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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Oban group slams move to tear down political posters

Ban is attack on democracy

LOUISE LEE
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A BAN on political posters in Argyll is 'the thin edge of the wedge' for democracy, says a protest group.

As the General Election approaches in May, Argyll and Bute council votes today (Thursday) on a policy forbidding campaign materials being displayed on any property under the council's control, including lampposts, telephone poles and buildings.

If the council votes through the ban, any individual who falls foul of the by-law would be liable for the full cost of removing the material and repairing any damage.

Some councillors have argued that following the Scottish independence referendum last September, posters and political material were still hanging from lampposts and buildings many months after the event.

At a meeting of the council's environment, development and infrastructure committee last Thursday, the vote to ban political posters was split. The convener of the meeting, councillor Ellen Morton, used her casting vote to carry the proposals forward to the full council today (Thursday).

Councillor Morton explained: 'It is important that we find time

to have the discussion about this as a whole council. The majority of councils in Scotland have now imposed this ban.

'It is time to consider if this is something we would like to do here.'

But Stacey Felgate, of Oban's community hub 'Grassroots', is part of a campaign against the blanket ban and said she was concerned that losing the right to put up election and campaign materials would undermine the democratic process.

She said: 'Of all the councils that want to stop people taking down posters none of them are as rural as Argyll.'

'It seems that this campaign is being led from the relatively urban area of Helensburgh, without consideration to the islands and country areas.'

Stacey claimed councillors have not had all the details to make an informed decision on this matter, adding: 'It was raised at a meeting and the papers presented to councillors did not have any information, such as how often posters are left up and how much it costs to remove them.'

'In other places there have been community consultations about posters and whether people want to see them removed, or not, but there was no information at all here.'

'Posters on lampposts are one of the few ways in which elections – particularly local and European elections – are made visible to the general public, raising awareness and familiarising the electorate with candidates. It is a relatively cheap way to advertise a candidate.'

An Argyll and Bute council spokesman said: 'The policy has been proposed because of the impact of election posters on the environment and the associated difficulty in removing them from council property.'

'If approved, this would bring Argyll and Bute council in line with over 20 other local authorities who have already taken the same decision, as well as Transport Scotland, the national trunk roads authority.'

'In coming to a decision, the council will be noting the comments of local residents.'

Lomond councillor George Freeman said he was reserving final judgement on the vote until today's debate.

Councillor Freeman said: 'As you will be aware, this is a policy that now applies across most local authorities in Scotland.'

'I have serious concerns that those involved in placing posters have failed to remove them from council property months after the event.'

TIMESLINE

Police alert after rural thefts spate

OBAN police have appealed to business and property owners in rural Argyll to review their security after thieves targeted an industrial unit.

Power tools in a shed at Barcaldine's marine resource centre were stolen between 5pm on Tuesday, January 13 and 5.30pm on January 15.

Police urged anyone who required a review of security to contact them on 101.

Dunoon woman to fly the UKIP flag

UKIP has named Dunoon woman Caroline Santos as its Argyll and Bute candidate for the UK general election in May.

Ms Santos, who grew up in Dunoon and later lived on Tirree, was announced on Tuesday as the candidate for the party, the first time it has stood in the constituency.

National call-up a real game-changer

AN OBAN athlete, who switched from swimming to rugby just two years ago, has been called up for Scotland Women's Six Nations squad.

Student Abigail Evans, 18, has previously played for the under-20 national team and will join the senior squad ahead of their first Six Nations match in France on February 7.

Delay to A83 work a costly disgrace

INVERARAY businessman Donald Clark, who owns the George Hotel, has slammed as 'disgraceful' the delay in the £3 million upgrade to the A83 at Rest and be Thankful.

The businessman also described the cost of the work as 'unnecessarily inflated'.



POSTER GIRLS: Stacey Felgate and Rhona Dougall of Grassroots 16_t04lamppost01



Dates confirmed for provincial Mod

THE OBAN Provincial Mod will be held in June this year, three months before the Royal National Mod comes to the town in October.

There were fears the local event wouldn't take place this year, but organisers announced this week that it will go ahead

on Friday, June 5 and Saturday, June 6.

Junior events will be held on the Friday with venues still to be confirmed, and senior and instrumental competitions on Saturday at Oban high school.

Committee member Moira Dunlop said: 'The committee

welcomes entries from anyone new to the provincial Mod, as well as more seasoned competitors.' Call or email Moira Dunlop on 01631710565 or moiradunlop@btinternet.com for more information.

The closing date for entries is Saturday, April 4.

Anxiety grows over GP practice

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GLENORCHY residents fear their local GP service is now so greatly diminished that they will be unable to see a doctor and would be better going to hospital for treatment.

That was the reaction from residents to proposed changes in how Taynuilt medical practice (TMP) is run.

A letter to patients, delivered by email and in various shops and post offices, outlined potential changes.

It outlined a plan to have a designated GP every day who

would deal with emergencies, urgent lab results and hospital discharges as well as being on-call for the entire practice.

A second plan would see the practice divided in half and GPs allocated on the number of patients in Connel, Dalmailly and Taynuilt.

But neither option allocated five surgeries a week in Dalmailly, something the community believes is needed.

At present, TMP serves 5,000 patients in Taynuilt, Connel and Dalmailly.

At a meeting last Wednesday of Glenorchy and Innishail community council, one man

said: 'We'd be as well as just travelling to Connel because that is what they (TMP) really want.'

A woman, who addressed the meeting, said: 'The real problem here is that the majority of GPs at the practice are part-time and do other work. We would be as well going to the hospital to see our own GP.'

Another woman from Portsonachan said none of the proposed changes would provide a better service.

Moira Newiss from TMP said: 'We are sincere about listening to our patients and for them to come up with other

options. If they are workable, we will consider them. Much of the feedback we have received so far has been very positive. Patient care is our priority.'

Mrs Newiss said consultation documents were sent to every patient email address and hundreds had been placed in shops, post offices and pharmacies.

The practice has added two more information days, today (Thursday) at Connel surgery between 12.30pm - 2pm and at Dalmailly surgery tomorrow between 12.30pm to 1.30pm.

Responses can also be sent to High-UHB.tmp@nhs.net.

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Earlier warnings a virtual reality

BETTER warnings should be put in place to advise drivers of winter road closures.

That is the view of Dave Stewart, MSP for the Highlands, Islands and Moray, who asked Scotland's minister for transport and the islands Derek MacKay to spread the use of 'virtual snow gates', trialled recently in north-east Scotland.

Dave Stewart tackled the minister on the matter during a questions session in the Scottish parliament last week.

Virtual snow gates are signs displaying a light to give advance warning to drivers of blocked routes and are placed at locations liable to heavy snowfalls.

Mr Stewart also said improvements could be made to digital road-side message warning boards, several of which are located on the Glasgow-Inverness A82.

New partnership could save lives

MORE lives could be saved on mountains in the Highlands and islands as a new partnership has been set up between NHS Highland and Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR).

The two groups will work together to improve the training of health workers in how best to deal with hill walking injuries.

Cameron Stark, public health correspondent for NHS Highland, said: 'The work of the mountain rescue teams is very important to the NHS in Scotland and to NHS Highland, in particular, when you consider that we cover some of the busiest teams in the country.'

Holyrood debates population crisis

A HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP has secured a Holyrood debate about the pending depopulation crisis in Argyll and Bute.

The debate, brought forward by Jamie McGrigor MSP, will be at 12.30pm today (Thursday).

Mr McGrigor said: 'It is right that our parliament is able to discuss what is one of the very biggest challenges facing Argyll and Bute.'

Hopes that pedestrianisation will bring 'café culture' to Oban's waterfront area

Stafford Street face-lift to be complete by summer

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ONE of the biggest changes to Oban's waterfront is under way this week.

The pedestrianisation of Stafford Street to the north of the George Street bay will see a new 'café culture' precinct for people to sit out and enjoy the view.

Announcing the plans, chairman of the council's area committee for Oban, Lorn and the Isles, councillor Roddy McCuish, said he was pleased the project was finally getting underway.

There will be a terraced seating area in front of shops and cafes and licences for the area will be made available to traders.

Due to be finished by May 2015, work undertaken by contractor Raynesway will be led by John McCormack.

Mr McCormack said he had an 'open door' policy and encouraged anyone with questions about the project to come into his office in the White Building on the North Pier.

Presenting plans for the area to the community, Mr McCormack said: 'We are looking forward to



People will very quickly see a difference

Councillor Roddy McCuish (Pictured left)

taking this project forward.'

The area will be fenced off while the work gets underway - but access to the shops will be maintained for the period of the construction work.

Working hours at the start of the project will be 8am until 4.30pm, but hours will extend as the nights get lighter.

At its peak there will be more

than 20 workers on site. Local contractors will be used to provide machinery.

The project is divided into three phases - the first is the removal of the planters before ground works are undertaken. Granite flagstones from China will be laid. Parking spaces at the Corran Halls have been made available for work vehicles to

keep North Pier parking free. Councillor McCuish said: 'It is great to see this work finally getting started. It should give people a clear indication that we are getting on with the work.'

'The regeneration of the town centre is now underway and people will very quickly see a difference.'

The next stage of Oban's development under the £6.2 million CHORD funding will see Station Square developed along a similar scheme between September 2015 and May 2016.

Open meetings on the plans were held last week in Oban's Caledonian Hotel.

Villagers fear plan for social housing complex may lead to a loss of privacy

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A BENDERLOCH resident is concerned that a plan to build 24 homes in the village would lead to the flooding of his property.

He is supported in his claim by other villagers who say the development would result in an invasion of their privacy.

The initial phase of the development is earmarked for social housing, and will see 12 homes and four flats built on ground to the east of the Lynn of Lorn nursing home.

The planning application has been lodged by West Highland Housing Association (WHHA).

Several residents who live near the proposed housing development raised their concerns at a meeting of Ardchattan community council last Thursday (January 15).

Resident Andrew Jones said he was concerned about both the scale of the development and the size of the two-storey houses and the flats.

He also said that given the proximity of his home to the development, and the amount of water which gathers in the area at present, his property 'would be under water' if the construction went ahead.

He also argued that some of the properties in phase one would

look into his bedroom and living room. Mr Jones, who has objected to the plans, also said he felt the buildings were not in keeping with the character of properties in the village.

Other residents raised similar issues, with worries that the height of the properties could cause privacy issues for nearby home owners.

Councillor for Oban North and Lorn, Iain Angus MacDonald, said the council had specific guidelines for what distance should be set between houses, with the 'rule of thumb' being a minimum of 20 metres between the bedroom windows of two properties.

The safety of the road junction into the development was also discussed, with some residents claiming that cars often drove into the village at high speeds and in the middle of the road.

However, the community council didn't object to the proposed development but instead called on Argyll and Bute council's planning committee to investigate the residents' concerns.

Councillor for Oban North and Lorn, Elaine Robertson, who is also on the board of WHHA, said she would contact the association in an attempt to arrange a presentation to the community council to address some of the concerns raised by villagers.

MULL lines



ISLAND VIEW: Mull officers, who will be part of Mull and Iona's rural watch scheme

Watching brief for police

POLICE Scotland are setting up a pioneering island rural watch scheme to cover Mull and Iona.

The Isle of Mull and Iona Rural Watch will consist of four separate areas. Each area is allocated to one of the local community police officers on the island. One of the main aims of the scheme is to improve the contact between islanders and local officers.

It is hoped that the scheme will lead to better communication between residents and the police, the sharing of information, and a heightened awareness of areas of concern.

Rural Watch is a national initiative which encompasses farms, rural businesses, residential and holiday properties within the Mull and Iona policing area.

The scheme is being coordinated by Police Scotland and will also be extended across Argyll, the islands and beyond.

Police Scotland will continue to carry out patrols, including joint operations with partner agencies, to reassure the community, acting as a deterrent and ultimately reduce crime in the area. The email system within the watch will be used to pass information on emerging crime patterns or areas of concern for islanders.

In turn members will be able to contact the coordinator by email. Weatherproof signage will be posted at strategic points throughout the watch area to raise awareness among visitors that the community and police work closely to prevent and detect crime.

This watch is supported by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland and many home insurance companies will offer a discount to members of the Rural Watch.

To find out more log onto www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk, click on an area, enter a postcode and it will find the nearest rural watch area.

PC David Turner of Craignure police office said: 'We are delighted that we are launching the Mull and Iona Rural Watch Scheme.'

'This is the first rural watch scheme to be implemented on a Scottish island. The community policing team on Mull view this as a positive way to help strengthen our good links between the police and the community in our rural location. The scheme will help to keep people safe.'



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DISCONNECT: pensioner Richard Grieve was without a phone line for more than a month

Richard's plight rings true after call for help

A MULL pensioner who was left without a vital phone line for more than a month has finally been reconnected to his loved ones.

Richard Grieve, 76, was at the end of his tether when he called *The Oban Times* to say that he was finding it difficult to keep in touch with family and friends over Christmas.

He said that shortly after he reported a fault on his line on December 12, a telephone engineer came to his Pier Road house in Salen to sort the problem.

But as the worker was on his own, Richard said: 'There was very little he could do. He did have a stick, but not a ladder so it was difficult for him to catch the end of the cable.'

'Because the pole is right next to the cliff, I was quite

relieved when he gave up. I was disappointed when he, or anyone else, didn't bother to come back to finish the job.'

A spokesman for British Telecom said: 'Lightning had destroyed the cable between the pole and the customer's house.'

'Our engineers had been unable to climb the pole due to high winds and hazardous equipment adjacent to the pole.'

'In addition to this, on the other side of the pole, there is a 10ft rock cliff which backs onto a new house.'

'However, an engineer was able to climb the pole safely and install a new armoured cable. We're sorry that it has taken longer than usual to repair the fault and for any inconvenience caused.'

Where there's a will

A LAW firm in Oban has raised more than £1,000 for the charity Will Aid by donating their services for a month.

Solicitors at D M MacKinnon wrote wills for local clients during November in exchange for a donation.

Karen MacAllister, partner of D M MacKinnon, said: 'It was exceptionally

hard work to see this many clients and it did mean working long hours, but it was worth it.'

'We are delighted to have raised so much money for the Will Aid charities.'

All money raised through Will Aid is shared by Action Aid, Age UK, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, NSPCC, Save the Children, Sightsavers, SCIAF (Scotland) and Trocaire (Northern Ireland).



WELL DRESSED: thanks to Castaways and a nose from Arlene's coffee shop

It's snow joke for club

SLUSHY snow in Craignure did not deter the folk at An Roth in building a happy little snowman.

After clearing the path for the centre's weekly lunch club last Wednesday, the three colleagues above got stuck into making their first snowman of the winter.

Children's music festival

DETAILS for Feis Mhuile are now available online. The Gaelic music and culture event for young people between the ages of eight and 18 will see classes in fiddle, accordion, step dancing and singing in the Ross of Mull.

There is even an event for children as young as three to seven years during the festival. Organisers say there is something for everyone during the festival which takes place over three days beginning on February 12.

Some events will be open to the wider community, including a tutor's ceilidh, a dance and a storytelling session. For more details contact Morven Gibson on 01681 708000.

Alloways were victorious

THE Hogmanay quiz on Iona was won by 'Alloway Victorious' (aka the Alloway family). The results were: fourth Postie Anonymous with 29 points; Team Maol aka Floors Blackies on 34 points; joint second The Musical Statues and Howe/MacInnes with 37 points; and the winners claiming 49 points.

Sheriff praises officers as he passes final judgement

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A RETIRING sheriff has highlighted the increasing number of drugs cases coming to court in Oban, but praised the way law enforcers were dealing with the problem.

A large gathering of well wishers, including solicitors, social workers, police and court staff, paid tribute to Sheriff Douglas Small last Friday at Oban Sheriff Court as he retired from duty.

The 65-year-old judge served the last 14 years of his career in Oban but also sat in Fort William during that time, having previously worked in Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Asked how court business had changed over the years, he said drugs offences had become far more common.

Sheriff Small, who lives in North Connel, told *The Oban Times*: 'When I first came here drugs offences were few and far between but it seems to be far more prevalent.'

He praised the law enforcement work in both Oban and Fort William, adding: 'I have worked in courts all over the country and it is excellent here. 'I have been greatly blessed

with the people I have worked with.

'I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here - it was probably the best part of my career.'

Speaking about the Oban-based solicitors at the gathering, Sheriff Small, who was joined by his wife Judith, said: 'I have never fallen out with any of them. It's a different story with some of the out-of-town solicitors.'

He singled out the late David MacNeill, a popular Oban solicitor, who Sheriff Small said had a 'mischievous' nature and a 'schoolboy charm'.

Sheriff Small also praised the quality of procurator fiscal he had worked with and thanked all the honorary sheriffs in Oban and Fort William for their 'invaluable service'.

Kath McMahon, dean of the Oban faculty of solicitors, described Sheriff Small's methods as 'tempering justice with mercy, the mark of a good judge'.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said: 'None of us failed to notice that when dealing with the public, particularly the vulnerable, you showed compassion and humanity.'

'People in this court left with their dignity intact and that doesn't happen in every court.'



JUDGEMENT CALL: Sheriff Douglas Small, pictured centre with his wife Judith, was given a warm send off after he decided to retire.

Church to become children's nursery

THE WHITE church on Oban's Esplanade will spring to life later this year when a childcare company throws open its doors.

Christ Church, which closed in 2013 because of costs involved in running it, will have a new lease of life as Right Start Nursery, once approval from the care inspectorate and planning gives the go-ahead.

The ambitious project will have an internal refurbishment of the building to make way for babies to older youngsters in what will likely be the biggest childcare facility in Oban.

The company behind the venture is Rainbow Nursery in Kilwinning, Ayrshire which already runs a business in a converted church.

Bid to buy 'unsafe' castle viewpoint

A COMMUNITY buyout of land overlooking Kilchurn Castle on Loch Awe is underway after residents declared the area 'unsafe'.

Dalmally Community Company (DCC) has applied to the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) to purchase approximately 0.7 hectares of land at Kinachrechan, next to the A819 Dalmally to Inveraray road.

DCC's wants to establish a car park and viewpoint for Kilchurn Castle to replace the current arrangement, which is considered to be potentially dangerous, as drivers park in a lay-by before crossing the trunk road to view the castle.

A 28-day open consultation period is required by the scheme. Details of the application can be viewed online at forestry.gov.uk/nfls. Comments on the proposals must be submitted by February 18 to Malcolm Wield, Forestry Commission Scotland, Highland Conservancy, 'Woodlands', Fodderty Way, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9XB or to malcolm.wield@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Argyll boys in line for rural award

TWO ARGYLL and Bute students have been nominated for a prestigious national award run by their college.

Agricultural student Ruairidh Mackinnon, 19, from Oban and engineer apprentice Fraser Maclean, 24, from Tiree have been selected for the Lantra industry training awards, in conjunction with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

Winners will be announced at the annual Lantra awards on Thursday, March 5, in the Hilton Dunblane Hydro.

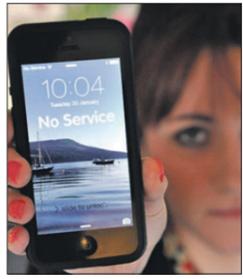
MSP calls on mobile phone companies to get better connected with customers

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AN MSP has blasted mobile phone companies Vodafone and O2 over their handling of last week's network collapse when storms hit the west Highlands.

Customers of the two mobile phone providers lost service for at least five days, prompting Highlands and Islands MSP Mike Mackenzie to call on the companies to drastically improve customer service.

Vodafone had told Mr Mackenzie that part of the issue was down to faults with electricity



NO SERVICE: Mobile phone signal was off for days

supply and other issues with BT equipment, vital to Vodafone's operations.

But Mr Mackenzie said: 'Vodafone need to get their stories straight; they are telling me one thing, telling SSE another and telling their affected customers nothing at all. 'When the networks were down, Vodafone and O2 provided no information about their lack of coverage to customers and were unable to give a timescale to suggest when service will resume.'

'Vodafone blamed the problem on third parties, saying they rely on SSE and BT to restore power

to affected areas. However, SSE confirmed it was told by Vodafone that Vodafone's lack of service is due to damaged microwave dishes.'

Mr Mackenzie said although stormy, the weather was fairly typical of winter and by no means the worst in recent memory.

He added: 'If it is such a problem to carry out repairs in good time then perhaps Vodafone and O2 need to urgently consider investing in more robust and resilient equipment.'

A spokeswoman for SSE said that it was working closely with Vodafone to ensure that service

was restored as quickly as possible, while a spokesman for BT said the company was unaware of any faults in its network which would impact on mobile coverage.

A Vodafone spokesman said: 'There has been considerable damage to masts across the region - not just the loss of power initially. We have teams working on this problem on a continuous basis. Our engineers have this as their highest priority and are working hard to restore full service. However, the weather conditions have been extremely challenging with snow and high

winds, which made it unsafe for them to climb masts, hampering our engineers' efforts to restore services at affected sites.'

'We'd like to apologise to any customers affected for any inconvenience but despite the challenging conditions, our engineers are making good progress in getting sites up and running.'

An O2 spokesman said: 'The site closest to Oban is carrying traffic successfully. We have one other site in the area which has developed an issue on January 9, due to the extreme weather conditions. We apologise for any inconvenience.'

Grant to cut down on fuel poverty

ARGYLL and Bute council is bidding for a slice of a £60 million Scottish government grant to make people's homes warmer.

This could mean a minimum of £1,393,112 to help households in fuel poverty install cavity and loft insulation.

The council's housing spokesman councillor Robin Currie said: 'Fuel poverty is increasing, which makes this bid a high priority.'

Cash-strapped rural drivers to get fuel discount

REMOTE communities in the West Highlands are a step closer to having their petrol prices slashed.

Appin, Acharacle, Mallaig and the Morvern peninsula are among the 17 areas which would benefit across the country from the UK government's rural fuel rebate scheme, receiving fuel duty discounts of up to five pence per litre.

The scheme has been approved by the European Commission

and now awaits agreement from other member states of the European Union before it can get the go ahead, but this is expected to be a formality.

The scheme was formed to help communities said to be paying the highest prices in the British Isles.

Alan Reid, MP for Argyll and Bute, is delighted with the news, which follows a discount scheme currently active on islands including the Hebrides and North-

ern Isles. He said: 'Hard-pressed rural filling stations need this support.'

'As I have said before, the high price of fuel in rural areas is very damaging to the local economy. 'The fuel duty discount scheme has been a success on the islands and if it proves to be a success in Appin I hope to see the discount extended to other parts of Argyll.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, says he has

long been campaigning for the change.

He said: 'High fuel costs have hit Highlanders for too long.'

'Many of my constituents will welcome the news they will now receive a five pence a litre reduction when they go to the pumps.'

'As someone who travels across the Highlands and Islands week in, week out, I know the geographical challenges we face. The use of cars here is a necessity, not a luxury.'

In December, the Morvern Community Development Company-run garage in Lochaline was said to be charging prices more than 30 pence a litre higher than those in Fort William, to the anger of residents in the area.

One Morvern resident, who wished not to be named, said about its inclusion in the rural fuel rebate scheme: 'Getting five pence off a litre is something but this will still leave it expensive compared to other garages.'

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Under half still to receive flu vaccine

LESS than half the population of the Highlands and islands, who suffer from health conditions, have yet to receive the free flu vaccine this winter.

Health professionals across the West Highlands are reminding people who are 'at risk' that they should get their annual flu vaccine as soon as possible.

People with chronic conditions such as obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema, asthma, heart problems, diabetes, kidney or liver disease, lowered immunities and women who are pregnant, can be hit harder by flu and suffer more serious complications.

These groups are eligible to receive the vaccine free at their local GP surgery.

The vaccine takes 10-14 days to work and should protect a patient from flu for a year.

Some cold comfort over temperatures

RESIDENTS across Argyll have received their first Cold Weather Payment of the year after the temperature dropped below zero for seven consecutive days last week.

The payment is made to people on pension credits or other qualifying benefits.

The temperature reading is now taken from a thermometer in Dunstaffnage, following a campaign mounted by Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid in 2010.

The reading was previously taken from Machrihanish in Kintyre, which has a more temperate climate than many parts of Argyll. Alan Reid argued at the time that people who should have qualified for the payment were missing out.

Oban crew answer island medical call

THE VOLUNTEER crew of the Oban Royal National Lifeboat Institution lifeboat transported a woman from Mull on Monday afternoon when she required medical assistance.

The Mora Edith MacDonald left Oban with two paramedics, who dealt with the medical care of the lady during the transfer from Craignure.

Upon arrival in Oban at 4.45pm, an ambulance transferred the woman to Lorn and Islands hospital for treatment.

Lifeboat goes to aid of quarry man

A MAN suffering from chest pains at Glensanda Quarry at 1.50am on Tuesday was transferred to Oban by lifeboat.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution's Mora Edith Macdonald took two paramedics to the Morvern peninsula to assess the patient before he was taken back to Oban and transferred to hospital.

All to play for as finish line nears for Oban community park plans

STEVEN RAE

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WITH construction to start in just six months' time, the huge community fundraising effort for the Oban Community Playpark is entering a crucial phase.

Total funds currently sit at £175,000, more than half of the £333,000 target for the park, which will be built next to the town's Atlantis Leisure centre.

Funding has come from a variety of sources, including local businesses, trusts, Argyll and Bute council and the Scottish government-funded body Sportscotland.

Organisers are keen to raise maximum funds so they can build facilities as close to the projected designs as possible when construction starts in July.

Lyndsay Elliot, who lives in Oban and has two school-aged children, is one of the key fundraisers for the project.

She explained: 'The money raised so far has been through pledges and donations.'

'Sportscotland will give us a grant of £85,000 to pay for half of the active play equipment, but because we want to put things



in that are not classed as part of active play equipment, we need to find approximately £100,000.

'It is going to happen; if we don't have the full amount then we will just do the best job we can with the money we have.'

The park has been designed with a pirate and maritime theme and includes a five-metre high tower.

The designs aim to make the play area as inclusive as possible for children of all ages and abilities.

Fellow fundraiser Fiona Sharples, who also has two young children, said: 'Disabled children need to be able to use the park too, so the equipment needs to meet their needs so they can play in a safe way.'

'We are also trying to expand the age range which has been a challenge too as there is a lot of equipment that might be suitable

for younger kids but not the older ones, and vice versa.'

Building is earmarked to start in the summer, but the pair said it is more likely to be nearer the autumn as the tender documents need to go out to get quotes to see which company will do the work and at what cost.

Lyndsay was also keen to praise the huge community effort that had been in place since fundraising began: 'The local community groups have been fantastic.'

'We had four primary school pupils raise more than £200 with a bake sale recently and that's typical of the effort that's been put in since we started fundraising.'

'One person involved with the planning said they had never heard of a group to raise as much locally as we have.'

The group is looking for more people to get involved in the project, and is inviting people along to its AGM on February 6, in the function room at Atlantis Leisure, at 11am.

Lyndsay added: 'Something will get built in July, and we will try our best to meet the aspirations, but the bottom line is; we still need more money.'

PLAYGROUP BAKE-OFF: Rockfield primary pupils Michael Beaton, Emma Beaton, Zoe Brown and Emma Brown at their bake sale last month

Card problems hit pay-on-the-day ferry crossings

CONNECTION problems have forced Caledonian MacBrayne to temporarily ban the use of some debit cards to pay for tickets on board short-distance ferries in the West Highlands.

It follows reports of passengers and car drivers using newly-issued cards, which allowed tickets to be purchased without the machine flagging up that there were not enough funds available to cover the cost.

The situation affects all 'pay-on-the-day' ferry crossings which do not allow advance ticket bookings, including Oban-Lismore, Kilchoan-Torbermore, Fionnport-Iona, Fishnish-Lochaline and Scorer-Raasay.

Certain new styles of card from the Royal Bank of Scotland, Bank of Scotland, Natwest, Lloyds and Halifax banks cannot be used to pay fares on boats but will still be accepted in all ticket offices.

CalMac has listed all the affected chip and pin types on its website, which are grouped by their respective six-digit number prefixes. The firms says it is a temporary problem, which should be resolved once wireless connections improve.

Promise to put info boards at remote stations

HI-TECH information systems are planned for railway stations in the West Highlands.

New operator Serco, which takes over the Caledonian Sleeper train in April, has pledged to build touch-screen customer service boards at each of the stops between Fort William and Glasgow, several of which are amongst the remotest stations in the UK.

