSULTING the community on Argyll and Bute Council's budget priorities is 'like asking who wants to get out of Auschwitz first', Oban's community planning group heard. The comment, from local businessman Graham MacQueen, came after the authority's executive director of development and infrastructure services Sandy Mactaggart talked to the Oban, Lorn and Isles Community Planning Group about the £40million black hole in the council's budget over the next seven years. Those members of the public in attendance were asked to respond to what services the community would like to see more or less spent on as part of the consultation, but Mr MacQueen said it was pointless asking laymen to make such important decisions. He said: 'It is a nonsense to ask us to do this. It's just like asking who wants to get out of Auschwitz first. I'd suggest the council appoint someone like Sandy to look at where the saving should be made as he is the expert.' Last week's consultation at the Corran Halls was the last in a series of public consultations carried out by the council across the county, although responses can still be submitted directly to the authority. Despite Mr MacQueen's concerns, some strong views were expressed about what the council should look at. Those in attendance were split into separate groups to look at different ways to shave £6million a year from the budget, answering questions such as whether the community would rather see more low quality services or fewer high quality services. Among the opinions expressed were that the council was inefficient and that school quality improvement officers were 'pointless', while a proposal that third sector or private companies could take on more council services needed further exploration. Oban community councillor Duncan Martin said: 'There is a feeling that the level of management is too high. Should we try to cut back on administration?' Local resident John MacKinnon warned against aggressive raising of charges to meet the shortfall. 'The council needs to look at business rates or within five years I don't see us having a town centre to visit,' he said, adding that landlords also have a role to play, with high rents not helping retailers. Chairing the meeting, councillor Louise Glen-Lee suggested discussing the subject of helping businesses more closely in future. To respond to the 2013 budget consultation, email budget@argyll-bute.gov.uk or for more details log on to the council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/budgetconsultation2013.

Oban phone scam warning

PHONE scammers have been contacting Oban residents - claiming to put an end to nuisance calls for £49. Purporting to represent a company called Safe Communications, the con-men claim their potential victim had arranged for payment some months ago, but that it had not been processed correctly. **Victim** The warning came from Oban woman Xandra Gray, who has previously fallen victim to a similar rouse. She said: 'They got quite aggressive in the end - for elderly people it really could be quite alarming. 'BT said the call probably came from outside the country and I should just ignore calls with number withheld.' She said the man had an Asian accent and phoned twice trying to ask for bank details over the past week.

'Steaming drunk' Islay man banned for five years

AN ISLAY man found with an empty bottle of whisky in his car while driving on the island has been banned from driving for five years. Duncan McPhee, of 1 Coastguard Cottages, was more than three-and-a-half times the legal limit when police found him slumped in the driver's seat in a layby on the A847 near Portmahaven on November 15. Officers on the scene described McPhee as 'steaming drunk'. The 54-year-old was also ordered to carry out 200 hours unpaid work and to attend alcohol counselling.

Argyll and Bute to clamp down on fly tipping

A CLAMPDOWN on fly tipping could see culprits fined £40,000. Fly tipping is the illegal disposal of rubbish anywhere other than an authorised waste disposal site. Argyll and Bute Council is actively seeking out offenders, who can be issued with a £50 fixed penalty notice up to a maximum penalty of £40,000 and six months in prison. You can find a list of waste disposal sites across Argyll and Bute - or report fly tipping - at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk



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'Facts and figures' on Oban airport to be revealed as 'days of secrets are long gone'

'THE DAYS of secrets about Oban Airport are long gone', it was claimed by a top council official at a meeting in the town last week. Speaking during a public budget consultation at the latest Oban, Lorn and Isles Community Planning Group meeting, Sandy Mactaggart, Argyll and Bute Council's executive director of infrastructure and development services, said the 'full facts and figures' regarding the airport would be presented at a future meeting. He further stated the council's desire to 'make best use' of what he called a 'real asset' to the area, adding that the authority was already looking at ways to capitalise on its potential. **Shortfall** His comments came after North Connell resident Iain MacLean put it to Mr Mactaggart that looking at the airport first would be a good way for the council to shave a significant part of the £6million annual shortfall. 'If I said revenue was £43,000 and the cost of the airport was about £1million would you dispute that?' **Under control** While admitting the cost of running the airport and the Public Service Obligation (PSO) services to the islands were 'significant', he said finances were under control, with some funding coming from Grant Aided Expenditure. He added: 'We've got a real asset there. I'm delighted we've got folks flights out to the islands and that is a big help to those communities and their economies. That's got to be welcomed. 'The bottom line is we've got the finances in order in the last couple of years. **Asset** 'We have an asset there - it's with us now and we have to see how we can get a better return from it. 'It's certainly something I'd be delighted to come back and talk about.'