They are designed to help passengers find out about train times, travel connections and local amenities and should be in place by December 2016.

Campaign group Friends of the West Highland Lines has asked for an upgrade to station platform lecterns, which give information about local history and points of interest.

These were put in place several years ago but have become faded by the weather and out of date.

Oban speakers talk night away

MEMBERS of Oban Speakers Club last week heard Tom Clegg talk about Grace Darling, Eamonn Arthur talk about Tom Johnstone and Martin Wilson speak on the Colosseum.

In the second half, topics chairman Roy Wood set some difficult tasks to Peter Mills, Jim Fraser, Frank Walton, John Maclean, Alec Clark and Bill Leech. The next meeting is today (Thursday) at 8pm.



ALL HEART: Hosting an event on Valentine's Day, four Jura women have brought together a remarkable array of prizes for a grand raffle fundraiser

Jura women put hearts into fund-raising event

LOUISE LEE

lleee@obantimes.co.uk

LAST April a serious accident on the A83, north of Furnace, saw four young mothers from the Isle of Jura caught up in a horrific ordeal.

Three of the women were taken to hospital in Glasgow with long-

term injuries, broken backs and broken bones, leaving all four shocked by the situation.

The women had been away from their island homes participating in a 10k race.

While the experience of the accident was terrifying, the care that the women received from the emergency services was sec-

ond to none and they have vowed to repay that with a remarkable Valentine's Day fundraiser at Craighous village hall on Jura.

One of the women, Denise Rozga, said: 'We wanted to do something positive to make the best of a terrible situation.'

The women are holding the fundraising charity ball to raise money for Scotland's Charity

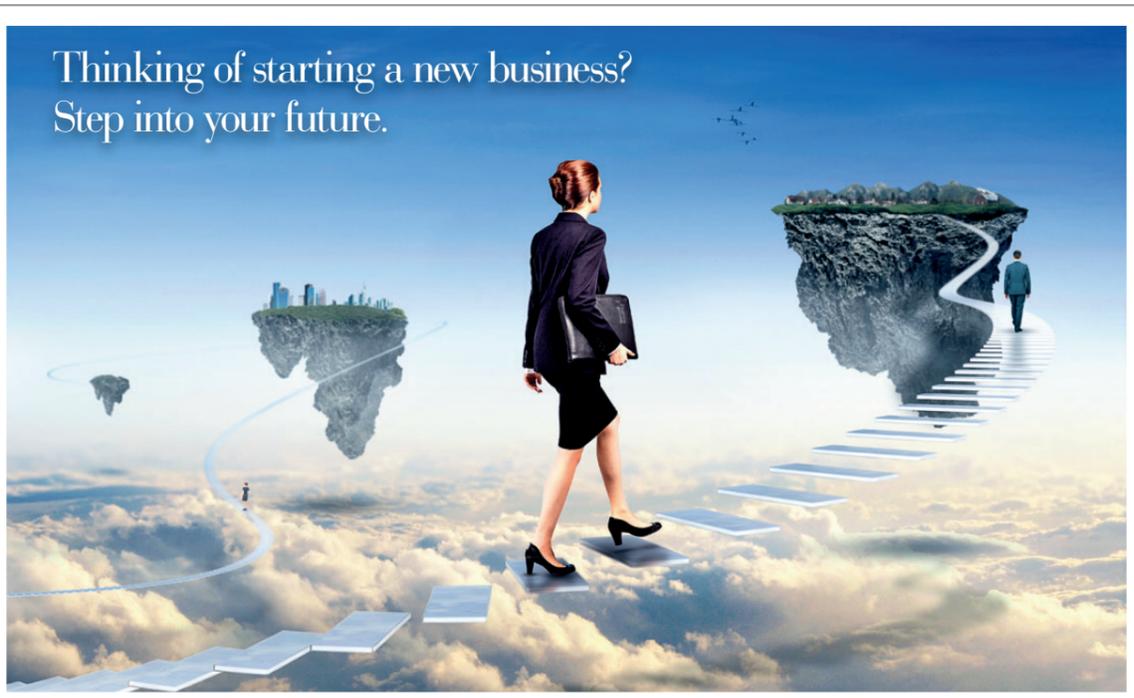
Air Ambulance service. A raffle includes a number of prizes that money simply can't buy, including staying at the island's distillery. Denise hopes that people who are unable to come to the ball will still be able to bid for the prizes.

For more details contact deniserozga@yahoo.co.uk

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SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Will your child be five years of age before 29 February 2016?

Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

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

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

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

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

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

Am bi an leanabh agaibh còig bliadhna a dh'aois ro 29 Gearran 2016?

Bidh? Ma-thà, tha an t-àm ann an clàrachadh airson na sgoile.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Drugs service rejects criticism

LOUISE LEE
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ADULT drug abusers and alcoholics may have become 'pawns' in a health counselling contract worth £1.4 million, according to a project manager in Oban.

Nichola MacGillivray of Oban Addiction Support Information Service (OASIS) said London-based charity Addaction, which provides addiction counselling and support for Argyll and Bute's Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP), is not yet registered with the Care Inspectorate for all of the services it is contracted to provide.

OASIS lost a slice of its revenue when the contract was awarded to Addaction. Its project manager, Nichola MacGillivray, said: 'While we all fully understand the need for services to be delivered under the best deal for the ADP, we need to be aware that men and women who have serious addiction issues might have been used as pawns for a lucrative contract.'

'People and their families deserve best value.' However, a spokesman for Addaction said it had followed the correct procedure when it applied for the contract.

Addaction confirmed it was in the process of registering all its services with the Care Inspectorate. It is understood that it cannot provide housing advice at the moment.

The spokesman continued: 'Addaction has access to offices

in every part of Argyll and Bute making us accessible to all.

'In addition, we regularly work with people in a variety of settings including their own homes, community venues and GP practices.'

Concerns have been raised that there was a delay in service users handing over information. The spokesman said: 'All services were approached to inform their service users about the new Addaction service, to obtain consent forms and supply the commissioners with names, addresses and contact details.'

'To date, services have in the main been unresponsive to this request.'

However, Argyll's MSP Michael Russell has voiced concerns about the role of Addaction.

He said: 'I remain very concerned about risks to local service users if the transfer takes place and there remain many unanswered questions about the whole matter, as well as about the work of the ADP going back several years.'

An ADP spokesman said: 'The Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership is fully committed to supporting service users and their families to help them deal with the impact of drugs and alcohol in their lives.'

'Addaction has a great deal of experience in this field and provides a wide range of community-based addiction recovery services and we will be working closely with them over the coming months.'



YOUTH POLICY: Robert MacIntyre receives the cheque on behalf of Glencruitten Golf Club from Rotary Club of Oban president Ronnie Neil, as Rotary members and golf club members look on

Rotary's 'Am Am' is driving force

MONEY raised at last year's Rotary 'Am Am' competition has been donated to the event's host, Glencruitten golf club, to help with its youth training programme.

The annual Am Am, organ-

ised by Rotary Club of Oban on June 1 last year, raised in excess of £9,000 for local causes but £1,000 was set aside for the golf club.

And a product of the club's youth ranks, Scottish amateur

team member Robert MacIntyre, was on hand to receive the cheque for his home club.

'Am Am organiser and Rotarian Iain MacIntyre said: 'The donation to Glencruitten golf club will assist with its junior

golf initiative, which it hopes to reinvigorate this year.'

'Glencruitten golf club assists the Am-Am tremendously, arranging the catering and giving the services of green keeper Dougie MacIntyre.'

Course for doctors is cutting edge

SOME OF Argyll's most highly-skilled medical professionals were back at the cutting edge of learning.

A new course, which was held at the Mid Argyll Community Hospital and Integrated Care Centre in Lochgilphead, was arranged to improve the skills of GPs who deal with patients attending accident and emergency and casualty units, as well as inpatients in hospitals.

A number of specialist health professionals delivered the course between January 12 and 19, covering situations including cardiac failure, advanced trauma life support and paediatric emergencies.

Lochgilphead GP, Dr Adrian Ward, who was in charge of the course, said that given positive feedback from the GPs, the course will run again in September.

Call for back-up as police arrest six

SIX PEOPLE ended up in the cells at Oban police station following a disturbance.

Police were called to a flat in Dunollie at around 9.15pm last Friday.

Officers initially arrested one man but when he was detained a number of others became involved and officers requested assistance from colleagues in the town.

The six people, five men and one woman, were all detained for disorder and drugs offences.

Court told how thug crushed Islay man's chest after bar row

COURT REPORTER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

A CALLOUS THUG who stood on an Islay man's ribcage and crushed his chest heard how his victim was 'fortunate' to be alive.

At the High Court in Glasgow last Wednesday, fisherman Andrew MacGillivray pleaded guilty to launching a savage and sustained assault on 41-year-old Keith Cameron on March 23 last year.

A doctor who treated the injured man, who was flown to Glasgow's Southern General hospital, said Mr Cameron's life had been in danger because of the serious injuries he had sustained during MacGillivray's brutal attack.

The court heard how the savage attack was sparked by a row between MacGillivray and a woman in a bar in Port Ellen on Islay, during which Mr Cameron had tried to diffuse the situation.

The 33-year-old fisherman was so enraged that he waited for his victim outside the bar and attacked him. During the frenzied assault, he stood on his victim's chest until his ribs cracked.

It was revealed in court that MacGillivray had got into an argument with a woman in the bar and Mr Cameron had tried to calm him down. MacGillivray was then asked to leave the pub.

But MacGillivray waited for Mr Cameron to leave and punched him and rained blows on him as he lay on the ground.

Prosecutor Ian Wallace added: 'He also stood on Mr Cameron's ribs and dropped down onto him causing his knees to strike him on the body.'

A couple passing by later spotted a blood-soaked Mr Cameron - whose nickname was 'Cabana' - lying on the pavement. Despite the fact they knew him, they were unable to recognise the victim at that time.

An ambulance soon rushed Mr Cameron to hospital in Glasgow.

MacGillivray meantime returned home and told his wife: 'I think I've killed Cabana. I hope he's OK. I know I hurt his ribs.' He insisted Mr Cameron had a 'go' at him in the bar before he launched his retaliation.

The father-of-three said he stood on Mr Cameron's ribs, heard them crack and the victim's chest 'went as flat as his stomach'.

Police later arrested MacGillivray. However, before being held in custody, he told his father-in-law: 'I did it - I would do it again and worse.'

'If you want to be hard, you have to act hard.'

Mr Cameron had injuries to his face, eye and significant fractures to his chest. He was eventually taken to the Southern General hospital in Glasgow for treatment.

A doctor said the injuries to the chest were more commonly found when a heavy object falls onto a person.

The medic added Mr Cameron's life had been at threat and that he was 'fortunate to be alive'.

MacGillivray, who now lives on the Isle of Lewis, was remanded in custody as sentence was deferred for background reports.

Fundraising night to ease seaman's plight

A FUNDRAISING night for Connel seaman Billy Irving, who is stranded in India, will take place in Campbeltown this Saturday.

'Night for Billy' will take place in the Victoria Hall from 7.30pm and feature entertainment from Kintyre Schools pipe band, The Twisted Melons, Jamie G Discos and Adam Fortune.

Money raised at the event will go towards supporting the former Campbeltown man and his family.

Former soldier Billy and his crew had criminal charges against them dropped by Indian authorities but are not allowed to leave the country while an appeal is being prepared by the government.

With no financial support from his employer or the UK government, his family, including pregnant girlfriend Yvonne MacFhugh, has been paying his expenses.

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BOWMORE

BOWMORE primary school must raise attainment in core subjects but has strong links with the community, according to school inspectors.

A report by HMIE into the school, Gaelic medium and nursery class, identified that pupils had opportunities for wider achievement in choir, drama and sporting activities and through a range of school clubs.

It also highlighted strong and productive links with the wider community, which enriched learning and praised 'the quality of experiences' for children in the Gaelic nursery class.

However the inspectors raised a number of issues with Argyll and Bute council, most notably a requirement to raise attainment in English, Gaelic and mathematics.

The school must also: increase the pace of learning and provide more challenging activities better matched to children's needs; improve the strategic leadership of the curriculum to ensure all staff are supported in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence; and ensure that self-evaluation has a stronger focus on improving outcomes for children.

The inspector will return in one year and report on the extent of improvements.

ISLAY

A RELAUNCH of Islay rugby club will see a fun family event held in Bowmore before the Brandie Cup is played on February 7.

Named La Révolution, the day will begin with a children's training session from 12.30pm and a 'Hats and scarves' barbecue from 1pm.

The Brandie Cup, Islay against the Rest of the World, will kick off at 2pm and the club will be screening the Scotland versus France match from 5.30pm.

KILMARTIN

ARCHITECTS have presented ideas on a new development at Kilmartin Museum.

The redevelopment of the museum will see millions invested in the project entitled Telling Scotland's Oldest Stories.

The presentation yesterday (Wednesday) saw a consultation held to hear from the public what it sees as priorities for the development.

The project will improve the museum's exhibition and collection storage and education service.

Architects Reiach and Hall gave a presentation on their proposed new scheme alongside an update on earlier consultations.

Museum staff were to discuss the types of activities that they hope to be able to carry out in the new building.

BALLACHULISH



BALLACHULISH nursery pupils were delighted to find their playground covered in snow.

Wrapped up warm last Tuesday, the children spent the morning building a snowman, complete with a hat, scarf and carrot nose.

GLENDALE

THE HISTORY of Glendale is to be recorded to form part of an exhibition about the north Skye village.

The video by the Glendale Trust will detail the 'then and now' of the community.

Anyone interesting in researching or recording for the project is asked to contact the trust via jane-talbot@sky.com.

COLL

RESIDENTS on Coll are gearing up for a range of evening activities at the An Cridhe community centre now the festive period is over.

Crianlarich Hydro scheme welcomed by residents



HYDRO: The old road bridge at Allt Coire Charoach, close to the site where a new proposed hydro electric scheme would be constructed

A HYDRO scheme which will generate electricity as well as raising around £10,000 a year for the community has been welcomed by residents in Crianlarich.

Alex Reading, director of Green Highland Renewables (GHR) gave a presentation to Strathfillan community council at its first meeting of the year on January 12 at Crianlarich village hall, to discuss the firm's plans.

GHR is a Perth-based company that specialises in river hydro electric schemes, and has a good working relationship with Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE), having taken over a number

of projects that SSE has gained planning permission for but hasn't progressed.

SSE was given permission for the hydro scheme at Allt Coire Charoach, around six miles east of Crianlarich, in 2009, and it was taken over by GHR last year.

The firm has been working with the planning authority over the last 12 months to ensure the scheme is viable and to reduce the environmental impact.

With an access track already built from the forest road to the river, the main construction would be a turbine house, which is being designed with environmental considerations to minimise visibility.

This will be connected via a pipeline of approx 900 meters in diameter with five concrete weir intake points.

It is hoped the second phase of construction will start between March and April this year with the aim of achieving grid connection by April 2016 and generating the first electricity by June 2016.

GHR is bound by SSE obligations, including the community benefits previously discussed with the community council, which is proposed to give the community £5,000 per megawatt over the life of the scheme, paid annually.

The lease is for 50 years, and the project is expected to generate two megawatts annually, around £10,000 per year.

Payment needs to be made to a recognised legal company, for which the Strathfillan Community Development Trust is ideal.

GHR is due to produce a draft community benefit agreement during the next six months, which will need to be designed before generation begins.

GHR currently estimates that the scheme will generate electricity worth approx £1 million per year, via the government's feed-in tariff.

On Monday evenings there are gym circuits, badminton and a bridge club, and then netball, table tennis and adult football on Tuesdays.

There is more table tennis and then hockey on Wednesdays and on Thursdays there is circuit training and a choir meeting.

For children, on Fridays there is football and then on Saturdays the kids club is up-and-running again.

Local artist Kip Poulson is also happy to be offering painting courses again next month.

The first four-day course of the year will be held from February 17 to 21, with further courses in March and October.

More information about the courses available and costs involved can be found at: <http://collbunkhouse.com/creativecoll/>

COLL Community council met for the first time this year on Wednesday, January 14.

Treasurer Peter Ings said there was agreement among members that the community had coped well with the disruption caused by the bad weather.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* on January 15, he said: 'We had our first ferry in eight days on yesterday [Wednesday 14].

'Credit to CalMac, they put on a special service yesterday which they didn't have to do. Between that and the extra flights by Hebridean Air Services, the carriers have served the island really well and pulled out all the stops.'

INVERGARRY

A CEILIDH dancing club has returned to Invergarry following a year's absence.

The popular fortnightly event restarted on Friday evening in Glegarry Community Hall.

Everyone is welcome to future meetings of the club, which meets from 7.30-9.30pm.

The hall will also play host to a Burns supper this Saturday (January 24), with music from the Inverroy Ceilidh Band.

Tickets are available from Seven Heads Store, Fort Augustus Newsagents and Neil Stewart (01809 501238).

MORVERN

MORVERN Community Woodlands volunteers have donated surplus timber to pensioners in their area for use as firewood.

Members of the group braved the cold, rain and ferocious winds over the weekend of January 10-11 to chop trees and donate the blocks to 25 residents for heating their homes.

Their job was made easier after the storms uprooted two large sycamores at the site in Achnaha community wood near Ardnamurchan.

The group has thanked all volunteers for their kind efforts on the day.



GOOD WOOD: Morvern Community Woodlands volunteers chop trees to stockpile as firewood for pensioners in their area

MORVERN lines

An epic walk

ADAM Short, 40, explorer and adventurer, who passed through Morvern a few weeks ago on his epic 6,500-mile trek round the UK mainland coastline to raise money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Save the Children, is making progress.

By the time this appears he will be leaving Tarbert and heading down the west side of the Kintyre peninsula towards its most southerly tip. From there he will turn north to Campbeltown and then follow the east coast up to Lochgilphead and ultimately across the Clyde.

Adam, who left Southampton last March and does not expect to complete his journey until July of this year, is carrying all his kit, including an inflatable canoe for river crossings, in a rucksack as heavy as a sack of coal. Unlike some others who have attempted this same journey, Adam has set himself some arduous rules which includes sticking as close to the coast as is safely possible. He has no back-up and is camping wherever he can find shelter to ensure his favourite charities get the maximum financial benefit.

His 'camp' is not a tent but a tarpaulin thrown over a rope strung between two trees which, in the weather we have experienced these past few weeks, makes one wonder how he has survived - admittedly the short winter days, recent blizzards and gale force winds have slowed him down a little. Adam does not carry any maps but navigates with a mobile telephone using Google Earth and by keeping the sea on his right. Before he set off he approached the Ordnance Survey, which is based in Southampton, for sponsorship in kind. It was unhelpful so he decided he didn't actually need its famous maps.



EPIC: Adam Short crossing the Crinan Canal

Adam arranged for small parcels of special lightweight food to be sent ahead to various post offices along the way. This has proved successful although he won't turn down the offer of a meal, a cup of tea and the opportunity to meet local folk and, as one of the country's leading computer gurus, he would be able to fix a machine in return. He is recording his journey for a book and a film at the prestigious Banff Mountain Film Festival. To pass the long dark evenings at the day's end and to keep him in touch with his friends and followers, he posts graphic film clips and often amusing messages on Facebook whenever he can access wi-fi. Perhaps it was folk like Adam that Edgar Guest had in mind when he wrote his well known poem, 'It couldn't be done'.

*Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it."
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.*

Support Adam by making a donation locally or on line through the UK Coastal Trek or the RNLI and Save The Children Just Giving webpage. If you see Adam on his walk and would like to help him personally he would be glad of any 'random acts of kindness'; the chance to shower, recharge his mobile telephone, a new tarpaulin to replace the present one which was badly holed in the recent storms, or sponsorship for the cost of a new pair of boots (he's gone through six pairs already) or some lightweight waterproof clothing and food. Adam can sometimes be contacted on Facebook or more usually through the email address at the foot of this column.

Knights of the road

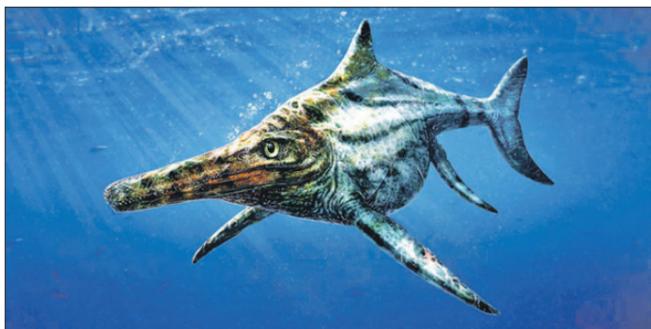
THE long Liddesdale Hill between Lochaline and Strontian, which rises from sea level to almost 900 feet, has proved arduous for many travellers in the recent wintery conditions. Thanks and praise are due to Duncan Cameron, Strontian, and his Highland Council colleagues for conscientiously keeping this and other roads in the area open at all times of the day and night often in dangerous conditions. Thanks also to Rob Capell, Lochaline, who not only keeps the school bus running safely but often, after work, voluntarily takes a turn up the road with his four-wheeled vehicle, especially in the evening, in case anyone finds themselves in difficulty.

Iain Thornber
iain.thornber@btinternet.com

KENTALLEN AND DUROR

A BURNS supper and ceilidh is to be held in Kentallen and Duror community centre tomorrow night (Friday). The 'bring your own bottle' event will include cockaleekie soup and traditional haggis, neeps and tatties. For tickets contact Rena Cameron on 01631 740238.

Prehistoric reptile discovered on Skye



PREHISTORIC: Dearthmha shawcrossi once roamed the waters around Skye

A GIANT new species of prehistoric reptile has been discovered by scientists on Skye.

An aquatic creature christened Dearthmha shawcrossi is said to have roamed Scotland's seas around 170 million years ago during the Jurassic period when much of Scotland was under water.

Fragments of skulls, teeth, vertebrae and an upper arm from the animal were discovered at Berreraig Bay on the island in 1959 and palaeontologists have now come to a conclusion with their research.

The species gained its name partly in honour of the man who found the fossil more than half a century ago, Brian Shawcross, while Dearthmha is Gaelic for 'marine lizard'.

Dr Steve Brusatte, from the University of Edinburgh's school of geosciences, led a team from his institution who discovered the reptile.

He said: 'During the time of dinosaurs, the waters of Scotland were prowled by reptiles the size of motor boats.

'Their fossils are very rare and for the first time we've found a new species that was uniquely Scottish.'

Palaeontologists say Skye is one of the few places in the world that fossils from the middle Jurassic period can be found.

The University of Edinburgh conducted the research with other groups, including Staffin Museum on Skye and National Museums Scotland.



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World snow day sees A82 parking mayhem in Glencoe



TRAFFIC JAM: Motorists were left frustrated after delays caused by vehicles parked on the A82 trunk road at Glencoe

GORDON WEBSTER
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POLICE were called on Sunday after the A82 road was brought to a standstill by hordes of motorists trying to access Glencoe Mountain Resort on a day perfect for skiing.

Around 200 visitors parked their cars on the edge of the main road and caused huge tailbacks as single-file traffic had to be enforced along the high-speed stretch of road between Bridge of Orchy and Fort William.

Deep snow and clear skies had resulted in unprecedented demand from winter sports fans and the centre's car parks becoming full by early afternoon.

Other passing vehicles, including lorries and coaches, had to wait in traffic jams for more than 20 minutes while drivers had to be wary of people walking on the road due to the verges being several feet deep in snow.

Staff at Glencoe Mountain

Resort sold 1,600 entry tickets and, with capacity stretched, afternoon visitors were turned away while cars parked around the entrance junction as well as on the centre's access road.

Details of cars left on the A82 carriageway itself were noted by police.

South Highland area commander chief inspector Colin Gough said parking in this manner was a road traffic offence.

He added: 'The inconsiderate and dangerous actions of those who parked on one of Scotland's busiest main routes posed significant risk and disruption for other road users.'

'We are liaising closely with Glencoe centre management, BEAR Scotland and the local authority, and will take steps to ensure this situation does not happen again.'

Numbers were swelled even more because of Sunday's world snow day event, details of which can be found on the sports pages.



PARKED: Traffic was gridlocked in Glencoe on Sunday as hundreds of visitors to the ski resort parked along the high-speed A82 road

TIMESLINE

Suspects sought after van stolen from Lochaline

A WHITE Peugeot van was stolen from outside Lochaline village stores in Morvern early on Saturday morning.

Police are seeking information about two men of an unkempt appearance seen in the area on Friday night.

Officers are also investigating a break-in to a shed at the rear of Ross Place, Fort William between the evening of January 11 and the following morning, where alcoholics drinks were stolen.

In Mallaig, a quantity of coal was stolen from the rear garden of a property in Lovat Terrace between January 8 and 10.

Anyone with information about these incidents should telephone the police on 101, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or by using the website www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

Rural pay phone lifeline cut off

'LIFELINE' public phones in rural areas must be repaired 'as a matter of urgency', according to a Highland MP.

This comes after Lochaber musician Mary Ann Kennedy was left stranded in snow and high winds near Corran Ferry, with no mobile phone signal, only to find the BT payphone was signposted as 'under maintenance'.

Ms Kennedy said the incident last Wednesday showed how important public phones were in rural areas.

She added: 'I didn't go out blind, I knew what the weather was like and I took a calculated risk. What I didn't know was when I got to the bus stop I'd have no way of contacting anyone to find out when the bus was expected.'

'If people think these phones are there and depend on them for whatever reason then they could end up in a really terrible situation.'

'This isn't a one off. If you

travel on the A82 between there and Fort Augustus I think you'd struggle to find a working public phone. The fact is the phone not being available made redeeming my situation almost impossible.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, said the communications company can't assume everyone has access to a mobile phone, particularly in remote areas where signal is often poor, and shouldn't 'muck around' when it comes to repairs.

He added: 'At present, mobile phone signal is dire across the Highlands.'

'My Liberal Democrat colleagues in [UK] government have secured an enormous win by forcing operators to allow users of other networks to reciprocally 'roam' on one another's networks but this doesn't give BT an excuse to muck us around. In some communities the village pay phone is a vital lifeline that should not be put at risk.'

'Given the reliance on these telephones by some constituents,

I urge BT to address each and every fault as a matter of urgency.'

A BT spokesman said the faults were a result of the weather last week.

He said: 'Severe weather conditions have affected a significant amount of our telecommunications equipment in this area and other parts of Scotland. We'll be checking all the payphones in the area as a result.'

But *The Oban Times* has since discovered some of the region's most remote communities are often without public pay phones, as they either don't work or have been removed.

The facility in Sunart has only recently been fixed, following a long-running problem, said Brian Evans, chairman of the area's community council.

He added: 'It works at the moment but it's quite often off, I definitely wouldn't rely on it working. It wasn't working for a long time last year but it seems to be back up and running now.'

And Acharacle residents came to rely on their payphone when the storms caused faults with their mobile signal and were relieved to find it working.

Margaret Green, secretary of Acharacle community council, said: 'We used to have a lot more in the area but they have been removed, you don't realise how important they are until something like this happens and then you really rely on them.'



TALK: Charles Kennedy says payphones in rural areas are a 'lifeline' for communities

LOCHABER musician Mary Ann Kennedy has thanked a 'hero' bus driver for his help and customer service when she was stranded in snow for two hours.

Amid road closures and train cancellations last Wednesday, the Ardgour-based director of Watercolour Music braved the conditions in an attempt to travel to Glasgow for the annual Celtic Connections festival but found herself stuck at the remote Corran Ferry bus stop with a broken pay phone and no mobile phone signal two hours after the Fort William-Glasgow service was delayed.

In the end it was Glasgow-Fort bus driver John Mellon who came to the rescue, collecting the musician when he passed travelling northbound on the A82.

More than eight hours later, Mrs Kennedy arrived safely in Glasgow, after meeting up with Mr Mellon again in Fort William for his return route south.

She said: 'The bus driver was a hero. He was such a gentleman,



MUSICIAN Mary Ann Kennedy was stranded for more than two hours

cheery, apologetic, helpful and generally an all-round fantastic soul.'

The Mòd gold medallist also took to social media to track down the driver, asking anyone who knows him to pass on her thanks but later said she hadn't spoken to him personally.

Mallaig primary finally re-opens after repairs

MALLAIG primary school and nursery finally reopened to pupils on Friday morning after being closed for more than a month.