£3,000 grant awarded to youth rugby in Oban

YOUTH RUGBY

A GRANT of more than £3,000 has been donated to Oban Lorne Rugby Football Club to buy training equipment for youth members.

Nearly 100 boys and girls aged between six and 18 are currently members of Oban Lorne RFC and the money will be used to buy a scrum machine, tackle bags and a new coaching aid that allows players to improve their reactions.

Calum MacAlpine, operations manager at Scottish Sea Farms, said: 'The rugby club is a true focal point for the community and we are delighted to help the young players develop for the future.'

Tight at the top in Atlantis Leisure five-a-side league

INDOOR FOOTBALL

RESULTS: RM Builders 9, Glenorchy 2; Carpet Fitters 5, The Handy Men 1; OES 'B' 0, Atlantis Leisure 19; Oban High School 4, Stobarts T&T 4.

All results regarding OES 'A' have been declared null and void as they have dropped out of the league. The table has been adjusted.

Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
Atlantis	5	5	0	0	15
Carpet Fitters	6	5	0	1	15
RM Builders	6	5	0	1	15
High School	5	4	1	1	13
Oban Times	6	4	0	2	12
Stoddarts	5	2	1	2	7
Handy Men	7	2	0	5	6
Royal Hotel	5	1	0	4	3
Glenorchy	7	1	0	6	3
OES 'B'	6	1	0	5	3

Colonsay Golf Club

GOLF

WINTER League returns from Colonsay Golf Club: 1 D MacAllister 45 gross, 37 nett; 2 D Binnie 53, 41; 3 C Nisbet 53, 42; 4 S MacAllister 45, 44.

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Muileach's looking for revenge

'We are really up for it and looking forward to giving Oban a hard game'

ISLE of Mull Rugby Club will go into the second derby of the season this Saturday against Oban Lorne with renewed optimism, despite a heavy defeat in the first encounter in Oban.

Mull travelled to Oban with a weakened team for the first game of the season in September last year and left Oban Bay having suffered a 34-3 defeat.

But the island club turns host at Garmony and although Oban's reception will be a warm one, that will all change when Mull's players cross the white line onto the pitch.

Speaking ahead of the West Division Three tie, Mull Rugby Club president Tom Nelson said: 'We fully expect it to be a closer match this time around.'

'We are really up for it and looking forward to giving Oban a hard game.'

'I am expecting a lot of players who missed the game in Oban to be back playing, because they are making an extra effort to be involved in this game.'

Mull claimed a share of the spoils in a hard-fought 15-15 draw with Lanark last Saturday; their opponents had beaten league leaders Loch Lomond the weekend before.

Postponed Some members of the Oban Lorne team, whose game against Clydesdale last Saturday was postponed because of the weather, were on Mull to support their fellow Argyll players against Lanark.

But despite the obvious links between the clubs, Saturday's match is expected to be a fiercely contested encounter.

Mr Nelson added: 'It was nice to have the Oban boys over to

RUGBY

watch the game and we have a good relationship with the club.

'But when they step onto the pitch there will be no love lost between the two teams.'

Both teams are in a rich vein of form at the moment and each have ambitions to win West Division Three.

Oban Lorne's well-oiled Green Machine will be a stern test for the Mull forwards, who will hope to secure enough possession for the islanders' dangerous back-line.

Buoyed

Mull will be buoyed by the return of talented youngster David Black, who managed to play 20 minutes last weekend after being sidelined with a hamstring injury since May last year.