Children were evacuated from the building on December 18 because of danger posed by a damaged chimney and missed their entire first week of the spring term after bad weather prevented repairs being completed.

It took until late last week for the damage to be fixed, with primary pupils spending four days being taught in Mallaig high school, while nursery children were sent to Arisaig primary.



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Alastair Redman - Candidate for the United Kingdom Parliamentary Election 2015

Alastair Redman is a native of the island of Islay, where he is the Postmaster in the village of Portnahaven and vice-chair of the island's Community Council. He also lead the Better Together Islay campaign. He is passionate about his homeland, and he campaigns relentlessly to improve the lot of all who live there. He believes that the amount of public money spent in Argyll & Bute fails to tally with the immense contribution which the area makes to the economy through malt whisky distilling, agriculture, forestry, and fishing. In 2007, Alastair began gathering donations at Portnahaven Stores in order to create morale-boosting packages to send to front line troops. Last year the shop sent its 3000th parcel to British soldiers, a fantastic achievement for such a small island.

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Hydro project will power mountain resort in future

A LOCHABER mountain resort could become environmentally friendly after an application to install a hydro power scheme was granted.

The project at Nevis Range has been approved but is yet to become a reality as directors still have to raise £3.2million to build it. Marian Austin, managing director at Nevis Range, said the scheme on a burn at the 'back quarry' of the resort, would go a long way to reducing electricity used on site.

She added: 'It's only a proposal at this stage but Nevis Range uses a lot of electricity, so by using renewable energy we hope to make a big difference.'

'As well as the environmental benefits it will help the range become more sustainable because on all the wet, windy and miserable days when we can't open the hydro scheme will be working and we can export electricity to other places.'

New jobs move at Marine Harvest

NEW JOBS are to be created at Marine Harvest when the team moves into bigger offices in Fort William.

The aquaculture company will move from Blar Mor to Glen Nevis Industrial estate, to accommodate increasing staff numbers.

It is hoped eight jobs and better facilities will be created as a result of the move, due to take place this spring.

Alan Sutherland, managing director of Marine Harvest Scotland, said: 'We have been bursting at the seams of our existing offices and we've had to use a Portakabin, which is far from ideal.'

'The new building in Fort William will accommodate our growing team and also provide a much better working environment.'

Duror junction upgrade is holding back development

EMMA CRICHTON
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A 'DANGEROUS' junction is preventing new housing being built in a rural Lochaber village, according to a community council chairman.

The Achindarroch junction leaves the A828 trunk road at Duror, leading to housing and a caravan park, and has poor visibility, said Jonathan Baxter of Duror and Kentallen community council.

But Transport Scotland officials disagree and have refused

to improve the route, despite ongoing pleas from residents in the area. Anyone who tries to build new housing at Achindarroch has been told they must upgrade the road at their own expense.

Mr Baxter said: 'Transport Scotland said it's not dangerous as it is but if there is any new development the road would need to be improved.'

'That's a load of rubbish because if you're coming on to the main road from Achindarroch the visibility is terrible, the junction really is quite dangerous.'

'But worse than that, it said if there are any new developments

it would become dangerous and the road would need to be improved.

'The problem with that is new developments would only be a couple of houses, not major developments from big companies.'

'If someone only wants to build one house they won't get planning permission without agreeing to improve the road.'

'They can't afford to upgrade the junction so it ends up they don't build at all.'

'It's holding us back as a community because it's stopping people from coming here,' said Mr Baxter.

'We're always told small communities should be cherished but when we have the potential to progress we're held back.'

Mr Baxter hopes a Highland council planning official will attend the Duror and Kentallen community council meeting on March 9 to listen to residents' concerns.

Andrew Baxter, Highland councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, said the cost of upgrading the junction was preventing development in the area.

He added: 'We have a small community which could benefit from some additional housing,

maybe two or three builds, but that's not possible because of improving the road - and the rate is higher than usual because it's a trunk road.'

A Transport Scotland spokeswoman said safety on trunk roads was 'extremely important'.

She added: 'We constantly monitor the network, including the A828 and the junctions, in terms of the personal injury accident safety record.'

'Any future planning applications which may have an effect on existing trunk conditions would be considered by Transport Scotland on their individual merits.'

Heavier financial penalties called for after Caol hit by dog fouling

DOG fouling in a Lochaber village has been described as 'disgusting' and 'a scourge' by a woman who is sick of finding mess outside her home.

Sheree Rowsell says the grass in front of her house in Caol has become a 'minefield' and other people from the village even bring their pets in cars specifically to MacQuarrie Court and don't pick up the mess, even though there is a dog bin on the stretch of grass.

She said: 'It's disgusting. I've reported people before and even posted poo bags through their letterbox to use but nothing seems to change.'

'It's the scourge of Caol. I've seen people pull up in cars, let their dogs out to do their business and just drive off again. They don't care but it would be a different story if it was at their front door.'

Mrs Rowsell took to Facebook to raise her concerns. She is worried about children who play on the grass.

She added: 'Kids could go blind if they got it in their eyes. There's a lot of wee ones about here and they play on their bikes and run about out there.'

A higher fixed penalty punishment is the only way to crack down on the problem according to Mrs Rowsell, who said people should be 'hit in their pockets'.

A Highland Council spokeswoman said fouling was targeted in Lochaber through routine patrolling, targeting problem areas, bin provision and issuing free disposable bags from service points and dispensers. She added: 'In the last six months we received seven reports of dog fouling and staff issued four fixed penalty notices. We urge anyone with any concerns to contact us with details.'

Incidents can be reported online via the council website or by phoning 01349 886603.

Word power wins prizes from Rotary

VOLUNTEERS from the Rotary Club of Lochaber have commended the 'extremely high standard' of entries in the club's essay competition for youngsters.

Entries were received from 14 pupils in Lochaber high school focussing on two topics; 'powers of the social media' and 'the impact of celebrities'.

Ella Smith came first in the S1-S3 category with Millie Jackson coming second, while Kirsti Clark took the S4 upwards prize with Jack Matheson the runner-up.

GOOD READING: Rotary Club of Lochaber volunteers are pictured with the young essay competition winners from Lochaber high school



Festive profits help elderly



GENEROUS: Louise Duffy, deputy manager of Abbeyfield care home in Ballachulish, receives a cheque for £208 from Craig and Noru Innes of the Loch Leven Hotel

STAFF from Ballachulish elderly care home, Abbeyfield, have thanked another business in the area for a generous cash donation.

The proprietors of the North

Ballachulish Loch Leven Hotel, Craig and Noru Innes, have given a generous £208 of their Christmas and new year profits to the centre, which opened in 2003. Dominic Duffy, office

manager at Abbeyfield, said: 'It is great to get support for our charity from other local businesses that have taken the opportunity to visit and appreciate what we do here.'

Rural Skye primary pupils face hour-long journeys

CHILDREN from rural Skye communities could face daily round trips of up to two hours after Highland councillors agreed to close four schools in the north of the island.

Edinbane, Dunvegan, Struan and Knockbreck primaries are to be merged into one new school in Dunvegan meaning Knockbreck pupils will now travel 11 miles each way to school, much of the journey on single-track roads.

A report on the proposal for Highland council's education, children and adult services committee said the journey would take 28 minutes but Skye local members told the committee last Wednesday (January 14) it often takes 40 minutes and up to an hour in bad weather.

Councillor Ian Renwick said: 'I can't agree with how long it's going to take. It's not just the distance from the school it's all the

outlying houses so it could easily be more than an hour and you will have four-year-old children travelling that distance.'

'I feel this would have a bad effect on the areas. People will not move to the area if there's no school there, people might even move away.'

Bill Alexander, Highland Council's director for care and learning, said the merge would 'benefit education' and com-

mittee members approved the proposal.

The decision must be ratified at the next full council meeting in March.

Skye councillors also said many parents in these communities would choose to move their children to other schools including MacDiarmid and Carbost. It was agreed a new consultation would begin to review the catchments areas for these schools.

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Glasgow Letter

Glaschunan Gaidheal

THERE is a well-known Gaelic/English macaronic song called 'MacDonald's First Trip to Glasgow'. It tells the tale of a Highlander who initially felt intimidated by the foreign nature of city life.

He wishes he was 'air ais an t-ir nam beann' - back in the land of the hills.

My own experience of arriving in Glasgow three and a half years ago was, thankfully, quite different - such is the extent of the young, Highland community established here.

The Gaelic department at Glasgow University (as well as the Comunn Oiseanach - a student Gaelic association) is a thriving hub of young Gaels.

Bodies like An Lòchran, Ceòl is Craic, and Gaels Le Chèile put on Gaelic events regularly. Not to mention the bright lights of the famous 'teuchter triangle'. Countless nights of studying have been lost somewhere between the Park Bar and the Islay Inn!

It is a great honour for me to pen the Glasgow Letter, and I hope to bring to it a sense of the liveliness of the youthful Highland scene down here.

The associations

IN his final letter, Neil Murray (whose Glasgow Letter I have always enjoyed) mentioned the lack of youngsters currently attending the Highland/Island associations.

I have a real soft spot for the associations because some of my first performances in Glasgow were at association ceilidhs.

While Neil is absolutely correct in his summary of the situation, I am optimistic for the associations.

It is undeniable that even the annual gatherings now seem a far cry from the glory days of years gone by when tickets for the dances would sell out within a day of going on sale. They are, nevertheless, still great nights and I think the younger generations will flood back to the dances very soon.

The Three Association's Annual Gathering Dance is a perfect case study.

Vice-President and Trail West accordionist, Ian Smith, said: 'In recent years, the numbers have really soared. I've only been on the committee for two years myself, but we've pushed it on social media and we've had a couple of great dances. It's particularly pleasing that the dance has been attended by both young and not-so-young people.'

The multitude of exciting bands from Three itself (which have all supported the association over the years) and the renown of Three Music Festival have undoubtedly contributed to the success of the dance, but there is no reason that the other annual gatherings will not now follow suit.

The Lewis/Harris dance is always similarly busy and there was also a big, young crowd at the Glasgow Skye

Your Letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 200 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

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dance last year. The association dances are very fine evenings, and I would like to think that the buzzing young Highland and Hebridean community in Glasgow will now attend them in increasing numbers, and return them to their former glory.

After all, who would go to hear a DJ play records in a club on Sauchiehall Street when you could go to a real dance with a real band?!

Celtic Connections

CELTIC Connections is in town once again this month.

Over the next few weeks, I hope to catch a few concerts. So far, I have attended two gigs.

On Friday January 16, I took in a folk singing extravaganza called Horizons.

There was a whole host of acts on the bill (including the fantastic Karine Polwart and Kate Rusby), but of particular note was Macanta - a young band fronted by Dol Eoin MacKinnon from Scalpay, Harris.

Its upbeat approach, and Dol Eoin's unique humour, really won over the audience.

On Saturday January 17, I went to 'Crossing the Minch' - The Music of Pipe Major Donald MacLeod, MBE.

This was a real cracker of a gig. The house band was immense, and the Glenfinnan Ceilidh Band on flying form as always. PM Donald MacLeod's tunes always get everyone humming along, so a whole evening of them was never going to fail - especially when played by such first class musicians.

Must be the accent...

A FRIEND of mine last week went into a Glasgow newsagent's to buy his paper.

He asked the shopkeeper where he could find The Oban Times. 'Behind the door', was the response.

He duly searched the pile of papers behind the door.

There was an Argyllshire Advertiser, a Campbelltown Courier, a Stornoway Gazette... but no sign of his coveted Oban Times.

He noticed, however, a sign on the back of the door saying: 7am - 10pm.

It then struck him that the shopkeeper had directed him not to The Oban Times, but to the opening times.

Pub scene

Park Bar: Friday, January 23 - Ceòl an Aire; Saturday, January 24 - Trail West; Sunday, January 25 - Trail West.

Islay Inn: Friday, January 23 - O' Cajunals; Saturday, January 24 - Black Velvet.

Uist and Barra: The Uist and Barra Association New Year Dance will take place on January 30 in the Glasgow University Union from 9pm-1am.

Three: The Three Association's annual Burns Supper takes place this Saturday at 7.30pm at Ralston Community Centre.

Robert Robertson robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Glenorchy Munro Shield winners - 1960

Glenorchy Shinty Club is holding a reunion at Dalmally Community Centre on Saturday May 9 2015. The event will include an open day presentation of the club's history followed by a ceilidh at night. The club is gathering old photographs and newspaper articles to create a historical record of the club and this one is the Glenorchy Munro Shield winners from 1960 before the club was reformed in 1965. Anyone who has any articles or photos they would like to share for the anniversary should send them to glenorchy1947@gmail.com Digital versions of flashback photos for The Oban Times can be sent to editor@obantimes.co.uk or prints sent in to Editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Anyone who wishes a print returned should include a stamped, addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Opposing views are confusing

Sir, Providing a platform for politicians to give their views on how Argyll and Bute Council is steering the county's future is credit orthy (Oban Times, January 8).

However, readers must have wondered if Mike MacKenzie and Ellen Morton were describing the same administration.

Ellen's account charts a rosy future in which the council is laying the foundation for success. Vibrancy seems to be her message, except that, somewhat contrarily, the population continues to fall, so hunky-dory is the area as a place to find employment.

Mike sees the council as obstructive of progress and development and in need of a change in outlook in order to promote business and enterprise and, so, reverse the decline in population.

Ellen's optimism encourages readers to feel that all is well, that the future is secure and that we should not worry.

Mike's call for radical change warns us that all is not well and that, without change, life will become less comfortable and less certain.

Such diametrically opposing assessments of the same facts provides a confusing picture. Any entrepreneur looking to set up business might prefer to invest elsewhere, where the picture is more clearly defined.

And residents must be wondering which interpretation tallies with what they experience on a daily basis,

Islay Letter

Schoolgirl success

A PORT Ellen schoolgirl was delighted to learn that she was chosen as the winner in the Argyll and Bute Council's road safety calendar competition.

The design efforts of Annie Farrell, a 10 year old pupil at Port Ellen primary school, greatly impressed the panel of judges who awarded her poster with the message 'The Lollipop makes cars stop' the top prize and prominent placing in the calendar layout.

Annie's artistic efforts sees her receiving a £50 voucher and the road safety classroom calendar trophy for her school.

Councillor Maurice Corry, the council's spokesperson on transport matters, congratulated Annie and

considering, perhaps, if they should move elsewhere.

This debate needs clarification so that, if there are problems, changes can be effected and confidence in the future of the county restored.

Prof Ian Reid, Oban.

Relatives of Helen Cameron

Sir, I am trying to trace possible relatives or friends of Helen McIntyre Cameron who died in Oban in 1983.

She was born in 1896 and her parents were John Cameron and Maggie Cameron. They lived in Bridgeton, Glasgow. Helen lived with a younger brother Robert (Bob) and they were rehoused from Glasgow to Coalburn in the late '60s or early '70s.

I am researching family history and am curious to know why Helen died in Oban. I would also like to know of any possible connections in order to share information.

My connection to Helen is that she is my father's aunt. Any information should be sent via my email address: lwm46@hotmail.co.uk

Lin Partridge, by email.

Ceilidh thanks

Sir, I would like to thank the youngsters of Oban who turned out, brought instruments, played and danced for the entertainment of me, and I hate to say this, but the few who turned up to the ceilidh run by the Oban Lions Club in the Royal Hotel on Saturday, January 10. Thank you.

Agnes MacFadyen, Dunbeg.

and whose publication will take place later in the year. Soloists and choristers, along with those with a knowledge of local songs did their bit at the ceilidhs which were overseen by Kenneth Thomson, the conductor of the Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association and better known as 'the GG'. Also having important input to the project will be Clare Jordan who wrote the music for the Còisir Ghàidhligle's highly successful 'Blar' production.

The Gaelic songbook proposal is a collaboration between Iomairt Ghàidhligle's Dhiùraand Comunnna Gàidhlig. Funding will be received from Bòrdna Gàidhlig and there will also be support from Ardbeg Distillery.

The book will be produced locally and designed by local artist Dr Raymond

Lafferty. Further help with the design will be provided by local youngsters currently involved in Gaelic activities. More information on the project can be obtained from lynn@cnag.org

No new A83 cash disappointment

Sir, I am very disappointed that the SNP is giving no new money for work at the Rest and Be Thankful.

All it announced on Wednesday last week was that the work promised last June for Strone Point and Glen Kinglas is still in the programme. This is just not good enough. October's closure at the Rest and Be Thankful showed that the 'patch and mend' work has not solved the problem.

Earlier this month, warnings were issued that the road might have to be closed yet again because of dirty water flowing from the hillside.

It's high time the SNP committed money for a proper solution for the Rest and Be Thankful, such as a new two-lane road on the other side of the glen. This would cost a fraction of the cash left unspent in last year's Scottish Government budget.

The SNP has the money available to construct a permanent solution at the Rest and Be Thankful, but it refuses to spend it. It's high time it did.

Alan Reid, Argyll and Bute MP.

Lack of machines take 'new' coins

Sir While I don't object to paying for parking in Oban town centre, per se, I do object when Argyll and Bute Council fails to provide machines that will take the current legal tender.

There can barely be half a dozen, out of numerous

parking-ticket-issuing machine all over the town, that actually take the 'new' 5, 10, 20 and 50 pence pieces, which have been in circulation since 2008.

It is bad enough having to scramble around to find 80 pence, for the shortest on-street parking period of 40 minutes, never mind find 'old' coins which are being phased out. A cynic might think the council was failing to replace these machines because then motorists use £1 coins for convenience instead, whether staying for 40 minutes or not.

The vast amount of money being generated from on and off-street parking could surely be spent on replacing these machines for ones that can actually take our country's legal tender.

Foreign visitors must be confused beyond belief, leading to a lack of parking tickets displayed and - hey presto - more money in council coffers from parking fines. What a scam.

Robert Miller, Oban.

Cut out the Cold

Sir At Turn2us we found that a huge 78 per cent of families struggled with their energy bills in the last year while three out of four families said cold homes were harming the health of their children.

We launched our Cut out the Cold campaign this month to reach families that need help so they can access financial support. However, we need to see a concerted effort by all organisations that can provide practical help in tackling fuel poverty.

Simon Hopkins, Chief Executive, Turn2us.

Lafferty. Further help with the design will be provided by local youngsters currently involved in Gaelic activities. More information on the project can be obtained from lynn@cnag.org

Band sponsorship

KILCHOMAN Distillery is to continue providing sponsorship for the island's pipe band for the next 3 years. This was welcome news for the band members who are presently putting the finishing touches to their latest CD in the Headhunter Studios in Glasgow. All systems go, the 12 track CD should hit the shops at Eastertide.

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

Beachd Ailein Ailean Caimbeul

'S E freastal fhèin a rinn nach robh fìor dhroch thu-baistean anns na h-Eileanan an Iar air an t-seachdain seo chaidh nuair a chaidh dà bhus goilear fàr rathaidean air an gànrrachadh le sneachda. Bha ceathrad is trìur chloinne eadar an dà bhus, ach gu fortanach cha deach duine aca a dhroch ghoirteachadh. A rèir neach-labhairt bhon Chomhairle, bha na rathaidean air an robh na busaichean a' siubhal aig ìre prìomhachais trì a thaobh glanaidh agus sailleadh, agus mar sin bha iad gun fhrithealadh riutha nuair a thachair na tubaistean dha na busaichean.

Cha bheag an t-iongnadh gum bheil pàrantan ag iarraidh gun tèid ath-sgrùdadh a dhèanamh gun dàil air poileasaidh na Comhairle air sailleadh nan rathaidean. Ach chan e Comhairle nan Eilean a-mhàin aig am bheil dùbhlhan den t-seòrsa seo!

Mus dèanar cronachadh sam bith air oifigich chomhairlean feadh na dùthcha, feumar cuimhneachadh gum bheil comhairlean Alba air fad air a bhith a' strì ri maoin stèidhichte fad grunn bhliadhnaichean, agus tha seo air am fàgail a' fàsadh bhuidseatan feadh sheirbheisean uile. Tha ìre obair saillidh nan rathaidean tron gheamhradh a' fulang mar phàirt den chionnadh seo ann an comas nan comhairlean air seirbheisean coileanta a libhrigeadh. Bidh buill taghta nan comhairlean air aontachadh ris na buidseatan a tha ma choinneimh na h-obrach le làn fhios, bhithte an dòchas, air buaidh nan gearraidhean. Saoidh mi gum bheil e follaiseach gum bheil a' mhòr-chuid de bhuiil nan comhairlean fada an aghaidh a bhith a' lùghdachadh sheirbheisean, ach tha e mar uallach orra obrachadh taobh a-staigh chrìochan an cuid maoin agus tha na gearraidhean air a bhith gan sparradh orra bliadhna an dèidh bliadhna. Ach tha fhios gum bheil rud eadar ciall is cuthach, agus saoidh mise nach gabh dìon a dhèanamh air suidheachadh anns am bheil beatha chloinne, neo gu dearbh beatha dhuine sam bith, ga chur an cunnart! 'S ann air ais a tha cùisean a' dol! Nuair a bha mi òg tha cuimhne glè mhath agam air mar a bhiodh "balaich an rathaid" a-mach aig uairean beaga na maidne ach am biodh na rathaidean air an glanadh agus gainmheach orra deiseil airson am bus is post, agus seirbheisean deatamach eile. Cha robh làraidhean le lannan glanaidh sneachda cho pailt an uairsin agus bha cidheachan sneachda gan cladhach le sluaiseadan, agus cha robh salann aca a bharrachd!

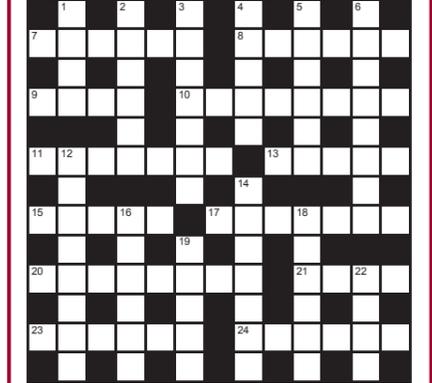
'S sinn fhin a tha gan taghadh is mura tèid aig luchd-poilltigs aig gach ìre air seirbheisean siubhail sàbhailte a thoirt dhuinn, bu chòir dhuinn feadhainn eile a thaghadh!

Despite local authority budgetary pressures the safety of public service transport, including school bus services, must be sacrosanct. It is not acceptable that school bus routes are 'prioritised' in such a way that children's lives are put at risk as they travel to school under the care of a local authority. We elect politicians to manage services and if they cannot ensure basic road safety for public transport services then we should replace them all!

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

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What is good for you may not be great for other people and vice versa.

How many times have you confided in someone?

Whether a partner, friend or work colleague, almost all of us will have shared difficult moments with the people closest to us.

But what if you can't speak to those you are closest to? What if your problem relates to these relationships, or is too personal to share with someone you meet every day?

Counselling may be the answer you are looking for.

Far from being 'for other people' counselling may be the starting point to a renewed take on life, to a more organised and focussed path.

From a chat with someone who is there to listen or a prayer or psychotherapy, it is always worth considering speaking to a friendly face. Often it helps if this person is not known to you.

A new chapter

As the Scottish population gets older - our elderly population is to increase by two thirds in the next 20 years. The service offered by care homes, support services and the health and social work services will become increasingly more important.

Council policies are also set up to assist with care in the home for as long as possible so that people can remain independent. There are even agencies which will help upgrade and decorate elderly peo-

The ultimate aim of a care home is to help people enjoy more independent and fulfilling lives in their later years.

Thankfully these are now far from the daunting sterile image of old.

In the West Highlands care homes provide 24-hour-care services including support

with all personal care.

So when choosing where you, or your loved ones, are going to spend this time, it is wise to judge each home by this simple, yet essential, mission statement.

A good care home will want residents and their families to look upon the new accommodation as their own - from the very first day they move in.

Look for homes that are modern - in attitude, if not appearance - spacious and safe.

It is important that staff are caring and receptive to people's needs and that the food served is high in quality and nutrition.

It is also worth noting if there are any organised activities within the home that encourage interaction between residents and allow them to try new things.

You can also have a visit from hairdressers, physiotherapists, chiropodists, doctors, nurses, dentists and even dieticians. That's on top of getting daily papers and magazines delivered.

A community that cares is something many people lament as a lost trait in society nowadays.

But what if the helpful neighbour who used to pop out for the elderly woman next door's shopping has simply been replaced with more professional - but no less caring - services.

A chat over a cup of tea and a few biscuits might solve some people's problems but others may have much more on their plate to deal with. And there are plenty of places in the West Highlands that you can turn to for care and support in a time of need.

You could be facing problems at home, whether that be coping with a loved one's illness, a recent bereavement or addiction issues.

There are many support and therapy groups that can help you overcome these issues and deal with the emotions you experience during them.

Perhaps you're stuck in a situation you can't see a way out of.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse help is at hand - don't be afraid to speak up.

Reaching out to others can pull you back from a point where you may be considering harming yourself. Talking through your problems will help solve them.

But perhaps you just need a helping hand



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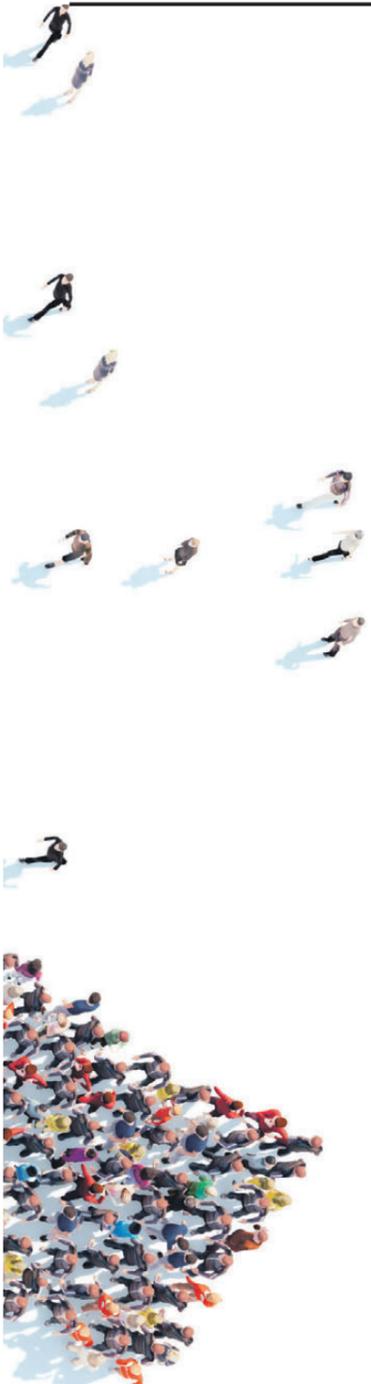
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ple's homes.

The NHS in Scotland is attempting to keep as many elderly people as possible at home and elderly care is changing to cope with the demand.

Through NHS Highland's Reshaping Care for Older People plan, support is being made available for that very purpose.

Of course staying at home isn't always an option, perhaps the burden of care has become too much for family members and the time has come to look at care homes.



Uncertainty around Post Office future sparks fears of a closure this summer

A VILLAGE Post Office, described as a 'vital lifeline' to residents faces an uncertain future this summer unless a new postmaster is found. Ledaig Post Office, a sub-post office which is inside the village shop in Benderloch, is run by postmistress, Fiona Clark, who is retiring in July. With the Connel Village Store and Post Office up for sale, there are fears amongst residents that the whole of the Ardcattan and Connel area could be without a post office. Margaret Adams, who lives in Benderloch and is chairwoman of Ardcattan community council, said the closure of Ledaig Post Office would be a great loss to the community. 'It really would be a huge loss to the area,' she said. 'I fully believe the post office is well used by many people, not just elderly people in the area. 'It's very seldom I use the post office and

there isn't somebody in front of me. It's definitely a busy business. 'With the Connel shop also up for sale it's a bit of a worry that the area could be without something so vital as a post office.' Willie Barnett, 68, who has lived in Benderloch for more than 40 years, warned a closure would have an 'enormous impact' on the community. 'This is quite a serious issue for a small place like Benderloch; it's going to have quite a substantial effect,' he said. 'There's the Lynn of Lorne old folk's home and the residents there rely on it for withdrawing their pensions. They haven't got the opportunity to go into Oban and use the cash machines there. 'There's also the sheltered houses at Ford Spence Court, which houses mostly infirm and immobile people, and they use it on a daily basis.

'This is going to have an enormous impact on our community, because for many people it's a vital lifeline.' A Post Office spokesman said: 'The postmaster at Ledaig Post Office has expressed an interest in leaving and we are currently looking for a new operator to run the post office. 'Customers should be assured that the Post Office is committed to maintaining a service to local customers. 'If this change involves relocating the post office it would be subject to a full public consultation and we will work hard to minimise any inconvenience to our customers during the transition.' The current postmistress at Ledaig Post Office confirmed she was retiring but declined to comment further. The Connel Village Store and Post Office, owned by Rosie Stevenson, has been up for sale since 2011.

Former cinema rolls out red carpet for Floorshop

A MOTHBALLED cinema in Fort William has been given a new lease of life as a carpet store moved in to the building. Floorshop opened in Cameron Square on Monday, the first business to make use of the premises since the picturehouse closed almost nine years ago. Although the old Studio Cinema will only be used temporarily, Floorshop store manager Atholl Dunnachie said he was on the lookout for a permanent unit in the town. He said: 'The problem with a carpet shop is we need somewhere with high ceilings and that can be hard to find. 'The cinema is good for that now but we're looking for somewhere more permanent.' This is the third branch of Floorshop; owners Ewen and Lorraine MacPherson also have stores in Oban and Lochgilphead.



OPENING: Floorshop manager Atholl Dunnachie welcomes customers to the new store in Fort William's Cameron Square 20_104floorshop01

Martial arts athlete is guilty of police assault

AN AMATEUR mixed martial arts athlete told a court on Monday that he 'didn't know why' he was arrested after he tried to find out the reason his fiancée had been refused entry to an Oban pub. Dawid Loukil, 26, was found guilty at Oban sheriff court of assaulting a police officer by kicking him, resisting arrest and acting in a threatening or abusive manner by shouting and swearing on August 3 last year. The court heard Loukil, of Glenshellach Terrace, Oban, had been out with a group of friends, celebrating the birth of two of his friends' children. Unemployed fish farm worker Loukil said he had drunk two and a half pints during the evening before a friend's wife had come into the bar. She then told Loukil that his fiancée was being refused entry to the bar because she was too drunk. Loukil, who is from Poland and was speaking through an interpreter, said he went outside to find out what was happening: 'I tried to explain to the bouncer that she wasn't drunk. We have been together six years and I have known her eight years. I know what she looks like when she is drunk. 'The bouncer wasn't listening and wasn't interested in what I had to say. 'She was ignoring me. I didn't shout at her. 'I was talking loudly.' He denied speaking to a male door steward - who gave evidence at the first half of the trial

last week that Loukil had 'tried to pick a fight' with him - saying he only spoke to a female steward. When police went to arrest his girlfriend, who had been warned that she was being loud and causing a disturbance to residents in the area, he said he stood in front of her because he didn't understand why she was being arrested but was then pushed to the ground and handcuffed himself. Loukil's fiancée Agnieszka Warzecha, who was also speaking through an interpreter, told the court she had three or four vodkas between 8pm and 11pm but was not drunk when she was refused entry to the pub. 'I wasn't shouting. I wanted this lady, who was standing outside the entrance, to explain why she wouldn't let me in. I was angry because it was an accusation that wasn't right.' She revealed she had since been sent a fixed penalty fine of £100, which she paid, for breaching the peace outside the pub. She and another witness said they did not see Loukil kick the police officer. The other witness said Loukil had not been shouting but he and his fiancée had been asked to leave the area by the police. Sheriff Douglas Small said he was satisfied that the police officer and door steward who gave evidence previously were telling the truth. He found Loukil guilty on all three charges and fined him a total of £450.

Stornoway ferry decision could harm tourism

A DECISION to cancel a Western Isles car ferry service for up to five weeks in the spring has been labelled 'shameful' by a political candidate for the region, who says tourism could be hit hard as a result. Alasdair Morrison, Western Isles Labour candidate in the 2015 general election, hit out at the Scottish government after it was announced the Caledonian MacBrayne Stornoway-Ullapool crossing would become passenger-only for a period beginning April 20 due to delays in harbour repairs to accommodate a new vessel, MV Loch Seafort. Work to replace the ageing linkspan at Ullapool was originally planned to start in February but was postponed due to upgrades at the Stornoway end falling behind schedule. Mr Morrison said: 'I was dismayed to learn the Stornoway-Ullapool ferry saga has already resulted in losses for island tourism businesses. 'Tourism industry leaders told me that they fear the months of April and May will cause economic hardship for many of their businesses because of the delay and uncertainty surrounding ferry services. 'The withdrawal of the ferry from April 20 for five weeks is shameful.' Members of one tourist group in the region, Outer Hebrides Tourism, have also criticised the Scottish government for its handling of the issue, with their transport spokesman Donald MacArthur saying ministers are 'treating the population of the islands with a complete lack of respect'. Caledonian MacBrayne will provide replacement car and freight ferry services between Stornoway and Uig, on Skye, while Ullapool terminal is out of action, as well as increasing the frequency of the Uig-Tarbert service. Martin Dorchester, the company's managing director, said: 'We have looked at all possible route options and this offers by far the best service for people impacted by these improvement works. 'I'm sorry for any inconvenience this may cause but it is for the long term sustainability of the harbour.'

'Home' crowd holds special appeal for Colin and Craig

OBAN Accordion and Fiddle Club met recently in the Royal Hotel for its annual dance. Around 90 guests gathered in the hotel on January 9, for a two-course meal and music by Colin Garvin and his Scottish Dance Band, featuring former Oban high school pupil Craig McFadyen. Colin, who lives in Livingston, said: 'I've played in Oban a few times and know the

place quite well. It's my first time playing in the Royal Hotel though - it looks like a good dance floor.' Craig, who grew up in the town but currently serves as a police officer in Aberdeen, said: 'I still play my accordion around about Aberdeen but the home crowd in Oban is always pretty special. There's always a good atmosphere here and it's great to come back home to.'



SPECIAL: (From left) Craig McFadyen, Alan Irvine and Colin Garvin at the Royal Hotel for the Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club's annual dance. 16_104accordion1

because of age or disability. Staying in their own home is what many people desire as the fragility of life catches up with them.

This can become trickier as mobility becomes a challenge but many organisations can install mechanically assisted devices in homes to ensure getting in and out of beds, chairs and baths is no problem.

If you're a carer for anyone and struggling to cope - or just looking for a bit of breathing space - there is also help available through respite services and support groups.

Annual events also aim to encourage support for others in the community - including participating in foster care.

Anyone considering fostering a child should get in contact with their local authority to find out more and, if appropriate, take steps to do so.

Other services for children are also available - if you are aware of a youngster dealing with issues at home you should not be afraid to point them in the direction of support.

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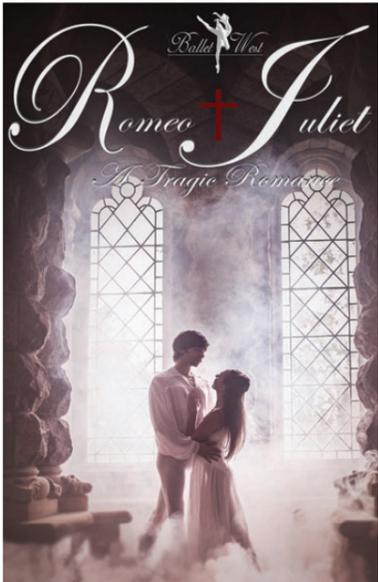
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Social Scene



REVELLERS: Dancing the night away (above) to traditional music provided by Deoch 'n' Dorus 16_t04dance

TRAIL WEST: (Right) Andrew Findlater, Ian Smith and Seonaidh MacIntyre 16_t04trail

PIPER: Angus MacPhail pipes in Robert's birthday cake 16_t04cake

PARTY-GOERS: Nicola MacPhail, Annabelle Kelsey, Alasdair 16_t04group

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Photographs of the evening will be featured in Scottish Field or online at scottishfield.co.uk and scottishruralawards.org. Photographs will be available to purchase after the event and a donation will be made from each sale to the Routes to Rural Employment charitable initiative. All proceeds from the silent auction will also go to Routes to Rural Employment.

Schools' artistic talents challenged by Fringe

THE COUNTDOWN is on for school pupils in Argyll and Bute to get their entries in for the 2015 Edinburgh Festival Fringe Schools Poster Competition.

Budding artists have until March 6 to submit their designs and be in with a chance of having their artwork featured as the official poster of the 2015 Fringe.

An impressive 198 school children from Argyll and Bute entered last year's competition and 14-year-old Tabitha Broatch from Campbelltown Grammar School was crowned regional winner.

Kath M Mainland, chief executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society which organises the competition, said: "The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the greatest arts festival in the world and is recognised as an explosion of creativity and talent so we need something that really expresses that excitement and diversity to our audiences."

Each year, the winning design is transformed into the official poster for the Fringe, and there are prizes of up to £750 for the top three artists and their schools.

Students are also in with the chance of seeing their posters appear in an exhibition in Edinburgh throughout the summer.

Entries for the Fringe Schools Poster Competition should be sent to: Schools Poster Competition, Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 180 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1QS no later than 17:00 Friday March 6.

Hands up to join big sing-song

HANDS UP for Trad is to launch its latest Scotland Sings event on January 24 and 25 and is asking choirs, singers, shower superstars and karaoke fans from Argyll to sign up and pay tribute to the legacy of Burns on January 24 from 10.30am to 5pm.

The workshop will teach one of Burns' most famous songs 'I Will not Say Goodbye' and 'Petals of a Red, Red Rose' which have been reworked and brought to the 21st century by musicians Findlay Napier and Kim Edgar.

Scotland Sings Gaelic song writing winner, David MacLennan, will also have his song 'An t-Each Uisge' belted out over the weekend long event.

Scotland Sings is the first ever initiative designed to encourage people to get out there and have a sing-a-long and the two-day festival will see a series of singing workshops all over Scotland.

Those that wish to be involved in Scotland Sings should visit <http://projects.scottishculture-online.com/scotland-sings/renewing-the-tradition-january-2015/> to book a place.

Robert Robertson's 21st Birthday Skipinnish Ceilidh House, Oban Friday January 9, 2015

HOUSE BAND: Deoch 'n' Dorus, below, provided the music for the evening 16_t04deoch



SKIPINNISH: Band members Ross Wilson, Kyle Orr, Alisdair Murray, Robert Robertson and Angus Macphail 16_t04skp



Murray and Camilla MacDonald

SKIPINNISH ceilidh house was the venue for a gathering of some of the west coast's brightest young musical stars last week, to celebrate an *Oban Times* columnist's 21st birthday. Robert Robertson, frontman of the traditional Scottish Gaelic band Skipinnish, was joined by his band members as well as fellow traditional Scots bands Trail West and Deoch 'n' Dorus for the celebration. Robert, who writes the weekly Glasgow letter for *The Oban Times*, said: 'All the bands on the west coast are really great. There's a great music scene here. 'Ourselves, Trail West and Deoch 'n' Dorus are all good friends and have had some great nights together.' Seonaidh MacIntyre, who plays bagpipes and sings with Trail West, added: 'I love the music scene in the West Highlands. We have gigs at the Park Bar in Glasgow and the Highland Annual in Edinburgh in February which I can't wait for, but the crowds up in the West Highlands are always amazing.' Deoch 'n' Dorus played Scottish music throughout the night, with the revellers enjoying Strip the Willow, Gay Gordons and the Dashing White Sergeant, amongst others.

'Through the Decades' dance show delights

OBAN high school staff and pupils transported their audience 'Through the Decades' last week as they put on three fantastic shows to hundreds of people in the Corran Halls at their annual dance show.

With a cast of 250, including some guest primary dancers, there was a huge variety of performances from all year groups, the gymnastics squad, Highland dancers and the Oban high school pipe band, primary hip-hop, S1 and S2 Oban high school of dance and Irish dancing. They were accompanied by the Oban high school traditional school of music, the sports leaders and even the staff.

Ballet West outreach classes by Amanda Sloss also featured in the programme which, through some wonderful performances, had something for everyone, including music from the 1950s through to the present day.

The sheer size of the dance show is a result of the 16 different dance classes held in the PE department every week, at no charge to pupils.

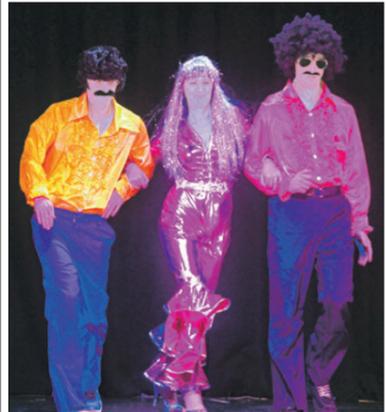
All but two of these are led by senior dance leaders who train in June and then take on the responsibility to choreograph and teach a dance to be included in the January show.

This year two of the school's dance leaders, Carla Moore and Zoe King, even held a Friday night dance class for primary six and seven pupils in the dance studio in Oban high school. Denise Gemmell, who oversees the dance programme, said: 'Our 14 dance leaders have done a fantastic job this year; they have shown tremendous enthusiasm, commitment and leadership skills.'

'While our pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in the dance shows it is also great to see the satisfaction and pride the dance leaders have seeing all their hard work come to fruition.'

Generous donations of raffle prizes from local businesses and the wider community added to the occasion, with all money raised in this going towards supporting dance in the high school.

Fresh from a HMIE inspection that found key strengths in achievements in the performing arts and sports, head teacher Peter Bain, in his vote of thanks, spoke of his pride in the wealth of talent within the school and thanked parents, staff, pupils and many members of the local community for the incredible amount of hard work and support that had gone into making the shows such a success.



Christine Cameron gets Night Fever with Greg Fairbairn, left, and Crawford Inglis as the teachers and staff of Oban high school strut their stuff on the Corran Halls stage Photo: Kevin McGlynn

Lochaber talk tackles peatland

LOCHABER history enthusiasts will be looking to the future rather than the past at the next meeting on February 16. Christina Wood from Scottish Natural Heritage will be joining Lochaber Natural History Society to give a talk on peatland and how to tackle restoration head on.

The talk will be held in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, at 7.30pm, all are welcome.

For more information on this or future meetings of the history society, contact Jon Mercer via 01397 712700, info@glenlochyodge.co.uk or Ian Strachan via 01397 712566 imstrachan55@gmail.com.

LISTINGS FROM 23rd JANUARY - 29th JANUARY 2015		
Birdman	Daily except Thu	18:00
Into the Woods	Daily except Thu	15:30, 18:10, 20:40
	Thu	15:30, 18:10
Paddington	Sat, Sun	13:00
ROH Live: Andrea Chenier	Thu	19:15
The Theory of Everything	Daily	15:15
The Woman in Black: Angel of Death	Daily	20:50
Tinkerbell & the Legend of the NeverBeast	Sat, Sun	13:15

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Musical celebration of poem by Duncan Ban MacIntyre

A FAMOUS Gaelic nature poem was celebrated in music form at a special concert last Thursday held in Plockton high school.

Miorbhaill Nam Beann, a bilingual event inspired by Duncan Ban MacIntyre's Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain (In Praise of Ben Dorain), used music, images and words to explore mankind's relationship with land and culture.

Lochaber musicians Iain MacFarlane and Ewan Henderson along with fellow popular traditional Scots artists Ewan Robertson and Hamish Napier joined forces in a specially-formed band called The Donnchadh Bàn Boys to accompany readings of the poem.

Dougie Pincock, director of the event promoters the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional

Music, said it was a fitting tribute to a poet who was once the West Highland's answer to Robert Burns.

He said: 'MacIntyre was one of the best-known Gaelic Bards and this was his masterpiece. 'The boys performing at the concert said it was a perfect run-through for their upcoming appearance at the Celtic Connections festival.'

'It was a lovely wee show.'



BOY BAND: The Donnchadh Bàn Boys entertain the crowd at a special concert held in Plockton high school Photo by Molly Nolan

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THIS WEEK'S LISTINGS

MONDAY:
0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Jim Edge, 1700 Drivetime With Danni Hay, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen, 2200 American Jukebox with Michelle

TUESDAY:
0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show with Maggie May, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are Made of This with Ken Hunter, 1300 The Quiz with Danni Hay, 1500 Lesley Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 1900 Sounds Scottish with Archie Cameron, 2000 Highest Praise with Stuart, 2100 Elaine Lamb, 2300 Northern Soul with Gordon Covey

WEDNESDAY:
0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Sound Scottish (repeat), 1000 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Elaine Lamb, 1700 Drivetime with Campbell and Coll, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len & Ken, 2100 Gordon's Grooves

THURSDAY:
0800 Maggie May's Carousel, 1100, Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with DJ Taz, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY:
0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Weekend Warmup with Ian Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 1845 Sports View, 1900 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 2000 Friday Night with Innes, 2100 TFI Friday with Jim Lawn

SATURDAY:
0900 Maggie's Swingin' Sixties, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowther, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis

SUNDAY:
0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Allan, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott

Farming

Be prepared for winter weather



HIGH winds, snow and freezing temperatures is a recipe for disaster as far as farm sheds and buildings are concerned.

Whether traditional or modern, many buildings cannot cope with the extreme weather that has lashed the west Highlands and islands during January 2015.

No doubt there will be repairs to be made, or perhaps crofters, farmers and landowners are looking for a building that could do with some strengthening before the next storm approaches.

Make sure your supplies are topped up. Heating fuel, be it oil or wood, can run down quickly in the cold weather.

Repairs and renovations can be big jobs, so you need to be confident you have the right company to meet your needs.

Using a tried and trusted company can give you peace of mind, especially if they have previously carried out good work in the area.

With the expense involved and importance of getting the job done properly, it is an expensive mistake if the job is

not done properly.

Maintenance of machinery and equipment is essential for people who work the land, especially in winter, when man tends to rely on machine.

Imagine buying the best quality seeds and manure and then planting everything with tender love and care and then ruining all your produce just because the equipment and machinery that you used was not properly maintained.

Maintaining your farming machinery, equipment and property is also demanded by the law to avoid risking people's health and safety.

Since maintenance can be a huge commitment in terms of time, energy and money, create inventories for all the machinery and equipment you own and prioritise what needs done and when.

Arrange your maintenance activities by season, make a note of all the upkeeps you need to do in that period and keep records of work carried out.

List the safety hazards of any particular equipment, and make sure staff know what work needs to be done and when.

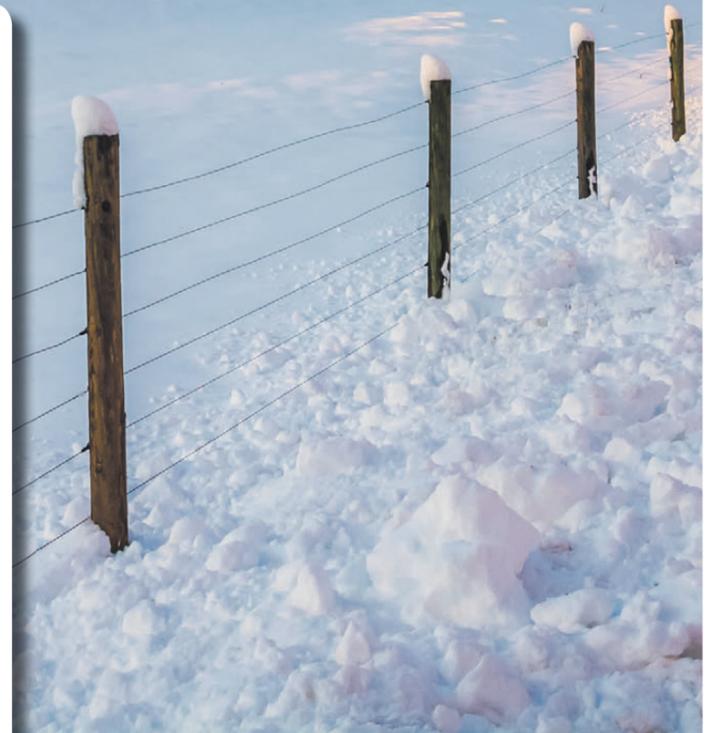
While doing vehicle maintenance ensure: the brakes work properly; the engines are running properly; the fuel tanks are clean, and when emptying out fuel tanks beware of any explosion risks; drain the fuel away from any sources of ignition; and before changing any batteries make sure that you have disconnected the terminals to avoid any electrical hazards.

It is the job of the employers to make sure that their workers are safe. This includes doing regular maintenance checks on farming machinery and equipment as well training their workers in a proper manner.

Health and Safety legislation also demands that any new machinery a farmer buys is CE marked.

The CE mark basically means that each piece of machinery has been built keeping in mind the minimum legal safety requirements. The machinery should also have certificate of conformity and a workshop manual.

If the farmer performs safety and maintenance checks on time, they will be able to safely get on with what they do best - farming.



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North Argyll Young Farmers reforms after seven years

A NEED to connect young farmers spread across the scattered rural communities of North Argyll has led to the reformation of the area's Young Farmers Club.

In abeyance for the past seven years, the newly reformed North Argyll Young Farmers Club held its first event, a stock judging competition, at the Oban livestock centre last Friday.

The group's teenage chairman John Gillies, heads up a committee that includes secretary Mhairi Dempster and treasurer Callum Leitch.

John, a shepherd at Castles Estate Farm, Dalmally, said: 'Because of where we are the young farmers

in the area tend to be separated and we don't see each other that often.

'I thought reforming the group would give a chance to get together and to talk about the issues of the day.

'Friday's event was our first one and we used that to test the water. The response was really good and I think there were around 30 people there eligible for the Young Farmers.'

In total, around 80 people came to the stock judging event at Oban mart and helped to raise more than £800 for the group.

Karen Love was the overall winner of the stock judging and Fulton Ronald won the

guess the weight of the heifer competition.

Prizes were donated by Brander Lodge, Carrs Billinton, Stirling, and Reid and Robertson.

Part of the proceeds from last Friday's event will be used at the end of February when the group goes bowling or go-karting.

North Argyll Young Farmers is also planning a shearing competition at Ballemeanoch, Dalmally in the spring time.

The Young Farmers group is for anyone living in the North Argyll area aged between 14 and 28.

To find out more see the group's facebook page or phone John on 07454185094.



NEW START: Helping to revive the North Argyll Young Farmers Club are, from left: secretary Mhairi Dempster, treasurer Callum Leitch and chairman John Gillies. 16_104young01



The stock judging competition attracted more than 80 entrants. 16_104young02

Commission appeals against decrofting decision

A CONTROVERSIAL plan to re-develop land in North Ballachulish has taken a fresh twist, with an appeal being launched against the decision that gave it the go-ahead.

In December, the Scottish Land Court quashed legislation blocking Donnie and Lizzie MacGillivray from decrofting ground they co-own for the building of 10 houses adjacent to the road into Ballachulish old town.

The land court deemed that applicants in multiple-occupied patches did not require the permission of their fellow tenants to build

after the Crofting Commission had said consent was required.

Now the Crofting Commission has lodged a request to challenge the verdict at the Court of Session.

A final ruling on the issue could be months away, coming as a blow to other applicants in shared areas who are waiting to get their plans approved.

Gordon MacIntyre is grazing secretary of the North Ballachulish Township which rejected the MacGillivray's original application.

He said: 'They are going to build on the best bit of ground in the

village and they need to widen the road to make it suitable for heavy traffic, that in itself is an issue.

'The crofting decision [to appeal] is quite right, there is not really anyone that the development is going to affect that supports it.'

'For the Scottish government to throw out the decision not to allow it is crazy.'

However, Brian Inkster, a crofting expert from Inksters solicitors in Glasgow, believes there are no grounds for the Crofting Commission to appeal.

He said: 'The land court's decision was a

clear, sensible and fair one.

'Many crofting lawyers, including myself, have long held the view that the Crofting Commission's policy was not a correct interpretation of the law.

'It is a pity that one affected party, there are many, had to take the commission to task over this whilst others have been left in limbo for over two years.'

In 2012, the MacGillivrays were told by the Crofting Commission their decrofting proposal was 'incompetent' because not all tenants of the land had applied.

Getting hardwood into the market

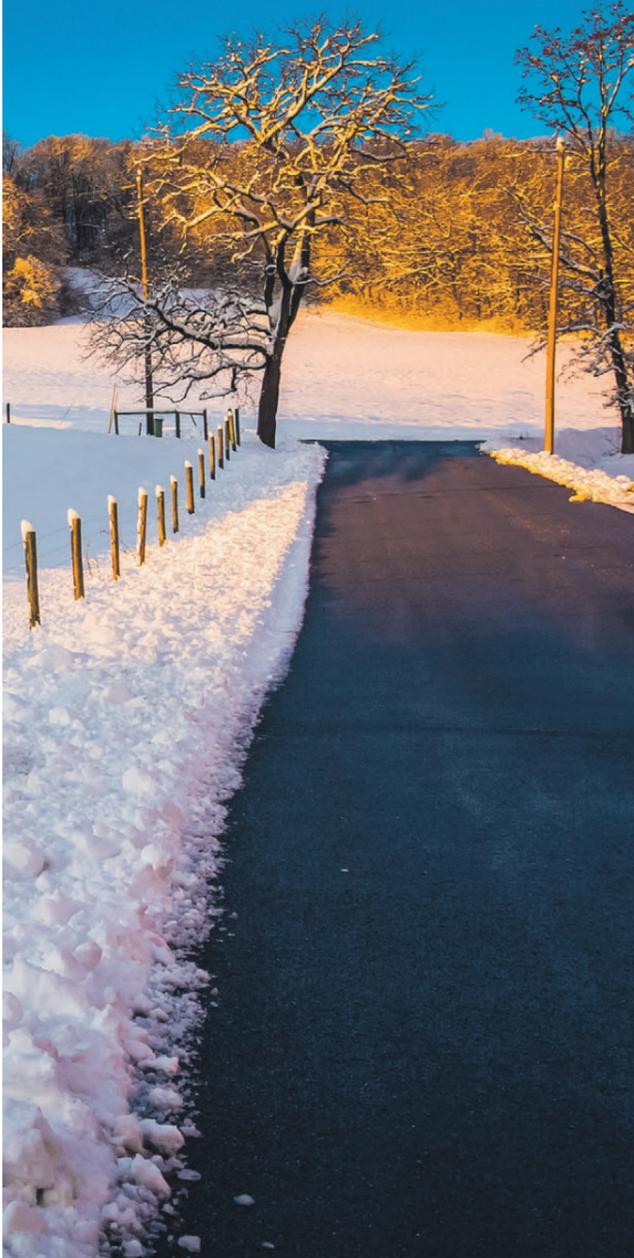
WOODLAND management and sustainable thinking will be high on the agenda for three courses being run by the Argyll Small Woods Co-operative (ASWC).

Reaching out to woodland owners who would like to know more about inspecting stems, grading timber, selling woods, access the market and spotting problems will be held at Dunollie Estate on February 12.

The co-operative was set up in 2014 to support small scale woodland management in Argyll.

ASWC has recently taken on a joint hardwood sales initiative between a number of businesses, facilitated skills training and supporting members. Open to woodland owners and workers it aims to be an honest broker between members and the wood market.

For more details about next month's events, which will also include two maintenance and cross cut chainsaw courses, contact Neil Donaldson on 07810 810 818.



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The Scottish Salmon Company

The Scottish Salmon Company is a leading independent producer of high quality Scottish Salmon. We are committed to high standards of animal welfare, sustainable operations and promoting a responsible environmental policy.

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

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

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

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

As well as having a sound understanding of the prime importance of food hygiene, applicants must be committed to meeting our quality standards, be good timekeepers and be able to work effectively as part of the team.

We now require to recruit the following posts:

- Numerous Pool Staff positions: staff to be deployed in several departments and therefore will be trained to multi-skilled staff (processing – maintenance- hygiene (day/night shift) – technical).

Ideal candidates will have: a high sense of flexibility and responsibility, be self-motivated and enthusiastic, experience to work independently or as part of a team, has a 'can do' approach.

- Several Processing/Engineering Supervisor roles: to assist with and/or to deputise for Management with the day to day operations within the plant, to achieve plant/factory objectives and to assist with the supervision and to provide leadership to staff.

Successful candidates will have excellent organisational leadership, communication and interpersonal skill.