Oban Saints Under 15s took on Milngavie in a Dumbarton Development League match at Oban Community Pitch last Saturday. Unfortunately the local team ended up on the wrong end of an 8-1 scoreline which was a bit harsh as the Oban boys played well and should have scored four or five goals themselves. Our picture shows Jamie MacPherson getting to grips with a Milngavie defender.

Dramatic penalty shoot-out win for Under 17s

OBAN SAINTS Under 17s played Eastwood in the 3rd round of the West Regional Cup at the Community Pitch last Saturday in what was a cracking game of football.

The local side equalised with almost the last kick of the ball to make the final score 3-3 which meant the game went to a penalty shoot-out.

Saints won the shoot-out 3-2 mainly due to a superb display by keeper Craig Maitland who saved three of the Eastwood penalties.

Netting for Saints during the 90 minutes were Aidan Campbell (2) and Donald McCallum.

Saints now play Harmony Row in the last 16 of

YOUTH FOOTBALL

the competition. The game is due to be played in Oban on Saturday, February 9.

Other Saints youth team results: PFD United 6, Under 13s 2. Scoring for Saints were Scott Rowley and Couper Munt. Clydebank v Under 14s postponed; Under 15s 1, Milngavie 8. On target for Saints was Stewart MacLean. Lenzie Colts Thistle v Under 16s postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: Riverclyde v Under 13s; Under 14s v Blair Thistle; Under 15s v Morton BC; Milngavie v Under 16s.

Scottish Amateur League - results and fixtures

SATURDAY'S results: Scottish Cup 5th round - Burntisland United v Oban Saints postponed; West of Scotland Cup 4th round - Craignek 2, Dunoon 0; West of Scotland Cup, 3rd round - Lochgilphead Red Star 0, Giffnock North 5; Premier Division 2 - Campbelltown Pupils 2, Centre 2; Division 1A - Tarbert 2, Strathaven Dynamo 4. This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Cup 5th round

FOOTBALL

- Burntisland United v Oban Saints; Jimmy Marshall Cup, 1st round - Dunoon v Aikenhead Thistle; 2nd round - Centre v Campbelltown Pupils; Division 1A - East Kilbride v Tarbert; Division 1B - Lochgilphead Red Star v Inverkip Thistle.



Action from the match between Oban Hockey Club and Glasgow University.

University prove too strong for Oban in plate semi-final

HOCKEY

West District Plate semi-final Oban 1

Glasgow University 3rds 8

THE FLEDGLING Oban Hockey Club played Glasgow University on Sunday and were on the wrong end of a 8-1 scoreline, despite a promising performance.

Glasgow proved to be the stronger side in the first half, although Oban restricted their opponents to three goals and Tara Pollock scored for the home side.

But on the astroturf pitch at the Lochgilphead campus, which is still unfamiliar to the 'home' team, the floodgates opened in the second half as Oban tired. Goal scorer Pollock said after the match: 'The ladies all played

HOCKEY

very well and are excited about the new challenges that are approaching in the new season.'

The team is currently looking for an additional coach to help progress the club, because of the growing numbers of male and female players.

Interested

The club is hosting a six-a-side indoor mixed tournament on March 16 at Atlantis Leisure and is inviting any team interested in joining.

Anyone interested in coaching, or entering the club tournament can contact Tara Pollock via email at t.pollock@hotmail.co.uk.



Some of the adult competitors are pictured after Glenclruitten Golf Club's 'night golf' competition last Saturday but it was a team of juniors who took top honours. The team was: Finlay Sinclair, Daniel MacMillan, Innes McColl and Aiden McCuish.

Friendlies organised for this weekend

SHINTY

OBAN Camanachd and Lochside Rovers begin their pre-season fixtures this weekend with tough ties in Oban and Fort William.

Camanachd, who have returned to the premier league for this season, travel to An Aird to take on Fort William.

The match will be a stern test and give manager Gussie Campbell a guide as to how his team

SHINTY

will cope with the demands of shinty's top tier. Throw up will be at 1pm.

Lochside Rovers, newly promoted to South Division One, will also face tough opposition in the shape of Lochcarron. The match at Mossfield will begin at 1.30pm.

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If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

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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.

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Fort's Martin Groat takes to the air to get the better of Thistle's Jordan Wardrope 20_104football02



This heavy challenge on Ryan MacDonald earned Thistle's Grant Fraser a booking. The afternoon went from bad to worse for Fraser - he was later carried off with a serious looking injury 20_104football07



Ryan MacDonald put in a solid shift for Fort all afternoon 20_104football05



All eyes on the ball: Martin Groat and Terry Swinton battle it out 20_104football04



Penalty! Davis Forbes goes down in the box after being fouled by Scott Hendry 20_104football09



Davie Forbes, a willing runner throughout, spins away from Jordan Wardrope 20_104football03

Alleycats still lead the way

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER WEEK six of The Lochaber Building Supplies 10 pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre Alleycats lead the scratch division with 28 points followed by Rotavators in second place with 22 points, while Splitheads and Council share third place with 21 points.

Alleycats also lead the handicap division with 25 points. Rotavators are in second spot with 22 points whilst Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are in third place with 19 points.

The top individual scratch games this week came from Tony Whitlocke of Alleycats with 185 and 170, Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 183, Tim Attack (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) with 180 and Colin Pinkett (Council) with 176. David Ogg of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio had the top handicap game of 228.

Tony Whitlocke rolled the top two-game scratch series of 355 whilst Stewart Duncan (Splitheads) had the top two-game handicap series with 435.

Top team games of the week were 612 scratch from Alleycats and 810 handicap from Council. The best scratch two-game game team series was 1176 from Alleycats whilst the best handicap two-game series was 1557 from Council.

Top individual scratch averages are held by Tony Whitlocke (Alleycats) with 174, followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 157 and Rossamy Wareing (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) on 150.

Achintore lose in shock defeat

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LOCHABER Leisure joined longtime leaders Achintore FC at the top of the All Young Premier indoor football league with a 6-2 win over Old Codgers at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

Achintore lost their pole position after going down to a shock 3-1 defeat at the hands of Ballachulish, who move up to third.

Goon Squad consolidated their fourth spot by thumping All Blacks 8-4 while Caol FC are up to fifth courtesy of their 3-0 victory over AA Young.

Elsewhere, Portoway continued their recent improvement in form with a 6-2 win over HWEnergy No Stars.

Fort take on Oban Camanachd

SHINTY

FORT WILLIAM Shinty Club will play a pre-season friendly against newly promoted Oban Camanachd at An Aird on Saturday.

Throw-up for the match - the Fort's first warm-up fixture ahead of the new season getting underway on March 2, is at 1pm.

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Fort record first win of the season

REPORT BY STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

FORT WILLIAM head for Deveronvale this weekend buoyed by Saturday's priceless win against Strathspey Thistle, which took the Claggan Park men to within striking distance of Lossiemouth and Rothes in the Highland League.

16-man squad at his disposal for the 1-0 victory, but is already two men down for the 'Vale clash as Sean Grant and Andy MacLean have work commitments.

Confidence

Nevertheless, Fort must have renewed confidence after posting their first win in 14 months and 42 games, not least because their high-flying opponents have yet to win in 2013.

Manager Danny Conlon had a

FOOTBALL

the win was 'just what we needed' and hoped his embattled team could upset the odds on Saturday.

He said: 'Deveronvale are blowing a bit hot and cold at the moment but they thumped us 7-1 down here earlier this season.

'We did have Davie Forbes sent off after 10 minutes but they



Priceless: Darren Quigg cleverly sends Strathspey keeper Ridgers the wrong way to earn Fort William their first win of the season 20_104football01

still gave us a bit of a trouncing after that.

'They are a good quality side, granted over the festive season they have not been too hot but we are expecting a really difficult game.'

He added: 'The club is not having a very good time at the moment and we are running the team on a shoestring and with a small squad.

'We need anybody and everybody who can help us out to do so. All we are looking for is one or two people with a few spare hours to come along and give us a hand.

'SFA standards have to be met and we need a bit more support to continue to develop football in the area.'