A full clean driving licence and own transport is essential for all positions. Contract, T&C and salary depending on role and experience but all jobs minimum guaranteed 30 hours. Basic hourly rate £7.996 (after 12 week training period)

For an application form and job description for the above posts, please contact:
 Veronica Anderson, HR Coordinator,
 The Scottish Salmon Company,
 Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, PA26 8BH
 Tel. No. 01499 600 415
 Email: veronica.anderson@scottishsalmon.com
 Closing date for applications: 4pm Friday, the 30th January 2015
 Visit our website: www.scottishsalmon.com

Temporary Technical Systems Coordinator – Salmon Processing Plant Cairndow, Argyll

40 hours per week for a minimum of 4 months – Salary £20,000 pro rata
 Ref: TSSC/Jan 15

As Technical Systems Coordinator you will analyse the site Quality Management System.

- Pull together all paper based processes from the Quality Management System for centre filing and logging, including for example SEPA reporting etc.

- Update the internal QMS document management system (QPulse)

- Analyse the interfaces between the Technical Department and Engineering/Processing functions.

- Make recommendations to improve communication processes and information flows.

The successful candidates must be Graduates interested in a career in Technical/Food Safety/Quality Management/Food Science/Microbiology degrees

Temporary Business Systems Coordinator – Salmon Processing Plant Cairndow, Argyll

40 hours per week for a minimum of 4 months – Salary £20,000 pro rata
 Ref: BSSC/Jan 15

As Business Systems Coordinator you will analyse the site Business Management System.

- Pull together all paper based non-food safety/quality management information for central filing and logging.

- Update the internal QMS document management system (QPulse) with all training records (across whole company).

- Audit all Maintenance, Hygiene, Purchasing, Supply Chain and Processing files and records.

- Make recommendations to improve communication processes and information flows.

The ideal candidates must be Graduates in Business/Operations Management Studies.

For an application form and job description for the above posts, please contact:
 Angela Gibson, HR Officer,
 The Scottish Salmon Company,
 Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, PA26 8BH
 Tel. No. 01499 600 430
 Email: angela.gibson@scottishsalmon.com
 Closing date for applications: 4pm Friday 30th January 2015
 Visit our website: www.scottishsalmon.com

Driver/Loader (Permanent)

£16,880 - £18,424 Isle of Islay Ref: DVR00357

Senior Social Care Worker (Permanent)

£28,861 - £32,507 Oban Ref: CMF00160

Assistant Cook (Permanent)

£15,433 - £16,340 pro rata Isle of Mull Ref: CMA00770

This post is for 35 hours per week
 ☎ 01546 604334

Closing date for all posts:
 30 January 2015.

To apply visit our website

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/jobs



The Scottish Salmon Company

The Scottish Salmon Company is a leading independent producer of high quality Scottish Salmon. We are committed to high standards of animal welfare, sustainable operations and promoting a responsible environmental policy.

Biology Assistant x 2
 Western Isles and Argyll
 Salary: Dependent on experience

Due to operational expansion of our Biology Department, and to fully support our regional Biologists an exciting opportunity has arisen to recruit a Biology Assistant in both our Western Isles and Argyll regions. This new role will involve planning and monitoring field trials, auditing of freshwater and marine sites, and providing invaluable support to our site based teams throughout the production cycle to ensure the highest standards of fish health and welfare are maintained.

The ideal candidate must have a degree or equivalent qualification in Aquaculture or Biology, with an aquatic specialism preferred. A full clean driving licence is also essential, along with a flexible and independent approach to enable full support to our site teams across a varied geographical area. Experience of working within the Scottish salmon industry would also be advantageous.

Applications are requested by CV and covering letter to the address below before 6 February 2015.

For a detailed job specification please contact:
 Lisa Connell, Training and Development Manager,
 The Scottish Salmon Company,
 8 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7JA
 Email: lisa.connell@scottishsalmon.com
 Visit our website at www.scottishsalmon.com

Argyll College UHI Registry Administrator

Based in our Oban centre, we would like to recruit a **full time** Registry Administrator. The post involves the processing of further and higher education student enrolments, results, all other data and associated tasks. This post is a challenging one with constant tight deadlines throughout the academic year, requiring someone who can multi-task and constantly review priorities. The post holder, along with other members of the small registry team, will implement internal business processes, reviewing and evaluating these on a regular basis to improve the processes as well as the information and reporting requirements of internal and external stakeholders.

Accuracy and attention to detail are paramount. Candidates should have experience in administration, excellent written and verbal communication skills and a good level of competency in Microsoft Office software. Training will be provided in the specialised student information system used (SITS).

The salary for the post will be within the range **£16,546.78 to £18,856.18** depending on skills and experience.

Successful applicants will be subject to an application to join Disclosure Scotland Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

All applications must be made on the Argyll College application form. An application form and job description can be found on the vacancies section of our website www.argyllcollege.ac.uk
 Please post/email completed application form to:

Lorna McDonald, Argyll College UHI Ltd, Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34 4RY or e-mail lorna.mcdonald@uhi.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is **Monday 2nd February**



Fusion Marine Ltd is well established as one of the leading manufacturers of high quality equipment for marine and freshwater environments all over the world, particularly in the fish farming industries. The company is expanding sales in current and new markets and we have the following vacancy.

Internal Sales Administrator

We are offering a new opportunity for a forward thinking, enthusiastic person who can manage and improve our sales growth.

Applications are invited from candidates who have experience in a busy sales and purchasing office and have the ability to support the technical sales team. A full driving licence is essential for this position. Please contact us for a full list of duties.

Salary is dependent on experience.

Hours of work: Mon – Fri 8.30am to 5.00pm
 Please apply by sending a covering letter and enclose a current C.V.

All applications to Mrs E Divers, Fusion Marine Ltd, The M.R.C., Barcaldine PA37 1SE

Or email: edivers@fusionmarine.com

Closing date: Monday 2nd February 2015

Loch Fyne Seafarms Ltd is seeking a trainee food production Supervisor for its shellfish factory in Tarbert Argyll.

The trainee Supervisor will assist with all aspects of production including data collection, quality control and sales. As part of a small team the trainee Supervisor will also carry out various production processes as part of the training to gain experience and to support product preparation. Interested applicant must be a good team worker and willing to work with shellfish processing. Training for this post will be provided.

Please contact: Loch Fyne Seafarms Ltd., Unit 7, Tarbert Trading Estate, Campbeltown Road, Tarbert, Argyll PA29 6SX. Tel: 01880 820 100

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For further information, please apply to:-
 Mrs J Young, Castle Manager

Inveraray Castle, INVERARAY PA32 8XF
 E-Mail - manager@inveraray-castle.com

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To find out more contact Aileen Binner (Scheme manager, Oban)

tel 01631 566749

or Anne Fraser (coordinator, Mull)

tel 07717527035

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e-mail : alex@iesuk2.fsnet.co.uk

Abacus Services Payroll Bureau Services

Payroll Assistant

Abacus Services are looking for a payroll assistant to join our very busy office in Oban. Candidates with payroll processing experience preferred but training can be given. The job is full or part time and salary is commensurate with experience. Excellent working environment available in modern office building for the successful candidate.

Please apply in writing, enclosing your C.V. to Helen Clark at R A Clement Associates, 5 Argyll Square, OBAN, PA34 4AZ, or by email to hc@raclement.co.uk



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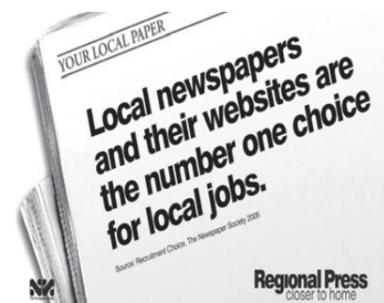
Kilmory Industrial Estate

Lochgillhead

Argyll

PA31 8RR

Email: donald@damacdonald.co.uk



West coast recruitment

Interview FAQs

Preparation for an interview is time well spent. Read on to find out more about what you can expect to face in an interview, and tips on how to deal with the more difficult questions:

WHAT TYPES OF INTERVIEW ARE THERE?

If you've not had an interview for a while, it's worth knowing that organisations use different types of interviews for different types of job. Some of the most common are:

Competency-based:

These focus on the skills and attributes needed. You'll have to relate your skills and experience to the job in question.

Technical:

These are for technical positions such as IT or engineering jobs. You will probably be asked to display your technical knowledge of a certain process or skill. They may ask you to do this by talking about your previous experience or by asking you hypothetical questions, such as: 'What would you do if you were working on this project?'

Face-to-face:

The interviewer meets the candidate in person.

Telephone:

Some organisations use these as the first stage of screening. You may be warned in advance or contacted out of the blue. First impressions count, so you should prepare for a telephone interview just as much as you would for a face-to-face interview. Unless it takes place on a videophone, you won't need to worry about what you are wearing at the time.

Panel:

This is when more than one person interviews you. Usually one person chairs the interview and panel members take it in turns to ask you different questions. You should direct your answer mainly towards the panel member that asked the question.

HOW DO I NEGOTIATE SALARY?

For some jobs (usually in the private sector) where a salary is not stated, you may have to negotiate your salary. This will usually happen when you are offered the job.

Some tips:

- > ask them what the salary range is for similar jobs in the company
- > get an idea of what the going rate is for the job - check other job ads
- > if you're asked what salary you are expecting, answer quickly and confidently - don't dither
- > start high and meet in the middle if necessary
- > don't ask about salary or benefits before you've been offered the job.

WHICH QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW?

At the end of the interview you usually get the opportunity to ask your own questions. You should always ask at least one question, to show your enthusiasm and interest in the job.

Here are some examples:

- > can you describe a typical day?
- > what training do you offer?
- > ask about something you read about in your research - such as a new product or service
- > who will I be working with?
- > who will my manager be?
- > where do I fit into the organisational structure?
- > how much of my time will be spent on this task?
- > how do you see the role developing?
- > when will you let me know the outcome of the interview?

WHAT IF I GET ASKED ABOUT SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE I DON'T HAVE?

You can face questions like this if you're applying for promotion or going for a career change. As a general rule, however, you should apply for jobs for which you have most of the skills. Do not worry if you haven't got one or two of the required skills. Remember, the person specification is an ideal, and no one person might match the ideal.

However, you will have to show that you have the potential to develop these missing skills. You can do this by describing times when you've:

- > been given extra responsibilities
- > been left in charge
- > showed this skill on an informal basis, either in work or at home.

For example, if you're applying for a job as an ambulance care assistant, you know it is essential to know how to carry patients and secure them in the vehicle. You could mention how you've done this with small children or elderly relatives, so you are aware of the need for safety. You need to show that you're aware of the need for the skill and that you're capable of developing it.

If you have no related experience, describe how you would act if you were placed in this situation. For example, if you had to deal with a difficult customer you could explain how you would approach it: stay calm, be polite and be clear on what your roles are.

Explain how you approach learning new skills, and that you are a keen and efficient learner. You may also score points if you describe how you handle tasks that don't play to your natural strengths. It would show you are willing to adapt and take on tasks that do not come that naturally to you.

WHAT SHOULD I DO THE NIGHT BEFORE THE INTERVIEW?

It's important to prepare for interviews.

But the night before the interview you shouldn't put in too much work, so try to relax. Last minute 'cramming' might only stress you out.

WHAT IF I WAS FIRED FROM MY LAST JOB?

If you were laid off as part of a general reduction in the workforce, be honest about it but then move on quickly.

If you were fired for misconduct or not fulfilling your responsibilities as laid out in your contract, deal with this differently. Admit to occasional failings if you can show that you've learnt from them. For instance, if you lost motivation, became lazy and got caught, describe how you intend to stay motivated in future. If you broke company policy, you could say you were going through personal or financial problems at the time, but that they have been resolved.

You should check out your referees: if it was your last boss who fired you, and you have to list the person for a reference, phone and try to clear the air. Say you understand why you were fired, but you've learned from the experience and are looking to start afresh.

Explain that you're looking for a reference as you're looking for work. Ask what they would say about you. Ask if they would say you were fired or if they would say you resigned. Not many bosses would keep giving you a bad reference to prevent you getting new work.

Even with these questions, honesty is the best policy. But always end with a positive and show how you learnt from a negative experience.

WHAT IF I GET ASKED WHY I'VE BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR A LONG TIME?

First, stress any positive activities you've undertaken during your period out of work.

Such as:

- > voluntary work
- > courses
- > keeping up with developments in your field
- > treating job seeking as a full-time job
- > keeping fit
- > networking.

You can also say that you were being selective and not taking the first job that came along. Stress that you were waiting for the right opportunity, such as the job being offered by the employer interviewing you.

WHAT IF I VOLUNTARILY LEFT MY JOB?

Make sure you state positive reasons for leaving.

The best reason is to say that you wanted a fresh challenge and you wanted to fully concentrate your efforts on finding your next opportunity. Reflect positively on your time in your previous job - describe how you developed in the role and say you were grateful for the opportunity.

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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 9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

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

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
14/0473/FUL	Land 35M NW of Fasgadh Glencoe	Erection of dwelling
14/04589/FUL	Maryburgh Court, High Street, Fort William	Installation of 27 (Nr) air source heat pumps within courtyard
14/04717/FUL	Land 65M SE of Stockman's Cottage, Achnabobane, Spean Bridge	Erect dwellinghouse
14/04765/FUL	Nevis Square, North Road, Fort William	Extension to drive through car parking area (14/01402/FUL) and adjustments drive through layout
14/04784/PIP	Land 90M NE of Ardlarach Letterfinlay, Spean Bridge	Erection of house (renewal of planning permission 11/04129/PIP)
15/00023/FUL	Land to North East of Primary School, Acharacle	Formation of an access track to the cemetery site and landscaping works
15/00098/FUL	Plot 13, Fassfern	Construction of dwellinghouse with altered house design and revised site boundary

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

**CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LIMITED
MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
THE MARINE LICENSING (PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013**

Notice is hereby given that Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL), (SC001854, Municipal Buildings, Fore St, Port Glasgow, PA14 5EQ) plans to hold a pre-application consultation event regarding a proposed licensable marine activity at Gallanach Slipway (OS Grid Ref: NM 834 283) and Kerrera Slipway (OS Grid Ref: NM 830 286). The activity consists of reconstruction of the Kerrera Breakwater and extension for both slipways and associated Works.

Further information, can be obtained concerning the proposed Marine Construction Works from:
Contact - Ruairidh Campbell

The pre-application consultation event will be held at (1930hrs) on Tuesday 27th January 2015 at:
Old School Building, Kerrera

Persons wishing to provide comments on the proposed Marine Construction Works can do so by writing to the prospective applicant at:
info@cmassets.co.uk,

Or by post to
Municipal Buildings, Fore St, Port Glasgow, PA14 5EQ, not later than 4th February 2015.

Comments should be dated and should clearly state the name (in block capitals) and full return email or postal address of those making comment. Comments received by CMAL after the date of the public meeting will be replied to in a timely manner. Comments made to the prospective applicant are not representations to the Scottish Ministers. If CMAL submits an application for a marine licence to Scottish Ministers, an opportunity will be given for representations to be made to the Scottish Ministers on the application.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02454/PP	Sub division of dwellinghouse to form holiday letting unit	Dungallen Salen Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA72 6JF	Sub Post Office Arros Isle of Mull
14/02974/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land Adjacent to Seilisdair Lochdonn Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA64 6AP	Sub Post Office Cnairnure
14/02993/PP	Change of use of ground floor shop premises to dental surgery	17 Lochside Street Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4HP	Oban Area Office
14/02994/PP	Formation of new vehicular access, erection of polytunnel and detached garage	Bluebell Cottage Gruline Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Arros Isle of Mull
14/03015/PP	Erection of agricultural shed and formation of vehicular access	Land South West of The Bungalow Crossapol Isle of Tiree Argyll and Bute	Tiree Area Office
14/03016/PP	Erection of two dwellinghouses, installation of two septic tanks and formation of vehicular accesses	Land East of Kirkapool House (Plot 1) And North East of 3 Kirkapool (Plot 2) Isle of Tiree Argyll and Bute	Tiree Area Office
15/00049/PPP	Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse, including demolition of existing ruins and installation of private drainage system.	Traigh Chrionnag 5 Ruaig Isle of Tiree Argyll and Bute	Tiree Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02952/PP	Erection of replacement servery.	Grounds of Dunollie House Ganavan Road Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 5TT	Oban Area Office
14/03020/LIB	Display of illuminated fascia sign and window graphics.	Columba Hotel North Pier Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00043/LIB	Re-roofing of existing buildings to replace existing slate/felt finish with metal corrugated roofing (colour black)	1 - 4 Charles Street Stafford Street Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09.00 - 17.00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Manse Lochgilphead Brae PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Central Validation Team, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.

Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

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Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATION

Mr J G Porter
4 Port Ellen, Kildalton & Oa
0.5102 ha - Site for affordable housing scheme
4.86.54236

Comments can be made to the Crofting Commission by any member of the crofting community within the locality of the land, within 28 days of the date of this newspaper.

Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW or info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk

Upper Sonachan Wind Park Public Drop-in Sessions

Portsonachan Village Hall
Wednesday 28th January 2015 12 noon - 7:30pm

Lochawe Community Village Hall
Thursday 29th January 2015 12 noon - 7:30pm

Ecotricity are holding two drop-in sessions to introduce proposals for a wind park at Upper Sonachan Forest between the B840 and the A819 near Cladich, north of Inverary, Argyll and Bute.

Members of the Ecotricity team will be there to discuss current proposals and the Environmental Impact Assessment work that is being undertaken.

If you're unable to make it to the drop-in sessions and want more information, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Email: upper-sonachan@ecotricity.co.uk
Call: 01463 223377

You can find further information at:
www.ecotricity.co.uk/upper-sonachan

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

Oban Times

ecotricity

Oban Otters AGM

Thursday 22nd January 2015
8pm Atlantis leisure.
Please come along and support the club.

Soroba Community Enterprise Ltd AGM

AGM meeting will be held in Soroba Community Centre, 6B Scalpay Terrace, Soroba, Oban PA34 4YH

On Monday 23rd February 2015 at 6.30pm

All Members are welcome to attend the meeting to give the board support and encouragement.

First Registration of a Croft

Mr Alistair John Colthart has registered his croft 4 Kinlochlaich, Kinlochlaich, Lismore and Appin on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 30th September 2015. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C365.

NEW CAR INDEX

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DRIVETIMES SAILING TIMES GARAGES CAR DEALERSHIPS MOTORING NEWS

11.5 million drivers missing out on cheaper motoring

MILLIONS of drivers could be missing out on savings of around £860 per year in fuel and tax because myths still exist about running electric and plug-in hybrid cars.

The findings are the result of new research released by Go Ultra Low, a joint initiative by government and the UK automotive industry.

According to the research, around 11.5 million motorists could benefit from the lowest cost, tax-free motoring by switching to pure electric vehicles, because in a typical year they don't drive further than 80 miles in a single trip. Millions more could benefit from other ULEVs, which can travel between 150 and 700 miles between charges thanks to range-boosting petrol and diesel assistance.

Huge potential for electrically-powered cars

The Go Ultra Low research shows that 70 per cent of car owners are planning to change their car within the next four years, while three in 10 say they have considered purchasing a ULEV. Two thirds of motorists under the age of 24 have considered a ULEV compared to just a quarter of drivers over 55.

The survey reveals that the majority of motorists still don't fully understand how



electrically-powered vehicles work and believe outdated myths across a number of topics, from range and charging to cost and practicality.

Motoring journalist Quentin Willson said: 'Ultra low emission vehicles make so

much sense, they are cheap to run, hugely practical and now almost every major manufacturer has something to offer. The Go Ultra Low research shows that a host of misconceptions are hampering consumer uptake and more needs to be done to educate people about the numerous benefits of these vehicles.'

Range anxiety persists, despite short journeys

A quarter of motorists misunderstand the range capabilities of ULEVs, with 16 per cent believing electric vehicles are unable to travel 50 miles without recharging. Yet the research also shows that more than a third of drivers said the furthest they drove in a single journey during 2014 was 80 miles or less. With pure-electric vehicles able to travel up to 100 miles on a single charge and other plug-in ULEVs boasting up to 700 miles' range, electrically-powered cars are a viable, low cost option for millions of motorists.

Public understanding lags behind reality

The survey reveals that there is widespread lack of understanding about the speed at which the batteries in ULEVs can be recharged. Nearly 50 per cent of drivers were unaware of rapid-charging facilities that can refuel a vehicle in 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, motorists were well informed about recharging methods and infrastructure, with more than 90 per cent aware that electrically-powered vehicles can be recharged at home and via on-street charge points. However, almost one in 10 wrongly believe that electric cars cannot be driven on the motorway, while nearly one in 20 think it's dangerous to recharge them in the rain.

£4,150 savings on fuel and tax over five years

More than one quarter of motorists are of the opinion that ULEVs are more expensive to run than a conventional diesel or petrol-powered car. This opinion is considerably higher among men (32 per cent) than women (25 per cent). However, despite falling fuel prices in recent months, the cost of fuelling a ULEV remains far cheaper than a petrol or diesel vehicle, being as little as 2p per mile, compared to around 12p per mile for a typical petrol or diesel car - representing a saving of £660 a year for the average motorist.*

Thanks to CO2 emissions of less than 75g/km, all ULEV vehicles are exempt from road tax, yielding potential savings of around £850 compared to the average car on the road over a five-year period.

Alex Michaelides, spokesperson for the Go Ultra Low campaign, said: 'With more than eight million families in the UK running two cars or more, pure-electric vehicles are the perfect family run-around, while hybrid and range-extended cars offer great long-distance options. Whereas once there was only a handful of ULEVs on offer and limited recharging infrastructure, today there are all sorts of types and sizes of car, backed-up by a nationwide network of recharging points.'

Go Ultra Low is a campaign to help motorists understand the benefits, cost savings and capabilities of the raft of new ultra-low emission vehicles on the market.

The collaborative campaign is the first of its kind, bringing together the Department for Transport, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles, SMMT and a consortium of leading car manufacturers: Audi, BMW, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Renault, Toyota, and Volkswagen. Further details are available at www.GoUltraLow.com.

*Based on average annual mileage per motorist of 8,266 miles (calculated using Department for Transport figures for total miles travelled per year and SMMT data for UK total car parc size)
*The research for Go Ultra Low was conducted between 24 December 2014 and 5 January 2015, on a sample of 1,690 UK adults who drive a car.

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13 Skoda Octavia SE TSI, Blue 16,600 miles.....	£11,500
13 Peugeot 107 Allure, 5dr, blue, 12,000 miles.....	£7,250
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11 Renault Megane dyn hatchback, 1.6 silver, 6,300k miles.....	£7,750
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58 Honda CRV 2.0 SE Auto, Blue, 55,000 miles.....	£8,500
58 Renault Scenic Conquest, DCI, Orange, 62,000 miles.....	£5,500
57 Citroen Berlingo Desire 1.6 Deisel Grey, 90,000.....	£3,500
57 Suzuki SX4 DDIS, 5 Dr Hatchback, 1.9 Diesel, Blue, 54,000 miles.....	£4,495
08 Fiat Doblo 1.9D Active Blue 52,000 miles.....	£3,850
54 Honda CRV Sport Vtec 2.0 ltr Blue, 91,000 miles.....	£3,950

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Sandero shown is a Laureate 1.2 16V 75 from £7,995. Sandero Stepway shown is a Laureate TCe 90 from £9,795. Duster shown is a Laureate dCi 110 4X2 from £12,995. Metallic paint optional on Sandero/Duster at £470.

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Three-in-a-row for Dacia at What Car? awards



Dacia has picked up the title of What Car? 2015 'Best Small Car for less than £12,000', with its Sandero 1.2 Ambiance hatchback, for the third successive year.

After initially picking up the accolade in 2013 following the brand's entrance into the UK car market, and confidently retaining it last year, the stylish, practical and affordable supermini has taken the honours once more to truly reaffirm its popularity alongside the rest of Dacia's 'shockingly affordable' range.

Commenting on the decision to give the award to the Sandero, Jim Holder, editor, What Car? said: 'There are cheap cars and then there's the Dacia Sandero. What really helps the Sandero's case, and boosts its value for money, is its huge interior space. There are few cars in this class that offer this much room for passengers and luggage.'

'It's quick enough to feel comfortable in and out of town, and our True MPG tests have revealed it's possible to get within a stone's throw of its official fuel economy.'

'Consider the fact that the Sandero comes with a three-year, 60,000-mile warranty and the deal looks even better.'

Andy Heiron, Dacia UK brand manager, said: 'We're delighted that the judges at What Car? have recognised the Sandero's qualities for the third year in a row - especially given that starting from a 'shockingly affordable' £5,995 you can get one from just half the amount of the category it competes in.'

The Dacia Sandero is a five-door hatchback, available in three trim levels with a choice of two petrol engines and one diesel engine. Pricing starts from £5,995,

making it the lowest priced new car on sale in the UK today.

The specific Ambiance version chosen by What Car? comes with features such as Bluetooth connectivity, electric windows and an ECO driving mode, improving efficiency and fuel consumption figures.

Dacia continued its prodigious rise in the UK with another strong year of sales, with 23,862 new Dacia owners during 2014, up 39.2 per cent compared to 2013.

For more information on the Sandero, as well as the rest of Dacia's award-winning range, please visit www.dacia.co.uk



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Thinking about moving home in 2015?

Now the festive season is over and the new year in full swing, it's a popular time to think about moving to a bigger home or downsizing. Moving home is one of the biggest decisions anyone makes, so if looking to move how should someone choose which property is the right one?

NHBC, the UK's leading warranty provider and standard setting body for new build homes, has recently seen the number of new homes registered between September and November 2014 increasing by eight per cent on the same period in 2013.

With more choice in the housing market than for the past several years, NHBC highlights how buying a new home can not only reduce costs but also benefit buyers when it comes to those finishing touches.

- A blank canvas - A new home comes free of decorating or DIY disasters from previous owners. In most cases, buyers can personalise their new home with a choice of kitchen units, floor coverings and tiling and start from scratch in the garden too, designing and planting to suit their own tastes. A new home is also maintenance-free, meaning less time spent on jobs around the house at weekends.

- Lower utility bills - New homes are built to high levels of energy efficiency, which reduces the amount of gas or electricity needed to keep the house warm. Research from the NHBC Foundation and Zero Carbon Hub revealed that new build homes built to 2013 standards could save more than £1,400 a year on their energy bills when compared to their neighbours in older homes.
- Chain free - Being part of a long property chain can be extremely stressful and often cause unforeseen delays. With a new home, there is greater peace of mind as no upward chain means a smoother and faster move.
- Ten-year Buildmark warranty - 80 per cent of new homes come with an NHBC Buildmark 10-year warranty, which currently protect 1.6 million homes across the UK. Buildmark protects homeowners by providing:
 - Pre-completion insolvency cover - protection if a builder becomes insolvent after an exchange of contract.
 - Builder cover for the first two years after completion - the builder is responsible for putting right certain damage and defects.
- NHBC cover for years three to 10 - insurance to cover the cost of putting right damage caused by defects in specified areas, such as damage to floors, staircases, roofs, drains, windows and doors.

- High levels of satisfaction - Results from the 2014 industry survey on customer satisfaction with new homes, facilitated by NHBC, found that 94 per cent of people surveyed said that they would buy a new build home again, with a similar proportion indicating they would recommend their builder to a friend.
- Better security - New homes come with security features as standard, including smoke detectors and robust locks on front and back doors. And to meet the demands of modern lifestyles, electrical circuits in new homes are designed for even the most gadget-intensive families.
- Incentive schemes - The government-backed Help to Buy scheme, along with some house builders operating their own buyer incentives, can make the purchase of a new home significantly more attractive.

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PERSONAL NOTICES
Happy Birthday
Happy 70th Birthday Isabel
25/1/2015
Love George & family

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BIRTHS

BROWN - Alec and Kayleigh are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful son, Calum Alexander, born on December 6, 2014, weighing 8lb 3oz. Thanks to all staff at the R.A.H. Paisley and Oban midwives.

DEATHS

BULL (CAPTAIN) - George, peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on January 18, 2015, after a short illness. A graveside service will take place at Pennyfuir Cemetery, Oban, on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 11.00 a.m. to which all family and friends are invited.

BURGESS - Peacefully, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, on January 16, 2015, Donald Burgess, aged 84 years of Tigh Na Croit, Tayvallich, (retired Blacksmith), son of the late Donald Burgess and Flora McLachlan, and beloved husband of the late Janie Barclay. A dear cousin to all the family. A good neighbour, dear friend and former work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held today, Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 11.00am in Tayvallich Parish Church, thereafter to Carsaig Cemetery.

DAVIDSON - Andrew, Peacefully at home on January 16, 2015, after long periods of ill health, predeceased by his beloved wife Joan, loving father of Diane and Iain. Following a family cremation at Cardross Crematorium, a service celebrating the life of Andrew, will be held at Arrochar Parish Church on Friday January 23 at 12.30pm. No flowers please but donations to Children's Hospice Association Scotland (taken at the church) would be much appreciated.

DEMPSTER - Suddenly at Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch on January 19, 2015, in his 76th year, George, beloved husband of the late Margaret nee McKnight, loving father of Lorraine, Caroline, Michael, Donald, Valerie and Lillian, papa and great grandpapa and a much loved brother. Sadly missed. Funeral will take place at St. Oran's Church, Connel on Saturday January 24 at 10.30 am. Thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection/donations, if desired, for Alzheimer Scotland (Oban & Lorne Branch).

FOYLE - Ann Judith Foyle passed away peacefully at Oban Hospice on January 12, 2015, after bravely facing cancer, aged 69. Much loved mother of Suzanne, she will be sorely missed by all who knew her. A memorial service will be arranged at a later date. Donations in memory of Ann to be sent to Cancer Research.

CHRISTIE - Peacefully, after a long illness, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, on January 17, 2015, Brian Robert Christie, aged 66 years, of 10 Dun Mor Avenue, Lochgilphead, (former Strathclyde Police), beloved husband of Margaret MacKinnon, and loving father of Claire and Stewart and much loved Shearnair of Eilidh, Kalin, Lauren and James. A much respected father-in-law of Scott and Sandra and dear brother to Jo-Anne and Sandy. A dear brother-in-law, uncle and cousin to all the family. A good neighbour, dear friend and former work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held in Ardriah Parish Church, on Monday, January 26, 2015, at 11.00am, thereafter to Cardross Crematorium at 2.15pm. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to the Local Red Cross and to the Kintyre Dialysis Campaign.

MACGILL - Peacefully on January 18, 2015 Nancy MacGill, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay, beloved wife of the late Donald MacGill, much loved mother of Anne & Neil, dear granny of Sophie & Donald. Funeral service Tuesday, January 27 at 11.30 Round Church, Bowmore.

MACLEAN - Peacefully, on January 14, 2015, at the Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch, Iain Dugald MacLean, aged 66 years of 1 Collaig, Ardfern, beloved husband of the late Eilidh MacDonald, and loving father of Iain, Julie, Ron, Amanda and Calum. Son of the late John and Margaret MacLean and son-in-law of Iain and the late John MacDonald. Dear brother of Morag, Ronald and Hugh. A much respected brother-in-law, uncle and cousin to all the family. A good neighbour and dear friend to many. Funeral service was held in Craignish Parish Church, on Wednesday, January 21, 2015, followed by interment at Kilvree Cemetery. Sadly missed.

MCGREGOR - Donald of Benderloch, much loved husband of Marion and father of Alasdair and Gordon, passed away suddenly, on Tuesday January 13, 2015. A beloved husband, father, brother and grandfather who loved all his family dearly. Funeral service at St. Modan's Church, Benderloch, on Friday, January 23 at 1.00 p.m., followed by interment at Ardchattan Church, Achnaba. Family flowers only with retiral collection in aid of Oban Hospice.

MCLELLAN - Peacefully at Lorn & Islands Hospital, Oban on January 12, 2015, in his 91st year, James Ian McLellan, last surviving member of the family of John & Maggie Anne McLellan, Mallaig, R.I.P.

MURRAY - Anne (Annie) MacPhail nee McDowall on January 13, 2015 holding Janice's hand, long time resident of Motherwell and more recently of Lorne, Argyll. Very much loved wife and utterly devoted wife to the late Peter Wood Murray. Much loved and most loving and generous mother of Janice and Sandra. Grandmother of Kathleen and Duncan and great-grandmother of Kirsten. Grateful thanks to everyone at the Port Appin Surgery, the gentle hands of the Ballachulish community nurses and the wonderful local friends who gave practical support. Service in Duror Parish Church on Thursday January 22, 2015 at 3pm, cremation in Inverness Crematorium on Friday January 23, 2015 at 12.30pm. Family flowers only, donations if desired, to British Heart Foundation.

SINCLAIR - Suddenly at home, Ardconnel farm, Connel on Tuesday January 13, 2015, Donald, beloved husband of Caroline, dear father of Malcolm, father-in-law of Ann-Marie, much loved brother, uncle and a cherished papa of the late Calum, Craig, Rachel and Euan. Funeral took place on Tuesday January 20, 2015.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FARNELL - Norma would like to thank everyone for their kind messages of sympathy following the sad loss of her husband Fred. Thanks to Rev. Robert Brookes for a comforting service, Hamish Hoey & Son Ltd for funeral arrangements and to all who braved the weather to attend Fred's funeral. Grateful thanks must go to the ladies of Dalavich, for providing a magnificent spread at the Social Club and special thanks to Sheila & Brian for their hard work clearing up afterwards.

HAY - The family of the late Mary Hay would like to thank all friends and neighbours for kind expressions of sympathy, flowers and cards. To all the staff at the ICU Monklands hospital, also staff at the ICU Southern General for their care and attention given to their mum. To all the local boys for enabling the funeral to go ahead. Thanks to the Rev. John Collard and Canon Billy Fraser for a lovely service, Hamish Hoey for dignified funeral arrangements, organist Gillian, Neil MacCallum for piping Mary's favourite tunes, Sheila, Dan, Eilidh and John for excellent hospitality after the funeral, the ferry boys who got us all to Iona and back and all who came from near and far to pay their last respects.

LAWRIE - Jessie, Keith and family of the late Donald would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours from Appin and elsewhere for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards and donations received during their recent sad loss of Donald, and for their support at the funeral. Thanks to the caring staff, both past and present of the Lynn Care Home who treated Donald with respect kindness and compassion.

Thanks to Duncan Gunn for the caring efficient funeral arrangements and guidance, and to the Reverend Dugald Cameron for a warm and comforting service. Thanks to Jessie MacKenzie and to Linda McLeod for all their invaluable help, and to the Appin ladies who gave of their time and set out a delicious spread in the village hall. The family are grateful to all of the above who gave comfort through a difficult time.

MACCORQUODALE - The family of the late Murdina MacCorquodale, would like to thank everyone for the kind expressions of sympathy and lovely cards and flowers they received, following their very sad loss. Heartfelt thanks to all the doctors and nurses who cared for her in Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital, the care and attention we all received was faultless. Thanks to Rev. Dugald Cameron for his fitting and comforting service and all those who travelled from near and far for the service. The Royal Hotel for refreshments and special thanks to Ian MacInnes, D & A Munn, for all his help and guidance. The sum of £375.19 was collected for Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital.

MACPHERSON - The family of the late Ernie MacPherson wish to thank all relatives friends and neighbours for kind expressions of sympathy, cards and floral tributes received during their recent sad bereavement. Thanks also to Dr. R. Coull and all at Strachur Medical practice and carers for all their loving care and attention to Ernie. Special thanks to the Rev. R MacKenzie for spiritual comfort, Arthur, Joanna and Melanie of Caladh Funeral Services. Calum for piping and Cairndow Stagecoach Inn for Purvey. The sum of £2201.41 has been donated to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

NOBLE - The family of the late George Noble would like to thank all friends, neighbours and relatives for their kind expressions of sympathy at this sad time. Thank you to Donald MacKinnon for his comforting service, to Norman Nicholson, Organist and to Ian MacInnes and staff for compassionate and efficient arrangements. Sincere thanks to Dr Fiona MacLennan and all nursing staff for their care over the years and also to Ward I staff for making George comfortable in his final days. Our heartfelt thanks to all who attended the church and graveside in such adverse weather conditions and contributed to Alzheimer's Scotland (local branch).

RENNIE - George, Morvern and Morag thank all relatives, friends and neighbours who attended the services at St Oran's Connel and Cardross; thank you all for your expressions and deeds of sympathy George was so disappointed that he was unable to thank you in person but under the circumstances he is sure that you will understand why. Many thanks to the Rev George Cingles for the poignant services at Connel and Cardross, and for the comfort to the family by travelling with them to Cardross. Thank you to all the Staff in Ward B, Oban Hospital for their support to all of the family and continuing care of George. Also to the staff at Care Plus in particular Zinta Belova who took great care of Nancy at home. Finally, Morvern and Morag would like to share their thanks and appreciation to everyone who supported Mum over the last years, who continue to help us care for Dad, and who have provided us with so much help at this sad time.

POTTER - 14th 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 - Treasured memories of our dear niece and cousin, Jennifer, who died on January 20, 2001, aged 17 years. - Stephen, Kirsty, Findlay and Susannah

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.

MACCOLL - In loving memory of our mother Margaret, who passed away at Kilmore on January 24, 2013. - Morven, Christina, Deirdre, Duncan and their 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.

MACDOUGALL - Precious memories of my darling son and brother David, died tragically in a road accident on January 24, 1996, aged 31 years, also my darling husband Duncan, father, father-in-law and papa, who died on August 26, 1996. Behind a smile there's many a tear

For ones we loved and lost so dear To a beautiful life came a sudden end He died as he lived, everyone's friend. - Inserted by Mum, Ann, Darren, Liam, Siobhan and Aiden.

MACFARLANE - Treasured memories of a much loved sister and aunt, Peggy, who passed away on 22nd January 2014. Sadly missed. -Mary and family, Invercoe, Glencoe

M E L L O W S / MACPHERSON - Cherished memories of our mother Sheila who passed away peacefully on January 20, 2014 also our father Robert who died on January 25, 1982. Always remembered by our children Anne, Douglas, Hamish, Derek and Lorraine

MACNEIL - In loving memory of Patricia (Buchanan), who sadly passed away on January 21, 2014. Forever in our thoughts. A dear sister-in-law and auntie. - Jackie and family.

MCNEIL - Patricia. Till roses lose their petals Till the heather has lost its dew Till the end of time dear sister We will remember you. - Caroline, Robert and family

NOBLE - George. Dad distance did not stop me thinking of you. Your passing will not change that. Thinking of you always. - John.

PEARSON - Treasured memories of our precious son Jamie, tragically taken from us on January 24, 1996, aged 27. We miss you more than anyone knows As time goes by the emptiness grows The tears we shed are wiped away But the ache in our hearts is there to stay 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 - 14th 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 - Treasured memories of our dear niece and cousin, Jennifer, who died on January 20, 2001, aged 17 years. - Stephen, Kirsty, Findlay and Susannah

GRADUATION



Rowan K M Paterson, daughter of David and Audrey Paterson, Taynuilt, graduated recently from University of Highlands & Islands, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig campus with BA (Hons) Gàidhlig is Leasachadh. Rowan is the granddaughter of Douglas and the late Rita Paterson, Alexandria and the late Dr Angus and Audrey MacLeod, Duunoon. She is now working as Marketing & Publicity Officer for Fèisean nan Gàidheal in Inverness.

POTTER - Always remembering my dear granddaughter Jennifer Jane, who died on January 20, 2001. - Nana Potter

POTTER - With special memories of Jennifer tragically taken January 20, 2001. - Auntie Irene and all family.

SMITH - In loving memory of Angus, a much loved husband, father and grandfather, who passed away January 23, 2013. Gone are the days we used to share but in our hearts you are always there. Never more than a thought away, loved and remembered every day. - Myrtle, Angus, Isobel, Calum and families.

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Charity Burns supper a success despite change of venue

A BURNS Supper fundraiser for families charity Homestart Lorn had to be moved from its annual home of the Waterfront Restaurant after damage to the restaurant's roof.

But the staff, including head chef Alex Needham, brought their catering and furniture over to the nearby Cuan Mor restaurant to allow the event to go ahead on Sunday.

Organiser Aileen Binner said: 'I cannot thank Alex and his team enough for what they have done for us. 'It would have been easier for them to cancel the event but it is our main fundraiser for the year.

'I would also like to thank Paul Sloan of Cuan Mor for letting us use the premises at short notice.' Among the main speakers at the event was Alex's

10-year-old daughter, Alice, who gave the Address to the Haggis.

Chairman Jack Degnan had earlier given the welcome and Rev Jeff McCormick gave the Selkirk Grace.

The Immortal Memory was given by David Condy. Husband and wife Campbell and Joy Cameron exchanged quips in giving the Toast to the Lassies and the reply before Rev McCormick spoke on The Land We Live In and Bob Clarke gave the vote of thanks.

Entertainment was provided by Willie Cameron and young pipers, Kate MacPherson and Gregor Macdonald, played in the haggis.

Produce for the supper was paid for by main sponsors Oban Milk, Breckenridge and Forteith's.



The top table at the Lorn Homestart Burns supper. 16_104burns01

Mull churches come together for Christian unity week

WORSHIPERS from different churches on Mull came together on Sunday, January 18, to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

In spite of the treacherous weather, the congregation gathered at St Columba's Church, Gruline, for a 'Songs of Praise' style service, which has become the tradition over recent years.

Each member of each congregation introduced themselves, their church and their chosen hymn, and then either read a lesson or prayer or outlined their reasons for choosing this hymn.

The snow and icy conditions took their toll on numbers but nevertheless the church still had a congregation of around 50 people.

Lay Leader of St Columba's church, Jeff Fielding, said: 'Every church on the island responded positively to a personal invitation, which shows beyond doubt that there is a strong feeling of Christian unity alive and well on the Isle of Mull.'

Thought for the week

God is only a prayer away

CHRISTMAS and New Year have been a time of celebration, festivity, and gatherings with both friends and family - but not for all of us.

We all know people who have been bereaved during this time, or through poverty or debt are unable to share in this time's festivity with the rest of society.

Some of these are known personally to us, others in war torn areas of the world and terrorist blighted cities brought to us daily in the world news.

God is only a prayer away. He is always there for all of us whatever our situation. He can give the comfort, help and inspiration needed

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Fort fan David has followed his team through thick and thin

'If we had the team we have now when we went into the Highland League then we would have been a top six team'

IF THERE is one person in a good position to judge Fort William F C's recent success it is surely club vice chairman David MacDonald.

Not only has he been a committee member at Claggan Park for the last five years, MacDonald is a lifelong supporter who has only missed two home league matches in the last 30 years.

The 46-year-old has followed his hometown team through the good times and the bad ever since their formation in 1974 and attended his first game in 1979, a pre-season friendly against Partick Thistle.

MacDonald also fondly remembers Fort trouncing now Scottish Premiership side Ross County 7-0 in their biggest ever home win in 1986 and demolishing Nairn County 9-3 away.

Recollecting his time as a supporter through the years, he said: 'A highlight was the 1993/94 season when we got to the North Cup Final.'

'On the way we knocked out

Football

Caledonian Thistle and Ross County who were then Scottish league sides.

'And season 1985/86 we played Stirling Albion at Claggan in the Scottish Cup and drew 0-0 in front of 1,500 people, which is our biggest crowd at home.'

MacDonald was a regular at Claggan well before Fort joined the Scottish Highland League in the summer of 1985.

He watched future Bolton Wanderers and Scotland star John McGinlay learn his trade with the club between 1978 and 1982 while Fort was competing in the North Caledonian League.

After winning the Chic Allan, Morris Newton and Football Times cups during a successful early 1980s period, Fort won the league title in season 1984/85, their only championship win to date.

MacDonald said: 'We won a bucketload of trophies in the



TOP FAN: Fort William fan-turned-vice chairman David MacDonald has stuck with his club through thick and thin 20_04macdonald01

North Caledonian League but even then we were playing catch up with fixtures.

'If we had the team we have now when we went into the Highland League then we would have been a top six team.'

'What's making the difference now is the league is more competitive - most teams are capable

of beating anyone else. 'And unlike the premier league you are not playing everyone five times a season.'

The Fort William squad's only recent problem has been a lack of game time, with only one match played since November due to weather-related postponements. This is a distraction the team

could do without, as they have arguably hit their best form for decades, sitting 13th in the Highland League after countless seasons rooted to the bottom.

This month the players broke an all-time record by winning four matches in a row and they can make it five by beating Forres Mechanics at home on January

31, after a league cup tie away to Nairn County this Saturday.

MacDonald said: 'There is a team spirit now that hasn't been there before and we are playing some cracking football.'

'The club has a bright future and we just hope we can build on what has been a successful season so far.'

Scots Camanachd player receives commendation

Shinty

IAN MUNRO, a former Skye player, recently received a certificate of commendation for his contribution to the armed forces shinty team, Scots Camanachd.

Ian was a very worthy recipient due not only to his playing contribution but also to his prodigious fundraising efforts to assist in supporting the side.

Ian was the skipper of the side last year, one of their most successful seasons in a number of years, reaching the Sutherland Cup quarter finals and the semi-final of the Bullough Cup. Ian is the first recipient of the commendation.

Scots Camanachd are always on the look-out for players from within the Armed Forces both regular and reserve.

The club are holding a pre-season training camp in late February where it is hoped to hold an inaugural Inter Service six a side competition.

Players should contact the club secretary Capt Robert Stoddart by email: robertstoddart@hotmail.com. Any shinty player who is serving in the Armed Forces is also asked to pass their details on to Robert.

Trotternish Ridge race to return

Athletics

A DEMANDING 17-mile race in north Skye is to return this summer if enough athletes enter.

The Trotternish Ridge Race had to be cancelled last year due to insufficient numbers but the Skye and Lochalsh Running Club is seeking competitors to bring the event back to Staffin in 2015.

Limited to no more than 75 experienced runners, the route starts at Flogidgarry and travels round Staffin covering both rough and steep terrain.

All enquiries and entries should be sent to event organiser Neil Turner via neilturner@btinternet.com.

Fort William shinty club dinner dance

Shinty

FORT William Shinty Club's annual dinner dance will be held in the Moorings Hotel on February 21.

As well as individual places, tables of eight can be booked on request. Tickets for the dance only can also be purchased for those who want to attend after the meal, with live music from Glasgow-based Surround.

Tickets are available from Claire MacAlpin (07789118442), MacPhee and Partners or via info@fwshinty.com.

Sleat and Strath FC holds AGM

Football

SLEAT and Strath Amateur Football Club from Skye is holding its annual general meeting on January 27 in the Broadford Hotel Monkey Puzzle Room at 6pm.

The team, whose forest-surrounded ground in Kinloch is notorious for its midge population, were winners of the GF MacRae cup in 2014.

Anyone wishing to join the club is welcome to come along.

Pre-season fixtures announced

Shinty

SHINTY teams in Lochaber and Skye have announced their pre-season fixtures taking place in January and February.

January 31
Fort William v Kyles Athletic
An Aird, Fort William.

February 7
Fort William 2nd team v Boleskine, venue yet to be decided
Glasgow Mid Argyll v Kinlochshiel Peterson Park, Yoker.
The Bear Tankard Trophy, Ballachulish v Newtonmore XII Jubilee Park, Ballachulish.
Thomas Ferguson Memorial Cup, Skye v Lovat
Paire nan Laoch, Portree.
Oban Lorne v Ballachulish juniors
Oban High School all weather pitch.

February 14
Fort William v Lochaber An Aird, Fort William.
Oban Celtic v Glengarry venue yet to be decided.
Taynuilt v Ballachulish Taynuilt playing fields.
Glenurquhart v Skye Blairbeg, Drumadrochit.

February 21
Fort William v Lovat An Aird, Fort William.
Ballachulish v Locheads Rovers, Jubilee Park, Ballachulish.
Ewen Morrison Memorial Cup North Skye v South Skye venue yet to be decided.

February 28
Fort William 2nd team v Lochside Rovers, An Aird, Fort William.
Ballachulish v Strachur Jubilee Park, Ballachulish.
Lochcarron v Skye 2nd team Battery Park, Lochcarron.

Thousands flock to Lochaber ski slopes

THERE was a phenomenal turnout for world snow day in Lochaber, with thousands of people taking to the mountains on Sunday in an event celebrating winter sports around the globe.

Perfect white-out conditions brought families to the Nevis Range and Glencoe Mountain Resort complexes as part of the day which ran with the theme

of 'bringing the children to the snow'.

Queues of cars
Hordes of regular skiers and snowboarders visited as well as those there specifically for the event, while queues of cars brought the A82 road in Glencoe to a standstill as there were no spaces left in any of the visitor centre car parks.

After 1,600 tickets were sold, the police had to turn motorists away.

Specially for world snow day, there was free sledding, chairlift access and 'snowtrax' car rides available for children, plus races, an igloo building demonstration and snowman building competition.

Angela Dingwall, Glencoe

Skiing

resort manager, said: 'We hadn't been open for 10 days and this was the first decent weekend of weather.'

'We were so busy we stopped selling tickets at 1pm. It's been mayhem. 'Snow-wise, the weekend has been perfect and everyone wanted to be here.'

As Sunday was chosen as world snow day in advance, there was never any guarantee the weather conditions would be suitable, but staff and visitors were in luck, with several feet of snow in places at Glencoe.

Gondola
Nevis Range, near Torlundy, saw almost 1,400 skiers and snowboarders, with an additional 500 visitors on the mountain gondola.

Events there included a limited number of half-price ski and snowboarding lessons, half-price snow shoe hire, snowman building and sledding.

Heather Negus, marketing manager at the centre, said: 'This type of event encourages non-skiers and snowboarders to join us on the mountain and experience the amazing atmosphere on the snowy slopes.'

'The snow conditions and weather turned out to be ideal and even the sun made a brief appearance.'



FUN IN THE SNOW: Sledding was one of many activities enjoyed by huge numbers of visitors to Glencoe Mountain Resort for world snow day

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1600

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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, mistaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

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Snow joke as Saints have West Cup match called off again

Overnight snow leaves Kirkintilloch pitch unplayable

THIS Saturday Oban Saints will be hoping to get back to action after their West of Scotland Cup match against Harestones was called off for the second week in a row after heavy overnight snow fell last Friday evening. A Saturday morning pitch inspection found that Waterside Park was covered in snow and the pitch was declared unplayable.

The match has been re-scheduled for this Saturday at the same venue with the 3G pitch at Kirkintilloch High School as an alternative.

The Oban side will face their biggest test of the season so far against the Kirkintilloch outfit, who are reckoned to be one of the top amateur teams in the country at the moment.

The four times winners of the Central Scottish League premier division currently sit in second place in the top flight, level on points with leaders Colville Park but with a game in hand. Saints come into this fixture smarting from back-to-back league defeats against St Joseph's and Finnart which has dealt a serious blow to their hopes of a successful league title defence.

However, with their last game a very distant seven weeks ago Saints will be looking on this fixture against Harestones as a fresh start and an opportunity to

Football

re-ignite their season. In sharp contrast to Saints' indifferent form the Hares are on a 10-match unbeaten run in all competitions. If Saints are to progress in the competition they must blunt a prolific Harestones attack which has already racked up 99 competitive goals this season.

The Oban side can draw some encouragement from their last away trip to face Central Scottish League opposition in season 2012-13. On that occasion Saints recorded a highly creditable 2-2 draw against Colville Park in the Scottish Amateur Cup seventh round before ultimately succumbing to a 3-1 replay defeat against the eventual losing finalists.

Edged out

Saints and Harestones previously met in the second round of the 2007-08 Scottish Amateur Cup.

After a 1-1 draw at Glencruitten Saints were eventually edged out in the replay by two goals to one by the 2002 and 2003 Scottish Cup winners.

This Saturday's tie was originally scheduled for December 13 but with the Saints boys already on the mini-bus and about to depart the news came through from the Hares that the grass park at Merklands and the 3G at



ICE TO SEE YOU: Two snowmen warm the bench during last Saturday's game against Oban Saints.

AFTER the postponement of last weekend's game against Harestones, Saints managed to organise a friendly game against a team of snowmen.

Manager Iain Jackson said: 'It was a good workout for the boys after the long lay-off. The snowmen began with a flurry and we never managed

to get to grips with their slippery style of football. A bit concerning was that a couple of their players were faster than some of our boys.'

Club secretary David Buchanan said: 'We've arranged to play them again, but this time on our terms. The game will be played in the summer.'

Kirkintilloch High School were both unplayable bringing 2014 to a frustratingly premature end for the Oban team.

Following the Scottish Amateur Football League festive period shutdown and more severe weather disruption this will be Saints' opening game of 2015 and they could scarcely have asked for a tougher fixture to begin the year with.

The 2009-10 West of Scotland Cup was the last of an incredible fifteen major trophies won by Harestones Amateurs in a 14-season purple patch which they have been striving ever since to recreate.

The Hares now look to be on the brink of reaching those dizzy heights again, therefore, a victory for Saints is an extremely tall order.

Under West of Scotland Cup rules the tie must be played to a finish on the day with extra-time and penalties to decide the winner if required. Saints have proved in the past that they can mix it with the big boys so, although they are strong favourites, the Hares should take nothing for granted. Whatever the final outcome the tie presents Saints with an ideal opportunity to test themselves

against a team of the highest quality and to kick-start what has been a faltering season so far with a good all-round performance. How the two teams have fared in this season's West of Scotland Cup: Second round - Harestones 13, Blantyre Soccer Academy 1; Glenburn Athletic 1, Oban Saints 7. Third round - Harestones 4, MLS Leeds 0; Rosehill Star 1, Oban Saints 7.

Donald makes his first team debut for Dumbarton

Football

TWO minutes on a football pitch will never be forgotten by young Campbeltown footballer Donald McCallum.

He gained his first experience of senior league football when he was brought on as a substitute for Dumbarton in the 90th minute of their recent clash against Hearts.

The 18 year old said: 'I've never been so nervous in a football game as I was after assistant manager Guillaume Beuzelin called me over.'

'I knew then that I was going to get on. He ran through the tactics and where I was playing, and I tried desperately to take it all in.'

Donald was kept waiting but was finally sent on to the pitch when SPFL Championship leaders Hearts already had the match sealed at 5-1.

'It was an amazing experience even though it was all over in a flurry,' he said.

'I did manage a few touches on the ball.'

The former Campbeltown Grammar School pupil lives in Glasgow and plays weekly with Dumbarton's under-20 development team.

Before signing for Dumbarton Donald played for Campbeltown Pupils Youth, Lochgilphead Red Star under-16s and Oban Saints Youth.



Donald McCallum

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

Youth Football

ALL GAMES involving Oban Saints youth teams were called off for the second weekend in row because of the weather.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Drumchapel United; Under 14s v Whitecraigs; Ardencaple v Under 15s; Antonine v Under 16s; Under 19s v EDFC.

Results from Islay Golf Club

Golf

DECEMBER Medal Played Sunday January 18: 1 N Johnston 83-10 = 73; 2 R MacIntyre 81-4 = 77; 3 N Carmichael 81-4 = 77.



WINTER WONDERLAND: Michael Bossard led from the start as he won in Fearnoch Forest. 16_t04cyle01

Wheelers brave wintry conditions at Fearnoch

OBAN'S Michael Bossard won by half a wheel from Tom Smith in an exciting finish to Sunday's West Highland Wheelers' winter league race near Taynuilt.

Good number

The club race, held in conjunction with North Argyll Cycle Club, attracted a good number of competitors considering the inviting skiing conditions that attracted so many cycling regulars.

Nick Charlton came in third, followed by Bruce Griffiths and Gavin Blaney, meaning the first five places went to members of the Argyll club.

Results

1 Mike Bossard 56.04, 2 Tom Smith 56.04, 3 Nick Charlton 57.59, 4 Bruce Griffiths 58.08, 5 Gavin Blaney 58.17 (all North Argyll Cycle Club), 6 Ed Daynes 59.28, West Highland Wheelers, 7 Gavin Linfield 64.15,

Cycling

West Highland Wheelers, 8 Tom McMahon 64.20 West Highland Wheelers (first junior), 9 Raeanne Miller 73.36, North Argyll Cycle Club (first lady), 10 Andy Rogers 95.33, West Highland Wheelers, 11 Marian Austin 95.33, West Highland Wheelers, 12 Alistair Jackson DNF, North Argyll Cycle Club.

Weather calls foul on Green Machine's league match in Fintry

OBAN Lorne's West Division 2 clash away to third placed Strathendrick was postponed last Saturday due to a waterlogged pitch.

This was a blow for the Oban side who were looking to build on their 40-0 win over Cambuslang the previous week. Lorne had a healthy squad to choose from for the game.