Against Jags, new Fort keeper Daniel Bell excelled early on,

saving first from Ritchie and then MacKenzie before Ridgers pulled off a great double stop from Andy Maclean at the other end.

Bell was in action again to deny Bobrowski from 10 yards and performed heroics just before the break to save Ritchie's effort.

After 20 scrappy second half minutes Fort looked the likelier

to score and did just that - from the penalty spot. Scott Hendry's 65th-minute challenge on Davie Forbes looked pretty innocuous but Darren Quigg wasn't caring as he sent Ridgers the wrong way to claim three vital points for the Fort.

The win was Fort's first at Claggan Park since they beat Turriff United 3-1 on May 7, 2011.

'The Battle of the Little Big Men'

LOCHABER Phoenix ABC continued their busy schedule last weekend when they welcomed Hayfield ABC from Glasgow for a training weekend.

Hayfield, perhaps the most successful club in Scotland at present, brought their top squad consisting of a Scottish youth champion, a Scottish senior intermediate champion and three Scottish open champions.

Coach Niall Clark said: 'While the sparring was undoubtedly hard due to the quality of our visitors and the fact that some of our boxers are just back after a Christmas break some of the lessons learned and information gathered on the attributes of our members will prove invaluable in the future.'

The visit comes as senior heavyweight Chris Donnelly and youth light welterweight Igor Sliwinski attempt to win their respective national Intermediate titles at Ravenscraig Sports Centre in Motherwell this weekend.

Igor is also in action the follow-

ing Sunday when the club holds its first ever afternoon show at the Ben Nevis Hotel.

'The Battle of the Little Big Men' will see boxers aged 16 and under compete as the club

welcomes opponents from all over Scotland to Fort William.

Doors will open at 1pm with the boxing scheduled to begin around 1.30pm. Tickets, priced at £10 for over 16s and £5 for

BOXING

under 16s, are available from Niall Clark (07554994744), Steve Docherty (07767069532) and Vince Lopez (07979321025).



New kit for Caol Primary School

Caol Primary School P1-P3 shinty team really looked the part at a shinty night at Lochaber High School on Friday after they were presented with brand new strips by local painter and decorator Dougie Duncan. Dougie had another good reason for sponsoring the team - his two boys Gordie and Kian, pictured third left and left in front row, both play for the team. Captain is Kyle Nolan, back left. The indoor event is being run by Highlife Highland. Each age group - P1-3, P4-5 and P5-6 - gets two sessions each of round robin games over the next six weeks.

20_104shinty01

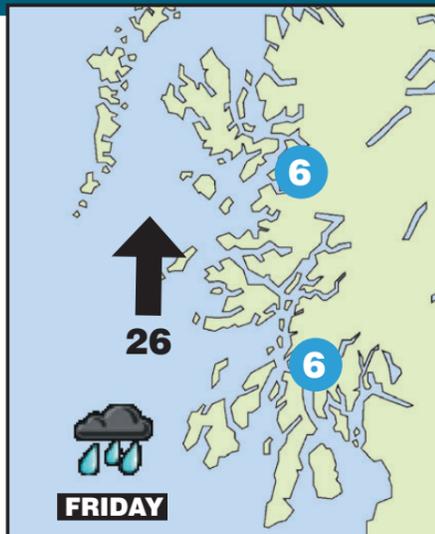
Weather

Thursday Sunny intervals
Winds light, south easterly
Temperatures 0C to 1°C

Friday Heavy rain
Winds strong, southerly
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook Heavy rain
Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 6°C to 6°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 24, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	03.56 3.3 10.52 1.7 16.31 3.4 22.32 1.4	
Fri	04.37 3.5 11.27 1.5 17.08 3.6 23.11 1.2	
Sat	05.16 3.7 11.58 1.3 17.44 3.8 23.47 1.0	
Sun	05.53 3.9 12.28 1.2 18.19 3.9 *** **	
Mon	00.21 0.9 06.56 4.0 12.59 1.1 18.50 3.9	
Tues	00.54 0.8 07.24 4.0 13.29 1.1 19.16 3.9	
Wed	01.25 0.8 07.24 4.0 13.56 1.1 19.43 3.8	

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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