The Green Machine sit second in the league, but have two games in hand on Cambuslang at the top.

Oban's attention now focuses on this week's home game against mid-table Cumbernauld. Kick off is 2pm at Glencruitten.

Despite the oppositions unimpressive league position they are one of only two teams to inflict defeat upon Oban Lorne this season with a 18-12 win in Cumbernauld during October.

A win for Lorne would increase the pressure at the top of the league and keep the positive momentum running throughout the club in the build up to the West Regional Shield Final on Saturday February 7 where the local

Rugby

lads will take on West Division 1 leaders GHK in this massive game.

The winner will move through to the National Shield Semi Final where they will be only one game away from a final appearance at Murrayfield.

The club are running a supporters' bus for this game - anyone interested should contact Tommy Sutherland on 07739 550300 or Darrell Williams on 07774 490265.

Oban Lorne Mini Rugby return this Wednesday evening from 6-7pm at the clubhouse after being cancelled the last two weeks due to the weather. Training is open for all Primary 4-7 players.

The U16s are back in league action this Sunday as they travel to face Cartha/Cumnock in U16 West Division North. The Cartha/ Cumnock team were beaten 40-17 at North Connel earlier in the season.

The school S1/2 teams are home to Lomond School on Saturday.

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Oban golfer lives the American dream

'In the States, what you see is what you get. It's more like target practise'

AS HE gazes out on a blanket of snow across his beloved Glencruitten golf course Robert MacIntyre suddenly yearns for the sun-kissed, pristine parkland golf courses of the USA.

Oban's teenage golfing prodigy is currently on a full golfing scholarship at McNeese University, Louisiana, but came home to celebrate Christmas and the New Year with his family at their home near to Glencruitten golf club, where his father Dougie is green keeper.



Robert MacIntyre represented GB in the Youth Olympics last year

Golf

In America, Robert is part of a multi-national, five-man McNeese team, known as the Cowboys, and his scholarship guarantees him a starting place for tournaments in sunny climes such as Hawaii, Florida and Arizona.

Since he joined as a freshman in 2014, after impressing scouts at the European Boys Championship last season, his university has climbed 60 places in the university rankings and Robert has recorded three top 10 finishes in his five events.

Top two

The standard of competition is high; at a universities tournament in Hawaii Robert was up against the top two ranked amateur players in the world.

Not only is he now playing against top class opponents in better weather conditions but the 18-year-old says the courses Stateside are 'easier' to play than those in Scotland.

'Where you hit the ball is where the ball ends up,' he said. 'On our links courses in Scotland we have bunkers, hidden traps and ponds in the middle of a fairway.'

'In the States, what you see is



COWBOYS: Robert, second from left, with McNeese University's golf team when they met former PGA champion David Toms

what you get. It's more like target practise.'

In 2015, Robert will have the chance to play at some of America's finest courses, including the famous TPC Sawgrass, Florida, home to the PGA Tour and annual host of The Players Championship.

His favourite course so far has been Florida's Quail Valley, despite being the venue where he carded his worst performance.

'It is a new design,' he said of

the course. 'There were entire holes on an island with man-made ponds wrapped around it.'

'Hawaii, too, was unbelievable. My mum was asking me to take lots of photos when I was there but I had to tell her the photos just couldn't do it justice. She would have to see it for herself.'

'The course is above a beach, 150 feet up, so the course is looking out to the sea. You just have to pause and take in where you are.'

Robert, who also represented Team GB at the Youth Olympics in China last year, admits his game has improved but the big hitter continues to work hard on his short game.

It is welcome news for the Scottish Golf Union, which has included Robert in its men's amateur team.

He will represent his country this year when he is home for the summer.

When a round at Glencruitten

was once part of his daily routine, Robert only played the course twice during the festive period - partly because of the weather conditions.

'This time I have been happy to come home and relax,' he said last week.

'I left the US in a pair of shorts but as soon as I flew into London I changed into a pair of joggies.'

'I miss being at home but I don't miss the course when the weather is like this!'

Three hours of action at Sportshall Athletics

MID ARGYLL Athletic Club held its annual indoor competition in the games hall and gymnasium at the joint campus school in Lochgilphead last Sunday.

This event was the first of a series of local area competitions being held in Argyll this winter.

There were several impressive performances throughout the three hours of action and one of the stars was Jilly Lefebvre from Kilmichael Glassary, and a pupil at Lochgilphead primary, who was the overall winner in the under 11 age group.

Jilly won five out of the seven events excelling in the six-lap race

recording an impressive time of 51.1 seconds. Jilly was the Argyll champion in this age group last year and she will be hard to beat again this year. Jilly broke the Argyll age record in the javelin throwing 17 metres and adding 50cm to the old record. Jilly also won the three jumping events including a 1.15metres high jump and she could have gone higher if time allowed.

Kirsten Blair, from Crinan, was runner up in this section winning the three-lap race in 24.7secs and shared first place with Jilly in the speed bounce.

Eilidh Cameron from Inveraray

was a close third on overall points.

There was family success for the Macdonald clan with Jemma winning the under-7s contest and older brother Murray was the under-9 champion.

Jemma won four events including an excellent 65.9 seconds run in the six-lap race. Jemma's twin sister Jeorga was runner-up ahead of Catriona Johnstone.

Alice Adair, from Kilmartin, was the under-9 champion winning six events with some style especially in the two running events and high jump. Ruby Phillips, from Glassary school was second overall and Holly Gilthorpe from Lochgilphead was in third place.

Considering the numbers attending weekly training the entry in the girls under-13 and under-15 age groups was very disappointing but the under-17s provided an interesting competition with Bethan Lemmon winning ahead of Freya Corner and Olivia Kerr.

Bethan won the two running events in addition to the long jump and shot putt. Freya impressed in winning the high jump, clearing 1.46metres and Olivia won the speed bounce and standing triple jump, clearing 6.78metres and only 12cm short of the long standing Argyll age record.

Sam Gillespie, Lochgilphead, was the under-7 champion winning both the three-lap and six-lap races and also the standing

long jump stretching out to 1.50 metres, an excellent distance for his age.

Murray MacDonald dominated in the under-9 age group winning six out of seven events. Murray looked strong in winning the three-lap and six-lap races and his winning distance of 4.50 metres in the standing triple jump impressed the judges. James Campbell won the javelin ensuring he finished second on overall points.

Neily Russell from Lochgilphead and Ben Maddox from Kilmartin filled the top two places in the under-11s. Champion Neily won the three-lap, high and long jumps while Ben was winner of the six lap in an impressive 52.7 seconds and also the javelin, throwing 17 metres. Arran Robertson was third overall, helped by a win in the triple jump.

The under-13 boys provided the most competitive category and only 1.5 points separated champion Archie Spencer, from Craobh Haven, and runner-up Alfie Smith from Tayvallich.

Archie won the long and triple jumps and also the shot putt with 9.50 metres. Alfie won the three-lap race in a close finish and his best event was the high jump, winning with 1.40metres which was one of the top performances of the day.

Other winners in this section were Jake Gillespie, who left older boys in his wake to win the six-lap race in 49.2 seconds

Athletics

and Peter Adair, who won the speed bounce with 75 jumps in 30 seconds. Donald Ferguson won the under-15s contest ahead of Joseph Harper with both boys each winning three events.

Donald won both the high and long jumps in addition to the shot putt and Joseph won the six lap, triple jump and speed bounce. Liam Scott and Theo Maddox contested the under-17s event, with Liam winning five events including an amazing 20.2 seconds in the three-lap race. Theo won the high jump and triple jump with a respectable 7.18metres.

Successful athletes from Sunday's competition will be invited to compete in the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on Saturday, March 21.

Results: Under 7 Girls - 1 Jemma MacDonald; 2 Jeorga MacDonald; 3 Catriona Johnstone, 4 Anya Banaghan.

Under 9 Girls - 1 Alice Adair; 2 Ruby Phillips; 3 Holly Gilthorpe, 4= Jody Sansom, 4= Kyra Robertson'

Under 11 Girls - 1 Jilly Lefebvre; 2 Kirsten Blair; 3 Eilidh Cameron; 4 Hannah Young; 5 Tilly Cunningham.

Under 13 Girls - 1 Rachael Johnstone.

Under 17 Girls - 1 Bethan Lemmon; 2 Freya Corner; 3 Olivia Kerr.

Under 7 Boys - 1 Sam Gillespie; 2 Euan McCartan; 3 Andrew Ritchie.

Under 9 Boys - 1 Murray MacDonald; 2 James Campbell; 3 Stuart Phillips; 4 Callum Green; 5= Rhys Coffield; 5= Struan Urquhart.

Under 11 Boys - 1 Neily Russell; 2 Ben Maddox; 3 Arran Robertson; 4= Logan



One of the officials gets ready to measure the standing long jump

Allan; 4= Gregor Brown; 6 Ruairaidh Green.

Under 13 Boys - 1 Archie Spencer; 2 Alfie Smith; 3 Shaun Doy; 4 Jake Gillespie; 5 Peter Adair; 6 Felix Maddox.

Under 15 Boys - 1 Donald Ferguson; 2 Joseph Harper; 3 Eoin Yuill.

Under 17 Boys - 1 Liam Scott; 2 Theo Maddox.

All the above athletes qualify for the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on Saturday, March 21 starting at 1pm with registration from 12noon.



The top six high jump winners in the Lochgilphead heats for the Argyll Sportshall competition. (Left to right) Girls: second place Kirstin Blair, 9, first Jilly Lefebvre, 10, third Eilidh Cameron, 9. Boys: second Arran Robertson, 10, first Neily Russell, 11 and third Gregor Brown, 10. Photos N Adams McGilp

Accies manager moves to Norwich Football

ENGLISH Championship side Norwich City have appointed Hamilton Academical player-manager Alex Neil as their new boss.

Neil, who took over at New Douglas Park in May 2013, is no stranger to Oban, leading his Hamilton side to two back-to-back wins in the D&K Lafferty Cup pre-season tournament run by Oban Saints Football Club.

Oban Saints secretary David Buchanan said: 'It's a great move for Alex. He's a real football man and a really nice guy and we wish him well at Norwich.'

'The Accies have been coming to our pre-season tournament for many years and we look forward to meeting the new manager at this year's tournament on Saturday July 11.'

Third time lucky? Shinty

THE ANNUAL challenge match between Oban Camanachd and Oban Camanachd Veterans, due to take place at Mossfield, was called off for the second week in a row this time as Mossfield was covered in a blanket of snow.

The game has been re-arranged for this Saturday, 1pm throw-up.

Scottish Amateur League fixtures Football

ALL SAFL games were postponed last Saturday due to the weather.

This weekend's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup fourth round - Harestanes v Oban Saints; Jimmy Marshall Cup first round - Campbeltown Pupils v Dunoon Athletic; Lochgilphead Red Star v Haldane United. Coronation Cup first round - Rossvale v Tarbert.

Athletic's West Cup game called off Football

OBAN Athletic's West of Scotland Cup tie away to Tarbolton fell victim to the weather last weekend and was called off on the Friday evening.

This Saturday the Oban team will be hoping to get back in action with the same away fixture against Tarbolton.

Over 35s scores Indoor football

SCORES from last week's Oban Over 35s League: Clements 5 Emergency 3; Taynult 2 D&K Lafferty 1; Emergency 2 Trialists 6.

Glenorchy's 50th anniversary Shinty

GLENORCHY Camanachd will celebrate its 50th anniversary this May and is looking for help as it gathers information on the club's history.

The anniversary year will culminate in a reunion on May 9 in Dalmailly community centre, where a presentation on the history of the club will be made.

Anyone willing to share information, photographs or memorabilia can contact Billy O'Brien, Keith MacIntyre or Graeme MacKechnie or email glenorchy1947@gmail.com

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WEATHER

Thursday Light rain
Winds light south south easterly
Temperatures 4°C to 4°C.

Friday Heavy rain
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.

Weekend Outlook Rain showers on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 22, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	00.41	0.4	06.48	4.3	13.10	0.5
Fri	01.25	0.4	07.29	4.2	13.55	0.5
Sat	02.11	0.4	08.11	4.1	14.40	0.7
Sun	02.58	0.6	08.56	3.9	15.28	0.9
Mon	03.48	0.8	09.45	3.6	16.19	1.1
Tues	04.43	1.1	10.44	3.3	17.16	1.4
Wed	05.47	1.4	12.15	3.1	18.20	1.6

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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World snow day sees A82 parking mayhem in Glencoe



TRAFFIC JAM: Motorists were left frustrated after delays caused by vehicles parked on the A82 trunk road at Glencoe

GORDON WEBSTER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

POLICE were called on Sunday after the A82 road was brought to a standstill by hordes of motorists trying to access Glencoe Mountain Resort on a day perfect for skiing.

Around 200 visitors parked their cars on the edge of the main road and caused huge tailbacks as single-file traffic had to be enforced along the high-speed stretch of road between Bridge of Orchy and Fort William.

Deep snow and clear skies had resulted in unprecedented demand from winter sports fans and the centre's car parks becoming full by early afternoon.

Other passing vehicles, including lorries and coaches, had to wait in traffic jams for more than 20 minutes while drivers had to be wary of people walking on the road due to the verges being several feet deep in snow. Staff at Glencoe Mountain

Resort sold 1,600 entry tickets and, with capacity stretched, afternoon visitors were turned away while cars parked around the entrance junction as well as on the centre's access road.

Details of cars left on the A82 carriageway itself were noted by police.

South Highland area commander chief inspector Colin Gough said parking in this manner was a road traffic offence.

He added: 'The inconsiderate and dangerous actions of those who parked on one of Scotland's busiest main routes posed significant risk and disruption for other road users.'

'We are liaising closely with Glencoe centre management, BEAR Scotland and the local authority, and will take steps to ensure this situation does not happen again.'

Numbers were swelled even more because of Sunday's world snow day event, details of which can be found on the sports pages.



PARKED: Traffic was gridlocked in Glencoe on Sunday as hundreds of visitors to the ski resort parked along the high-speed A82 road

TIMESLINE

Suspects sought after van stolen from Lochaline

A WHITE Peugeot van was stolen from outside Lochaline village stores in Morvern early on Saturday morning.

Police are seeking information about two men of an unkempt appearance seen in the area on Friday night.

Officers are also investigating a break-in to a shed at the rear of Ross Place, Fort William between the evening of January 11 and the following morning, where alcoholics drinks were stolen.

In Mallaig, a quantity of coal was stolen from the rear garden of a property in Lovat Terrace between January 8 and 10.

Anyone with information about these incidents should telephone the police on 101, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or by using the website www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

Rural pay phone lifeline cut off

'LIFELINE' public phones in rural areas must be repaired 'as a matter of urgency', according to a Highland MP.

This comes after Lochaber musician Mary Ann Kennedy was left stranded in snow and high winds near Corran Ferry, with no mobile phone signal, only to find the BT payphone was signposted as 'under maintenance'.

Ms Kennedy said the incident last Wednesday showed how important public phones were in rural areas.

She added: 'I didn't go out blind, I knew what the weather was like and I took a calculated risk. What I didn't know was when I got to the bus stop I'd have no way of contacting anyone to find out when the bus was expected.'

'If people think these phones are there and depend on them for whatever reason then they could end up in a really terrible situation.'

'This isn't a one off. If you

travel on the A82 between there and Fort Augustus I think you'd struggle to find a working public phone. The fact is the phone not being available made redeeming my situation almost impossible.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, said the communications company can't assume everyone has access to a mobile phone, particularly in remote areas where signal is often poor, and shouldn't 'muck around' when it comes to repairs.

He added: 'At present, mobile phone signal is dire across the Highlands.'

'My Liberal Democrat colleagues in [UK] government have secured an enormous win by forcing operators to allow users of other networks to reciprocally 'roam' on one another's networks but this doesn't give BT an excuse to muck us around. In some communities the village pay phone is a vital lifeline that should not be put at risk.'

'Given the reliance on these telephones by some constituents,

I urge BT to address each and every fault as a matter of urgency.'

A BT spokesman said the faults were a result of the weather last week.

He said: 'Severe weather conditions have affected a significant amount of our telecommunications equipment in this area and other parts of Scotland. We'll be checking all the payphones in the area as a result.'

But *The Oban Times* has since discovered some of the region's most remote communities are often without public pay phones, as they either don't work or have been removed.

The facility in Sunart has only recently been fixed, following a long-running problem, said Brian Evans, chairman of the area's community council.

He added: 'It works at the moment but it's quite often off, I definitely wouldn't rely on it working. It wasn't working for a long time last year but it seems to be back up and running now.'

And Acharacle residents came to rely on their payphone when the storms caused faults with their mobile signal and were relieved to find it working.

Margaret Green, secretary of Acharacle community council, said: 'We used to have a lot more in the area but they have been removed, you don't realise how important they are until something like this happens and then you really rely on them.'



TALK: Charles Kennedy says payphones in rural areas are a 'lifeline' for communities

LOCHABER musician Mary Ann Kennedy has thanked a 'hero' bus driver for his help and customer service when she was stranded in snow for two hours.

Amid road closures and train cancellations last Wednesday, the Ardgour-based director of Watercolour Music braved the conditions in an attempt to travel to Glasgow for the annual Celtic Connections festival but found herself stuck at the remote Corran Ferry bus stop with a broken pay phone and no mobile phone signal two hours after the Fort William-Glasgow service was delayed.

In the end it was Glasgow-Fort bus driver John Mellon who came to the rescue, collecting the musician when he passed travelling northbound on the A82.

More than eight hours later, Mrs Kennedy arrived safely in Glasgow, after meeting up with Mr Mellon again in Fort William for his return route south.

She said: 'The bus driver was a hero. He was such a gentleman,



Musician Mary Ann Kennedy was stranded for more than two hours

cheery, apologetic, helpful and generally an all-round fantastic soul.'

The Mòd gold medallist also took to social media to track down the driver, asking anyone who knows him to pass on her thanks but later said she hadn't spoken to him personally.

Mallaig primary finally re-opens after repairs

MALLAIG primary school and nursery finally reopened to pupils on Friday morning after being closed for more than a month.

Children were evacuated from the building on December 18 because of danger posed by a damaged chimney and missed their entire first week of the spring term after bad weather prevented repairs being completed.

It took until late last week for the damage to be fixed, with primary pupils spending four days being taught in Mallaig high school, while nursery children were sent to Arisaig primary.



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Reducing A82 speed limits not the answer, says road campaign group

A GROUP campaigning for improvements to the 'inadequate' Glasgow-Fort William trunk road has called speed limit reductions an 'unacceptable' solution to the problem.

Three stretches of the A82 totalling 20 miles - Letterfindlay to Glengloy, Onich to Fort William and Tarbet to Inverarnan - will become 50 miles per hour routes, a drop from the current national speed limit of 60 miles per hour. But members of the A82 Partnership said

Transport Scotland should be repairing the road instead.

Stewart MacLean of the partnership said: 'The A82 Partnership considers this order to be official recognition by Transport Scotland that this section of the A82 does not meet national network standards.'

'The A82 Partnership finds it regrettable, and not acceptable, that Transport Scotland addresses this inadequacy by reducing the speed limit as

opposed to investing in this economic and social lifeline.'

'We therefore request from Transport Scotland a time line identifying when these sections of road will be brought up to national network standards and the national speed limit of 60 miles per hour be reinstated.'

A Transport Scotland spokesman said: 'The effective management of speed is part of our wider approach to ensuring the trunk road network operates as safely as possible. This is true

for the A82 as it is for any other route.'

'We are committed to significant improvement programmes for the A82 and to deliver on them for communities along its length, with around £57 million committed since 2007.'

Last year, Transport Scotland announced plans to repair the riverbank at Glengloy, and a spokesman said two bends would be realigned at the same time. Work is due to start early this year.

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Hydro project will power mountain resort in future

A LOCHABER mountain resort could become environmentally friendly after an application to install a hydro power scheme was granted.

The project at Nevis Range has been approved but is yet to become a reality as directors still have to raise £3.2million to build it. Marian Austin, managing director at Nevis Range, said the scheme on a burn at the 'back quarry' of the resort, would go a long way to reducing electricity used on site.

She added: 'It's only a proposal at this stage but Nevis Range uses a lot of electricity, so by using renewable energy we hope to make a big difference.'

'As well as the environmental benefits it will help the range become more sustainable because on all the wet, windy and miserable days when we can't open the hydro scheme will be working and we can export electricity to other places.'

New jobs move at Marine Harvest

NEW JOBS are to be created at Marine Harvest when the team moves into bigger offices in Fort William.

The aquaculture company will move from Blar Mor to Glen Nevis Industrial estate, to accommodate increasing staff numbers.

It is hoped eight jobs and better facilities will be created as a result of the move, due to take place this spring.

Alan Sutherland, managing director of Marine Harvest Scotland, said: 'We have been bursting at the seams of our existing offices and we've had to use a Portakabin, which is far from ideal.'

'The new building in Fort William will accommodate our growing team and also provide a much better working environment.'

Duror junction upgrade is holding back development

EMMA CRICHTON
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A 'DANGEROUS' junction is preventing new housing being built in a rural Lochaber village, according to a community council chairman.

The Achindarroch junction leaves the A828 trunk road at Duror, leading to housing and a caravan park, and has poor visibility, said Jonathan Baxter of Duror and Kentallen community council.

But Transport Scotland officials disagree and have refused

to improve the route, despite ongoing pleas from residents in the area. Anyone who tries to build new housing at Achindarroch has been told they must upgrade the road at their own expense.

Mr Baxter said: 'Transport Scotland said it's not dangerous as it is but if there is any new development the road would need to be improved.'

'That's a load of rubbish because if you're coming on to the main road from Achindarroch the visibility is terrible, the junction really is quite dangerous.'

'But worse than that, it said if there are any new developments

it would become dangerous and the road would need to be improved.

'The problem with that is new developments would only be a couple of houses, not major developments from big companies.'

'If someone only wants to build one house they won't get planning permission without agreeing to improve the road.'

'They can't afford to upgrade the junction so it ends up they don't build at all.'

'It's holding us back as a community because it's stopping people from coming here,' said Mr Baxter.

'We're always told small communities should be cherished but when we have the potential to progress we're held back.'

Mr Baxter hopes a Highland council planning official will attend the Duror and Kentallen community council meeting on March 9 to listen to residents' concerns.

Andrew Baxter, Highland councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, said the cost of upgrading the junction was preventing development in the area.

He added: 'We have a small community which could benefit from some additional housing,

maybe two or three builds, but that's not possible because of improving the road - and the rate is higher than usual because it's a trunk road.'

A Transport Scotland spokeswoman said safety on trunk roads was 'extremely important'.

She added: 'We constantly monitor the network, including the A828 and the junctions, in terms of the personal injury accident safety record.'

'Any future planning applications which may have an effect on existing trunk conditions would be considered by Transport Scotland on their individual merits.'

Heavier financial penalties called for after Caol hit by dog fouling

DOG fouling in a Lochaber village has been described as 'disgusting' and 'a scourge' by a woman who is sick of finding mess outside her home.

Sheree Rowsell says the grass in front of her house in Caol has become a 'minefield' and other people from the village even bring their pets in cars specifically to MacQuarrie Court and don't pick up the mess, even though there is a dog bin on the stretch of grass.

She said: 'It's disgusting. I've reported people before and even posted poo bags through their letterbox to use but nothing seems to change.'

'It's the scourge of Caol. I've seen people pull up in cars, let their dogs out to do their business and just drive off again.'

'They don't care but it would be a different story if it was at their front door.'

Mrs Rowsell took to Facebook to raise her concerns. She is worried about children who play on the grass.

She added: 'Kids could go blind if they got it in their eyes. There's a lot of wee ones about here and they play on their bikes and run about out there.'

A higher fixed penalty punishment is the only way to crack down on the problem according to Mrs Rowsell, who said people should be 'hit in their pockets'.

A Highland Council spokeswoman said fouling was targeted in Lochaber through routine patrolling, targeting problem areas, bin provision and issuing free disposable bags from service points and dispensers. She added: 'In the last six months we received seven reports of dog fouling and staff issued four fixed penalty notices. We urge anyone with any concerns to contact us with details.'

Incidents can be reported online via the council website or by phoning 01349 886603.

Word power wins prizes from Rotary

VOLUNTEERS from the Rotary Club of Lochaber have commended the 'extremely high standard' of entries in the club's essay competition for youngsters.

Entries were received from 14 pupils in Lochaber high school focussing on two topics; 'powers of the social media' and 'the impact of celebrities'.

Ella Smith came first in the S1-S3 category with Millie Jackson coming second, while Kirsti Clark took the S4 upwards prize with Jack Matheson the runner-up.

GOOD READING: Rotary Club of Lochaber volunteers are pictured with the young essay competition winners from Lochaber high school



Festive profits help elderly



GENEROUS: Louise Duffy, deputy manager of Abbeyfield care home in Ballachulish, receives a cheque for £208 from Craig and Noru Innes of the Loch Leven Hotel

STAFF from Ballachulish elderly care home, Abbeyfield, have thanked another business in the area for a generous cash donation.

The proprietors of the North

Ballachulish Loch Leven Hotel, Craig and Noru Innes, have given a generous £208 of their Christmas and new year profits to the centre, which opened in 2003. Dominic Duffy, office

manager at Abbeyfield, said: 'It is great to get support for our charity from other local businesses that have taken the opportunity to visit and appreciate what we do here.'

Rural Skye primary pupils face hour-long journeys

CHILDREN from rural Skye communities could face daily round trips of up to two hours after Highland councillors agreed to close four schools in the north of the island.

Edinbane, Dunvegan, Struan and Knockbreck primaries are to be merged into one new school in Dunvegan meaning Knockbreck pupils will now travel 11 miles each way to school, much of the journey on single-track roads.

A report on the proposal for Highland council's education, children and adult services committee said the journey would take 28 minutes but Skye local members told the committee last Wednesday (January 14) it often takes 40 minutes and up to an hour in bad weather.

Councillor Ian Renwick said: 'I can't agree with how long it's going to take. It's not just the distance from the school it's all the

outlying houses so it could easily be more than an hour and you will have four-year-old children travelling that distance.'

'I feel this would have a bad effect on the areas. People will not move to the area if there's no school there, people might even move away.'

Bill Alexander, Highland Council's director for care and learning, said the merge would 'benefit education' and com-

mittee members approved the proposal.

The decision must be ratified at the next full council meeting in March.

Skye councillors also said many parents in these communities would choose to move their children to other schools including MacDiarmid and Carbost. It was agreed a new consultation would begin to review the catchments areas for these schools.

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Oban group slams move to tear down political posters Ban is attack on democracy

LOUISE LEE
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A BAN on political posters in Argyll is 'the thin edge of the wedge' for democracy, says a protest group.

As the General Election approaches in May, Argyll and Bute council votes today (Thursday) on a policy forbidding campaign materials being displayed on any property under the council's control, including lampposts, telephone poles and buildings.

If the council votes through the ban, any individual who falls foul of the by-law would be liable for the full cost of removing the material and repairing any damage.

Some councillors have argued that following the Scottish independence referendum last September, posters and political material were still hanging from lampposts and buildings many months after the event.

At a meeting of the council's environment, development and infrastructure committee last Thursday, the vote to ban political posters was split. The convener of the meeting, councillor Ellen Morton, used her casting vote to carry the proposals forward to the full council today (Thursday).

Councillor Morton explained: 'It is important that we find time

to have the discussion about this as a whole council. The majority of councils in Scotland have now imposed this ban.

'It is time to consider if this is something we would like to do here.'

But Stacey Felgate, of Oban's community hub 'Grassroots', is part of a campaign against the blanket ban and said she was concerned that losing the right to put up election and campaign materials would undermine the democratic process.

She said: 'Of all the councils that want to stop people taking down posters none of them are as rural as Argyll.'

'It seems that this campaign is being led from the relatively urban area of Helensburgh, without consideration to the islands and country areas.'

Stacey claimed councillors have not had all the details to make an informed decision on this matter, adding: 'It was raised at a meeting and the papers presented to councillors did not have any information, such as how often posters are left up and how much it costs to remove them.'

'In other places there have been community consultations about posters and whether people want to see them removed, or not, but there was no information at all here.'

'Posters on lampposts are one of the few ways in which elections – particularly local and European elections – are made visible to the general public, raising awareness and familiarising the electorate with candidates. It is a relatively cheap way to advertise a candidate.'

An Argyll and Bute council spokesman said: 'The policy has been proposed because of the impact of election posters on the environment and the associated difficulty in removing them from council property.'

'If approved, this would bring Argyll and Bute council in line with over 20 other local authorities who have already taken the same decision, as well as Transport Scotland, the national trunk roads authority.'

'In coming to a decision, the council will be noting the comments of local residents.'

Lomond councillor George Freeman said he was reserving final judgement on the vote until today's debate.

Councillor Freeman said: 'As you will be aware, this is a policy that now applies across most local authorities in Scotland.'

'I have serious concerns that those involved in placing posters have failed to remove them from council property months after the event.'



POSTER GIRLS: Stacey Felgate and Rhona Douglall of Grassroots 16_t04lamppost01

TIMESLINE

Police alert after rural thefts spike

OBAN police have appealed to business and property owners in rural Argyll to review their security after thieves targeted an industrial unit.

Power tools in a shed at Barcaldine's marine resource centre were stolen between 5pm on Tuesday, January 13 and 5.30pm on January 15.

Police urged anyone who required a review of security to contact them on 101.

Dunoon woman to fly the UKIP flag

UKIP has named Dunoon woman Caroline Santos as its Argyll and Bute candidate for the UK general election in May.

Ms Santos, who grew up in Dunoon and later lived on Tiree, was announced on Tuesday as the candidate for the party, the first time it has stood in the constituency.

National call-up a real game-changer

AN OBAN athlete, who switched from swimming to rugby just two years ago, has been called up for Scotland Women's Six Nations squad.

Student Abigail Evans, 18, has previously played for the under-20 national team and will join the senior squad ahead of their first Six Nations match in France on February 7.

Delay to A83 work a costly disgrace

INVERARAY businessman Donald Clark, who owns the George Hotel, has slammed as 'disgraceful' the delay in the £3 million upgrade to the A83 at Rest and be Thankful.

The businessman also described the cost of the work as 'unnecessarily inflated'.

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Dates confirmed for provincial Mod

THE OBAN Provincial Mod will be held in June this year, three months before the Royal National Mod comes to the town in October.

There were fears the local event wouldn't take place this year, but organisers announced this week that it will go ahead

on Friday, June 5 and Saturday, June 6.

Junior events will be held on the Friday with venues still to be confirmed, and senior and instrumental competitions on Saturday at Oban high school.

Committee member Moira Dunlop said: 'The committee

welcomes entries from anyone new to the provincial Mod, as well as more seasoned competitors.' Call or email Moira Dunlop on 01631710565 or moiradunlop@btinternet.com for more information.

The closing date for entries is Saturday, April 4.

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Sheriff praises officers as he passes final judgement

EUAN PATERSON
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

A RETIRING sheriff has highlighted the increasing number of drugs cases coming to court in Oban, but praised the way law enforcers were dealing with the problem.

A large gathering of well-wishers, including solicitors, social workers, police and court staff, paid tribute to Sheriff Douglas Small last Friday at Oban Sheriff Court as he retired from duty.

The 65-year-old judge served the last 14 years of his career in Oban but also sat in Fort William during that time, having previously worked in Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Asked how court business had changed over the years, he said drugs offences had become far more common.

Sheriff Small, who lives in North Connel, told *The Oban Times*: 'When I first came here drugs offences were few and far between but it seems to be far more prevalent.'

He praised the law enforcement work in both Oban and Fort William, adding: 'I have worked in courts all over the country and it is excellent here. 'I have been greatly blessed

with the people I have worked with.

'I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here - it was probably the best part of my career.'

Speaking about the Oban-based solicitors at the gathering, Sheriff Small, who was joined by his wife Judith, said: 'I have never fallen out with any of them. It's a different story with some of the out-of-town solicitors.'

He singled out the late David MacNeill, a popular Oban solicitor, who Sheriff Small said had a 'mischievous' nature and a 'schoolboy charm'.

Sheriff Small also praised the quality of procurator fiscal he had worked with and thanked all the honorary sheriffs in Oban and Fort William for their 'invaluable service'.

Kath McMahon, dean of the Oban faculty of solicitors, described Sheriff Small's methods as 'tempering justice with mercy, the mark of a good judge'.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said: 'None of us failed to notice that when dealing with the public, particularly the vulnerable, you showed compassion and humanity.'

'People in this court left with their dignity intact and that doesn't happen in every court.'



JUDGEMENT CALL: Sheriff Douglas Small, pictured centre with his wife Judith, was given a warm send off after he decided to retire.

Church to become children's nursery

THE WHITE church on Oban's Esplanade will spring to life later this year when a childcare company throws open its doors.

Christ Church, which closed in 2013 because of costs involved in running it, will have a new lease of life as Right Start Nursery, once approval from the care inspectorate and planning gives the go-ahead.

The ambitious project will have an internal refurbishment of the building to make way for babies to older youngsters in what will likely be the biggest childcare facility in Oban.

The company behind the venture is Rainbow Nursery in Kilwinning, Ayrshire which already runs a business in a converted church.

Bid to buy 'unsafe' castle viewpoint

A COMMUNITY buyout of land overlooking Kilchurn Castle on Loch Awe is underway after residents declared the area 'unsafe'.

Dalmally Community Company (DCC) has applied to the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) to purchase approximately 0.7 hectares of land at Kinachreacan, next to the A819 Dalmally to Inveraray road.

DCC's wants to establish a car park and viewpoint for Kilchurn Castle to replace the current arrangement, which is considered to be potentially dangerous, as drivers park in a lay-by before crossing the trunk road to view the castle.

A 28-day open consultation period is required by the scheme. Details of the application can be viewed online at forestry.gov.uk/nfls.

Comments on the proposals must be submitted by February 18 to Malcolm Wield, Forestry Commission Scotland, Highland Conservancy, 'Woodlands', Fodderty Way, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9XB or to malcolm.wield@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Argyll boys in line for rural award

TWO ARGYLL and Bute students have been nominated for a prestigious national award run by their college.

Agricultural student Ruairidh Mackinnon, 19, from Oban and engineer apprentice Fraser Maclean, 24, from Tiree have been selected for the Lantra industry training awards, in conjunction with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

Winners will be announced at the annual Lantra awards on Thursday, March 5, in the Hilton Dunblane Hydro.

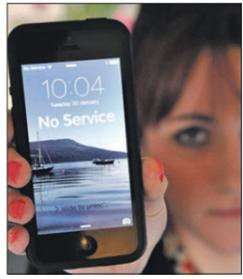
MSP calls on mobile phone companies to get better connected with customers

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

AN MSP has blasted mobile phone companies Vodafone and O2 over their handling of last week's network collapse when storms hit the west Highlands.

Customers of the two mobile phone providers lost service for at least five days, prompting Highlands and Islands MSP Mike Mackenzie to call on the companies to drastically improve customer service.

Vodafone had told Mr Mackenzie that part of the issue was down to faults with electricity



NO SERVICE: Mobile phone signal was off for days

supply and other issues with BT equipment, vital to Vodafone's operations.

But Mr Mackenzie said: 'Vodafone need to get their stories straight; they are telling me one thing, telling SSE another and telling their affected customers nothing at all. 'When the networks were down, Vodafone and O2 provided no information about their lack of coverage to customers and were unable to give a timescale to suggest when service will resume.'

'Vodafone blamed the problem on third parties, saying they rely on SSE and BT to restore power

to affected areas. However, SSE confirmed it was told by Vodafone that Vodafone's lack of service is due to damaged microwave dishes.'

Mr Mackenzie said although stormy, the weather was fairly typical of winter and by no means the worst in recent memory.

He added: 'If it is such a problem to carry out repairs in good time then perhaps Vodafone and O2 need to urgently consider investing in more robust and resilient equipment.'

A spokeswoman for SSE said that it was working closely with Vodafone to ensure that service

was restored as quickly as possible, while a spokesman for BT said the company was unaware of any faults in its network which would impact on mobile coverage.

A Vodafone spokesman said: 'There has been considerable damage to masts across the region - not just the loss of power initially. We have teams working on this problem on a continuous basis. Our engineers have this as their highest priority and are working hard to restore full service. However, the weather conditions have been extremely challenging with snow and high

winds, which made it unsafe for them to climb masts, hampering our engineers' efforts to restore services at affected sites.'

'We'd like to apologise to any customers affected for any inconvenience but despite the challenging conditions, our engineers are making good progress in getting sites up and running.'

An O2 spokesman said: 'The site closest to Oban is carrying traffic successfully. We have one other site in the area which has developed an issue on January 9, due to the extreme weather conditions. We apologise for any inconvenience.'

Grant to cut down on fuel poverty

ARGYLL and Bute council is bidding for a slice of a £60 million Scottish government grant to make people's homes warmer.

This could mean a minimum of £1,393,112 to help households in fuel poverty install cavity and loft insulation.

The council's housing spokesman councillor Robin Currie said: 'Fuel poverty is increasing, which makes this bid a high priority.'

Cash-strapped rural drivers to get fuel discount

REMOTE communities in the West Highlands are a step closer to having their petrol prices slashed.

Appin, Acharacle, Mallaig and the Morvern peninsula are among the 17 areas which would benefit across the country from the UK government's rural fuel rebate scheme, receiving fuel duty discounts of up to five pence per litre.

The scheme has been approved by the European Commission

and now awaits agreement from other member states of the European Union before it can get the go ahead, but this is expected to be a formality.

The scheme was formed to help communities said to be paying the highest prices in the British Isles.

Alan Reid, MP for Argyll and Bute, is delighted with the news, which follows a discount scheme currently active on islands including the Hebrides and North-

ern Isles. He said: 'Hard-pressed rural filling stations need this support.'

'As I have said before, the high price of fuel in rural areas is very damaging to the local economy.'

'The fuel duty discount scheme has been a success on the islands and if it proves to be a success in Appin I hope to see the discount extended to other parts of Argyll.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, says he has

long been campaigning for the change.

He said: 'High fuel costs have hit Highlanders for too long.'

'Many of my constituents will welcome the news they will now receive a five pence a litre reduction when they go to the pumps.'

'As someone who travels across the Highlands and Islands week in, week out, I know the geographical challenges we face. The use of cars here is a necessity, not a luxury.'

In December, the Morvern Community Development Company-run garage in Lochaline was said to be charging prices more than 30 pence a litre higher than those in Fort William, to the anger of residents in the area.

One Morvern resident, who wished not to be named, said about its inclusion in the rural fuel rebate scheme: 'Getting five pence off a litre is something but this will still leave it expensive compared to other garages.'

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FW

Oban golfer lives the American dream

'In the States, what you see is what you get. It's more like target practise'

AS HE gazes out on a blanket of snow across his beloved Glencruitten golf course Robert MacIntyre suddenly yearns for the sun-kissed, pristine parkland golf courses of the USA.

Oban's teenage golfing prodigy is currently on a full golfing scholarship at McNeese University, Louisiana, but came home to celebrate Christmas and the New Year with his family at their home near to Glencruitten golf club, where his father Dougie is green keeper.

Golf

In America, Robert is part of a multi-national, five-man McNeese team, known as the Cowboys, and his scholarship guarantees him a starting place for tournaments in sunny climes such as Hawaii, Florida and Arizona.

Since he joined as a freshman in 2014, after impressing scouts at the European Boys Championship last season, his university has climbed 60 places in the university rankings and Robert has recorded three top 10 finishes in his five events.

Top two

The standard of competition is high; at a universities tournament in Hawaii Robert was up against the top two ranked amateur players in the world.

Not only is he now playing against top class opponents in better weather conditions but the 18-year-old says the courses Stateside are 'easier' to play than those in Scotland.

'Where you hit the ball is where the ball ends up,' he said. 'On our links courses in Scotland we have bunkers, hidden traps and ponds in the middle of a fairway.'

'In the States, what you see is



COWBOYS: Robert, second from left, with McNeese University's golf team when they met former PGA champion David Toms

what you get. It's more like target practise.'

In 2015, Robert will have the chance to play at some of America's finest courses, including the famous TPC Sawgrass, Florida, home to the PGA Tour and annual host of The Players Championship.

His favourite course so far has been Florida's Quail Valley, despite being the venue where he carded his worst performance.

'It is a new design,' he said of

the course. 'There were entire holes on an island with man-made ponds wrapped around it.'

'Hawaii, too, was unbelievable. My mum was asking me to take lots of photos when I was there but I had to tell her the photos just couldn't do it justice. She would have to see it for herself.'

'The course is above a beach, 150 feet up, so the course is looking out to the sea. You just have to pause and take in where you are.'

Robert, who also represented Team GB at the Youth Olympics in China last year, admits his game has improved but the big hitter continues to work hard on his short game.

It is welcome news for the Scottish Golf Union, which has included Robert in its men's amateur team.

He will represent his country this year when he is home for the summer.

When a round at Glencruitten

was once part of his daily routine, Robert only played the course twice during the festive period - partly because of the weather conditions.

'This time I have been happy to come home and relax,' he said last week.

'I left the US in a pair of shorts but as soon as I flew into London I changed into a pair of joggies.'

'I miss being at home but I don't miss the course when the weather is like this!'



Robert MacIntyre represented GB in the Youth Olympics last year

Three hours of action at Sportshall Athletics

MID ARGYLL Athletic Club held its annual indoor competition in the games hall and gymnasium at the joint campus school in Lochgilhead last Sunday.

This event was the first of a series of local area competitions being held in Argyll this winter.

There were several impressive performances throughout the three hours of action and one of the stars was Jilly Lefebvre from Kilmichael Glassary, and a pupil at Lochgilhead primary, who was the overall winner in the under 11 age group.

Jilly won five out of the seven events excelling in the six-lap race

recording an impressive time of 51.1 seconds. Jilly was the Argyll champion in this age group last year and she will be hard to beat again this year. Jilly broke the Argyll age record in the javelin throwing 17 metres and adding 50cm to the old record. Jilly also won the three jumping events including a 1.15metres high jump and she could have gone higher if time allowed.

Kirsten Blair, from Crinan, was runner up in this section winning the three-lap race in 24.7secs and shared first place with Jilly in the speed bounce.

Eilidh Cameron from Inveraray

was a close third on overall points.

There was family success for the Macdonald clan with Jemma winning the under-7s contest and older brother Murray was the under-9 champion.

Jemma won four events including an excellent 65.9 seconds run in the six-lap race. Jemma's twin sister Jeorga was runner-up ahead of Catriona Johnstone.

Alice Adair, from Kilmartin, was the under-9 champion winning six events with some style especially in the two running events and high jump. Ruby Phillips, from Glassary school was second overall and Holly Gilthorpe from Lochgilhead was in third place.

Considering the numbers attending weekly training the entry in the girls under-13 and under-15 age groups was very disappointing but the under-17s provided an interesting competition with Bethan Lemmon winning ahead of Freya Corner and Olivia Kerr.

Bethan won the two running events in addition to the long jump and shot putt. Freya impressed in winning the high jump, clearing 1.46metres and Olivia won the speed bounce and standing triple jump, clearing 6.78metres and only 12cm short of the long standing Argyll age record.

Sam Gillespie, Lochgilhead, was the under-7 champion winning both the three-lap and six-lap races and also the standing

long jump stretching out to 1.50 metres, an excellent distance for his age.

Murray MacDonald dominated in the under-9 age group winning six out of seven events. Murray looked strong in winning the three-lap and six-lap races and his winning distance of 4.50 metres in the standing triple jump impressed the judges. James Campbell won the javelin ensuring he finished second on overall points.

Neily Russell from Lochgilhead and Ben Maddox from Kilmartin filled the top two places in the under-11s. Champion Neily won the three-lap, high and long jumps while Ben was winner of the six lap in an impressive 52.7 seconds and also the javelin, throwing 17 metres. Arran Robertson was third overall, helped by a win in the triple jump.

The under-13 boys provided the most competitive category and only 1.5 points separated champion Archie Spencer, from Craobh Haven, and runner-up Alfie Smith from Tayvallich. Archie won the long and triple jumps and also the shot putt with 9.50 metres. Alfie won the three-lap race in a close finish and his best event was the high jump, winning with 1.40metres which was one of the top performances of the day.

Other winners in this section were Jake Gillespie, who left older boys in his wake to win the six-lap race in 49.2 seconds

Athletics

and Peter Adair, who won the speed bounce with 75 jumps in 30 seconds. Donald Ferguson won the under-15s contest ahead of Joseph Harper with both boys each winning three events.

Donald won both the high and long jumps in addition to the shot putt and Joseph won the six lap, triple jump and speed bounce. Liam Scott and Theo Maddox contested the under-17s event, with Liam winning five events including an amazing 20.2 seconds in the three-lap race. Theo won the high jump and triple jump with a respectable 7.18metres.

Successful athletes from Sunday's competition will be invited to compete in the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on Saturday, March 21.

Results: Under 7 Girls - 1 Jemma MacDonald; 2 Jeorga MacDonald; 3 Catriona Johnstone, 4 Anya Banaghan.

Under 9 Girls - 1 Alice Adair; 2 Ruby Phillips; 3 Holly Gilthorpe, 4= Jody Sansom, 4= Kyra Robertson

Under 11 Girls - 1 Jilly Lefebvre; 2 Kirsten Blair; 3 Eilidh Cameron; 4 Hannah Young; 5 Tilly Cunningham.

Under 13 Girls - 1 Rachael Johnstone, 2 Freya Corner; 3 Olivia Kerr.

Under 7 Boys - 1 Sam Gillespie; 2 Euan McCartan, 3 Andrew Ritchie.

Under 9 Boys - 1 Murray MacDonald; 2 James Campbell; 3 Stuart Phillips; 4 Callum Green; 5= Rhys Coffield; 5= Struan Urquhart.

Under 11 Boys - 1 Neily Russell; 2 Ben Maddox; 3 Arran Robertson; 4= Logan



One of the officials gets ready to measure the standing long jump

Allan; 4= Gregor Brown; 6 Ruairaidh Green.

Under 13 Boys - 1 Archie Spencer; 2 Alfie Smith; 3 Shaun Doy; 4 Jake Gillespie; 5 Peter Adair; 6 Felix Maddox.

Under 15 Boys - 1 Donald Ferguson; 2 Joseph Harper; 3 Eoin Yuill.

Under 17 Boys - 1 Liam Scott; 2 Theo Maddox.

All the above athletes qualify for the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on Saturday, March 21 starting at 1pm with registration from 12noon.



The top six high jump winners in the Lochgilhead heats for the Argyll Sportshall competition. (Left to right) Girls: second place Kirstin Blair, 9, first Jilly Lefebvre, 10, third Eilidh Cameron, 9. Boys: second Arran Robertson, 10, first Neily Russell, 11 and third Gregor Brown, 10. Photos N Adams McGilp

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Accies manager moves to Norwich

Football

ENGLISH Championship side Norwich City have appointed Hamilton Academical player-manager Alex Neil as their new boss.

Neil, who took over at New Douglas Park in May 2013, is no stranger to Oban, leading his Hamilton side to two back-to-back wins in the D&K Lafferty Cup pre-season tournament run by Oban Saints Football Club.

Oban Saints secretary David Buchanan said: 'It's a great move for Alex. He's a real football man and a really nice guy and we wish him well at Norwich.'

'The Accies have been coming to our pre-season tournament for many years and we look forward to meeting the new manager at this year's tournament on Saturday July 11.'

Third time lucky? Shinty

THE ANNUAL challenge match between Oban Camanachd and Oban Camanachd Veterans, due to take place at Mossfield, was called off for the second week in a row this time as Mossfield was covered in a blanket of snow.

The game has been re-arranged for this Saturday, 1pm throw-up.

Scottish Amateur League fixtures

Football

ALL SAFL games were postponed last Saturday due to the weather.

This weekend's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup fourth round - Harestanes v Oban Saints; Jimmy Marshall Cup first round - Campbelltown Pupils v Dunoon Athletic; Lochgilhead Red Star v Haldane United. Coronation Cup first round - Rossvale v Tarbert.

'I miss being at home but I don't miss the course when the weather is like this!'

Athletic's West Cup game called off

Football

OBAN Athletic's West of Scotland Cup tie away to Tarbolton fell victim to the weather last weekend and was called off on the Friday evening.

This Saturday the Oban team will be hoping to get back in action with the same away fixture against Tarbolton.

Over 35s scores Indoor football

SCORES from last week's Oban Over 35s League: Clements 5 Emergency 3; Taynuilt 2 D&K Lafferty 1; Emergency 2 Trialists 6.

Glenorchy's 50th anniversary Shinty

GLENORCHY Camanachd will celebrate its 50th anniversary this May and is looking for help as it gathers information on the club's history.

The anniversary year will culminate in a reunion on May 9 in Dalnally community centre, where a presentation on the history of the club will be made.

Anyone willing to share information, photographs or memorabilia can contact Billy O'Brien, Keith MacIntyre or Graeme MacKechnie or email glenorchy1947@gmail.com

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Fort fan David has followed his team through thick and thin

'If we had the team we have now when we went into the Highland League then we would have been a top six team'

IF THERE is one person in a good position to judge Fort William F C's recent success it is surely club vice chairman David MacDonald.

Not only has he been a committee member at Claggan Park for the last five years, MacDonald is a lifelong supporter who has only missed two home league matches in the last 30 years.

The 46-year-old has followed his hometown team through the good times and the bad ever since their formation in 1974 and attended his first game in 1979, a pre-season friendly against Partick Thistle.

MacDonald also fondly remembers Fort trouncing now Scottish Premiership side Ross County 7-0 in their biggest ever home win in 1986 and demolishing Nairn County 9-3 away.

Recollecting his time as a supporter through the years, he said: 'A highlight was the 1993/94 season when we got to the North Cup Final.'

'On the way we knocked out

Football

Caledonian Thistle and Ross County who were then Scottish league sides.

'And season 1985/86 we played Stirling Albion at Claggan in the Scottish Cup and drew 0-0 in front of 1,500 people, which is our biggest crowd at home.'

MacDonald was a regular at Claggan well before Fort joined the Scottish Highland League in the summer of 1985.

He watched future Bolton Wanderers and Scotland star John McGinlay learn his trade with the club between 1978 and 1982 while Fort was competing in the North Caledonian League.

After winning the Chic Allan, Morris Newton and Football Times cups during a successful early 1980s period, Fort won the league title in season 1984/85, their only championship win to date.

MacDonald said: 'We won a bucketload of trophies in the



TOP FAN: Fort William fan-turned-vice chairman David MacDonald has stuck with his club through thick and thin 20_f04macdonald01

North Caledonian League but even then we were playing catch up with fixtures.

'If we had the team we have now when we went into the Highland League then we would have been a top six team.'

'What's making the difference now is the league is more competitive - most teams are capable

of beating anyone else. 'And unlike the premier league you are not playing everyone four times a season.'

The Fort William squad's only recent problem has been a lack of game time, with only one match played since November due to weather-related postponements.

This is a distraction the team

could do without, as they have arguably hit their best form for decades, sitting 13th in the Highland League after countless seasons rooted to the bottom.

This month the players broke an all-time record by winning four matches in a row and they can make it five by beating Forres Mechanics at home on January

31, after a league cup tie away to Nairn County this Saturday.

MacDonald said: 'There is a team spirit now that hasn't been there before and we are playing some cracking football.'

'The club has a bright future and we just hope we can build on what has been a successful season so far.'

Pre-season fixtures announced Shinty

SHINTY teams in Lochaber and Skye have announced their pre-season fixtures taking place in January and February.

January 31
Fort William v Kyles Athletic An Aird, Fort William.

February 7
Fort William 2nd team v Boleskine, venue yet to be decided
Glasgow Mid Argyll v Kinlochshiel Peterson Park, Yoker.
The Bear Tankard Trophy, Ballachulish v Newtonmore XII Jubilee Park, Ballachulish.
Thomas Ferguson Memorial Cup, Skye v Lovat
Paic nan Laoch, Portree.
Oban Lorne v Ballachulish juniors Oban High School all weather pitch.

February 14
Fort William v Lochaber An Aird, Fort William.
Oban Celtic v Glengarry venue yet to be decided.
Taynuilt v Ballachulish Taynuilt playing fields.
Glenurquhart v Skye Blairbeg, Drumadrochit.

February 21
Fort William v Lovat An Aird, Fort William.
Ballachulish v Lochside Rovers, Jubilee Park, Ballachulish.
Ewen Morrison Memorial Cup North Skye v South Skye venue yet to be decided.

February 28
Fort William 2nd team v Lochside Rovers, An Aird, Fort William.
Ballachulish v Strachur Jubilee Park, Ballachulish.
Lochcarron v Skye 2nd team Battery Park, Lochcarron.

Thousands flock to Lochaber ski slopes

THERE was a phenomenal turnout for world snow day in Lochaber, with thousands of people taking to the mountains on Sunday in an event celebrating winter sports around the globe.

Perfect white-out conditions brought families to the Nevis Range and Glencoe Mountain Resort complexes as part of the day which ran with the theme

of 'bringing the children to the snow'.

Queues of cars
Hordes of regular skiers and snowboarders visited as well as those there specifically for the event, while queues of cars brought the A82 road in Glencoe to a standstill as there were no spaces left in any of the visitor centre car parks.

After 1,600 tickets were sold, the police had to turn motorists away.

Specially for world snow day, there was free sledging, chairlift access and 'snowtrax' car rides available for children, plus races, an igloo building demonstration and snowman building competition.

Angela Dingwall, Glencoe



FUN IN THE SNOW: Sledging was one of many activities enjoyed by huge numbers of visitors to Glencoe Mountain Resort for world snow day

Skiing

resort manager, said: 'We hadn't been open for 10 days and this was the first decent weekend of weather.'

'We were so busy we stopped selling tickets at 1pm. It's been mayhem.
'Snow-wise, the weekend has been perfect and everyone wanted to be here.'

As Sunday was chosen as world snow day in advance, there was never any guarantee the weather conditions would be suitable, but staff and visitors were in luck, with several feet of snow in places at Glencoe.

Gondola
Nevis Range, near Torlundy, saw almost 1,400 skiers and snowboarders, with an additional 500 visitors on the mountain gondola.

Events there included a limited number of half-price ski and snowboarding lessons, half-price snow shoe hire, snowman building and sledging.

Heather Negus, marketing manager at the centre, said: 'This type of event encourages non-skiers and snowboarders to join us on the mountain and experience the amazing atmosphere on the snowy slopes.'

'The snow conditions and weather turned out to be ideal and even the sun made a brief appearance.'

Alleycats keep their scratch lead

Ten pin bowling

ALLEYCATS have kept the lead in the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league scratch division, with 52 points after week 12.

All three of the top teams took the maximum five points at the Nevis Centre, giving the Creeps 51 points and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio 50.

In the handicap division, the Rotavators retain the top spot with 51 points, followed by Alleycats with 47 and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio in third with 42.

The top individual scratch game this week came from Gary Cowan, of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio, with 215. Gary also took the top handicap game with 269 while Ron Gretton rolled a season high of 368 in the two-game scratch series and 466 in the two-game handicap series.

Ardtoe/Nevis Radio also rolled a season high of 661 in the scratch team game, as well as the top handicap team game of 887 and the top two-game handicap team series with 1638.

Alleycats had the top two scratch team series of 1219, another season high.

The highest scratch average is currently held by Pam Weller of Alleycats on 156, followed by Tony Whitlocke, also of Alleycats, with 153 and Stewart Duncan, The Creeps, on 144.

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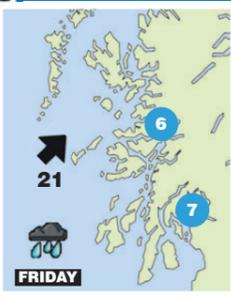
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WEATHER

Thursday Light rain
Winds light south south easterly
Temperatures 4°C to 4°C.

Friday Heavy rain
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.

Weekend Outlook Rain showers on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 22, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	00.41	0.4	06.48	4.3	13.10	0.5	19.00	4.0
Fri	01.25	0.4	07.29	4.2	13.55	0.5	19.40	3.9
Sat	02.11	0.4	08.11	4.1	14.40	0.7	20.22	3.7
Sun	02.58	0.6	08.56	3.9	15.28	0.9	21.06	3.5
Mon	03.48	0.8	09.45	3.6	16.19	1.1	21.55	3.3
Tues	04.43	1.1	10.44	3.3	17.16	1.4	22.56	3.0
Wed	05.47	1.4	12.15	3.1	18.20	1.6	***	**

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrisaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate