

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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POLITICIANS URGED TO STAND STRONG OVER NANCY GLEN

• FULL STORY PAGE 3



WIN WIN WIN

A TWO NIGHT STAY FOR TWO PEOPLE AT DREAMHOUSE APARTMENTS



Police step in and demand immediate pothole repairs

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POTHoles on the A85 through Connel became so dangerous last week police officers contacted BEAR Scotland to carry out emergency repairs, a fortnight before scheduled works.

Sandy Dunlop, chairman of Connel Community Council, told *The Oban Times* last Thursday the trunk road was becoming a 'nightmare' for drivers and a 'no-go area' for pedestrians.

'There have been windcreens broken and they are worried about stones being fired,' he said. 'You are taking your life into your hands walking along there.'

'There are two bus stops. People are sheltering behind them – they have to while they are waiting for the bus. You could not walk along there with a pram. You see lorries driving on the pavement. It is deadly walking along there. This is the main artery into Oban. It is probably the worst road in Scotland.'

That day, Police Scotland confirmed: 'Officers on patrol came across potholes which were potentially dangerous to road users and stopped to put out slow signs and contacted BEAR Scotland who came and carried out repairs.'

BEAR Scotland, which maintains north west trunk roads, told *The Oban Times*: 'We attended the scene with a road sweeper and undertook emergency patch repairs. We followed that up overnight with further repairs to the road surface. This particular area has suffered from sudden deterioration following adverse

winter weather conditions over the last few months. We'll continue to monitor this closely until the scheduled repairs start on Sunday February 11 to Thursday February 15.'

Last week a campaigner on change.org also started a petition asking the Minister for Transport and the Islands Humza Yousaf to repair potholes along the A82 and A85 between Oban and Glasgow, which 'are in the most appalling state'.

'Cycling and driving are becoming increasingly hazardous. Swerving to avoid the potholes increases the risks of hitting cyclists and other cars while driving through them causes damage to the car. The quality of our road surfaces is at an all time low and requires urgent action.' By Tuesday the appeal had attracted 800 signatures.

Islanders on Jura also complained to Argyll and Bute's MP and MSP about 'monstrous potholes' along the island's only road, the A846. One, Gemma MacLean, told them: 'The state of the only road on Jura is a joke. The game of 'Pothole or Puddle' is not a fun one and becoming very costly in vehicle repairs. How much longer before the council makes temporary repairs is anyone's guess.'

Another resident, Kenneth Cameron, said: 'The road on Jura is more or less a track with potholes the size of craters. Residents and tourists are getting fed up with the lack of maintenance and total disregard to safety on Argyll and Bute's part.'

'The situation is terrible for motorists but you are actually

running a gauntlet if you are a cyclist or motorcyclist as some of these potholes are hard to spot in wet weather.'

'There seems to be no end in sight for Jura residents. The community council has been working hard on our behalf but their efforts seem to be falling on deaf ears. The knock-on effect of this situation will also be detrimental to tourism on Jura which is a huge part of our economy. This is our only road and at the moment even an emergency vehicle responding to an incident would be severely delayed, which could have disastrous consequences.'

Argyll and Bute Council responded: 'Road repairs are scheduled to be carried out on Jura this week, weather permitting. Potholes are a national problem. The roads revenue budget for Argyll and Bute is just under £4 million and is split into areas based on network length. The Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Isles area is allocated 30 per cent of the annual budget with individual districts, such as Islay, Jura and Colonsay, allocated an equal third.'

'The area's roads network, excluding trunk routes, runs to more than 1,400 miles.'

Michael Russell MSP said: 'Jura already had some of the worst roads in the area and the present state of the main and only road from the ferry is causing difficulty, damage to vehicles and danger to road users.'

'This road is the council's responsibility and while, of course, money is tight, I have asked them for urgent action based on the evidence that is there for all to see.'



The cast of Clachan Jack or the Man with the Golden Beans. Photograph: Cat Jones.

Clachan Jack foils Donald Nump's Seil deal

THE OBAN Times was accused of fake news by an American president this week.

No, not that one. This was Donald Nump, one of the characters in Seil Drama Group's annual panto which played to capacity audiences in the community hall last Saturday.

Cutting a deal with local landowner Lady Matilda Killierankie to take over the island, Nump, played by John Colston, persuaded local boy Clachan Jack (Jenn Brunner) to swap his family's land for a treasure map.

To stop their dastardly plans, Jack, his mother Ma Bond (John Maclean) and his girlfriend Jill (Gillian MacKechnie) enlisted the help of eccentric golfers and local children.

In a thrilling finale, the islanders sent Nump

and his shady Russian sidekicks packing, or maybe to a new career in Washington DC, while Lady Matilda escaped to Dunoon with rediscovered love Sir Tufton Bufton (Alastair Mill).

Clachan Jack, or the Man with the Golden Beans, brings to four the Seil group's panto performances.

Directing again this year was Wendy Dugdale, who also managed comedy cameo performances between scenes.

With a sparkling script by John Colston, songs and music arranged by Maggie Thorpe and Lindsay McColl's dance routines, the cast delivered a great show that delighted the audience.

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Work starts on potential M&S Oban site

WORK has started on the former Lidl store on Oban's Lochavullin Industrial Estate, which is believed to be where an M&S Foodhall is set to open, writes David McPhee.

Fences were positioned around the site last week, which created a buzz on social media.

A spokesman for Marks and Spencer refused to confirm if they are behind the work, but said they remained interested in coming to Oban.

Under the 'New Store Registration' section on its website, there is an Oban section where people can show their interest in applying for jobs.

It reads: 'We're always looking for great talent for our new stores. While we're not recruiting for the stores below just yet, you can let us know that you're interested

by registering your details. Select the role and store you're interested in, enter your details and we'll let you know when we post vacancies.'

A planning application on the Argyll and Bute Council website, with the subject line M&S Oban Retail Unit, shows plans to revamp the outside of the building.

It will see a number of large windows replace the current brickwork, with 'umbra grey cladding' above, from the 'M&S colour palette'.

On a popular public Facebook group, someone said: 'Marks and Sparks at last. And you never know once they become established they may well extend.'

Another member of the public said: 'I love Marks. It is expensive though. Many people won't be able to afford to get

shopping in there, especially big families.'

'I went to Fort William yesterday and paid a fair bit more than I would have in Tesco but I have to say it is all lovely stuff and won't be in all the time so I don't mind.'

Another said: 'Just what Oban needs. [It] will bring a lot of people to the town. I get so many visitors asking where our M&S is.' 'M&S food is not that expensive,' someone else wrote. 'I go to Fort William so I can shop at the one there and, of course, Morrisons. Cannot wait.'

An M&S Foodhall opened in Fort William at the end of November last year.

The 8,000 sq ft store features a 24-seat café, bakery and an extensive range of food and drink.

The Fort foodhall is the most remote M&S store in mainland UK.

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Support for Mull crabbing zone

A PROJECT to create a crabbing zone to the west of Mull, producing crab worth £750,000 to the island's economy, has been supported by Mull Community Council.

The proposal by the fishermen of Mull, backed by fishermen on Coll and Tiree, was presented to this month's community council meeting by Nick Turnbull, of Mull Aquaculture and Fisheries Association.

Community council chairman Billy McClymont said: 'It is a fantastic idea that this box would be closed exclusively for crab fisheries.'

The community council's draft minutes explained: 'The crabbing zone has a number of potential benefits, including protection of the local brown crab stocks, giving some protection to the local economy, encouraging biodiversity and avoiding gear conflict.'

'[Mr Turnbull] did warn there would probably be some dissension from scallop dredgers from further afield but these would have access for eight months of the year.'

'The project was also designed to be sustainable, with four to six boats involved and a maximum limit of 300 creels per boat taken from the zone and, with crab tagging also planned, would provide information on crab and scallop stocks plus potentially offer research into the movement of crabs. There are no crabs in the summertime.'

'Asked about the value of the stocks, [Mr Turnbull] advised that this area was producing around £60,000 for scallops and £750,000 for crab.'

Community councillor Jim Corbett asked if the crabbing zone would create a precedent for the future formation of a Marine National Park, which 'was not popular on the island', but Mr Turnbull thought it would not.

The community council agreed unanimously to support the proposal.

Lifeboat rescues fishing boat

ISLAY RNLI volunteer lifeboat helped a disabled fishing vessel and her crew of three in the Sound of Jura early in the evening of Saturday January 27.

The 10-metre fishing boat was making her way to Stornoway but, while in the Sound of Jura and six miles south of Crinan, with a strong westerly wind blowing, the engine overheated and had to be shut down.

The crew notified Belfast Coastguard of their problem and the Coastguard immediately called the Islay lifeboat station at 4.49pm. The Helmut Schroder of Dunlossit II was launched at 5.18pm with a crew of seven on board.

Despite fairly difficult wind and sea conditions, the lifeboat took the vessel in tow and brought it safely to Crinan. The lifeboat arrived back at Port Askaig at 9.30pm and was refuelled and ready for service by 9.55pm.

MP blasts council over Barra all-weather pitch decision

THE COMMUNITY of Barra has been left bewildered and angered by Western Isles Council's decision not to develop an all-weather pitch.

Island team Barra Football Club is the only club in Scotland that needs to take a ferry journey for every away match.

The weather on the island is often wet and windy, with an average of 100mm of rain during November, so an all-weather pitch would have been extremely beneficial.

As a previous player for the team, MP Angus Brendan MacNeil was both confused and concerned by the refusal.

After hearing the decision, Mr MacNeil said: 'It is really hard to understand and difficult to explain why the comhairle is preventing a community from building a much-needed sports facility.'



Barra FC's football pitch is in poor condition.

'I understand one of the reasons for refusal is that the land in question may need to be used for the purpose of sitting

a portable building during the construction of Castlebay Community School. However, I am told that land is being made

available by a crofter for this purpose, should it be required.'

Mr MacNeil wants the council to reverse the decision.

He said: 'I have written to comhairle leader Roddie Mackay and all councillors. The comhairle must approve the Community Asset Transfer of this land to allow the community to benefit from an all-weather pitch. This has full support on Barra and it is bizarre that the comhairle of all bodies should ride roughshod over the community.'

'Campaigners have lived with 18 years of promises from the comhairle. People are not even looking to the comhairle to fund it, but to get out of the way and let it happen.'

A comhairle spokesperson said: 'The redevelopment of Castlebay School is in the very early stages of options appraisal and the final solution will depend on the level of funding available from the various supporting agencies.'

'The preferred option would be

to include an all-weather pitch in the scope. The reason for retaining the land at the current time is to allow all development options to be considered.'

Mr MacNeil responded: 'The community has until January 30 for its Community Asset Transfer appeal and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar should remember they were only custodians of the King George V playing fields in Castlebay and shouldn't act like unreasonable Victorian landlords. Councillors, of course, have to ensure this.'

Another comhairle spokesperson replied: 'An all-weather pitch has not been blocked.'

'The comhairle is supportive of the community's aspirations to enhance the sporting facilities in Castlebay.'

'The comhairle will keep the community of Barra updated with progress on this project.'

Writers are winners in Skye Reading Room competition

THE SKYE and Raasay Schools' Gaelic and English writing competition, organised by the Skye Reading Room (Seòmar Leughaidh), as part of Book Week Scotland 2017, proved to be a resounding success.

More than 60 entries on the theme of 'Nourish' were short-listed and put before a panel of experienced judges, which included four retired Head teachers and three distinguished Gaelic speakers.

The objective of the Writing Competition was to encourage children and young people of all abilities to write, and to reward both the best and those who had made great progress in their writing.

The quality of the winning entries was exceptional. The young authors explored the theme of Nourish in diverse ways: feeding the heart, the spirit and the mind, as well as the body.

Some entries were humorous and others were descriptive or sensitive. The judges enjoyed a feast of good writing from all age groups.

The Reading Room is grateful for the substantial prizes donated by world renowned authors Alexander McCall Smith and Ian Rankin, together with Gillesbuig Ferguson, Chris Watkiss, Alasdair Galbraith, the Isle of Skye Sea Salt Company, Cafesia, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Urras an Eilein, Glasgow Skye Association, the Highland



Alexander McCall Smith

Council, and the Highland Society of London.

The Skye Reading Room, which regularly invites published authors to talk about their work at Edinbane Village Hall, is currently expanding its appeal with popular Open Mic sessions.

In response to enthusiastic pressure from participating schools, the schools' writing competition team is exploring the possibility of making the competition an annual event.

Anyone interested in helping with the organisation of the competition or judging entries in the future should contact Ann Galbraith at annasdair@hotmail.com.

For more information visit theskyeadingroom.wordpress.com



The Spirit of Eilidh, named after tragic Barra teenager Eilidh MacLeod, left, was blessed at a family ceremony on Barra Airport's beach runway.

The Spirit of Eilidh to fly over Barra

LOGANAIR has named a plane Spirit of Eilidh as a tribute to Barra teenager Eilidh MacLeod who was killed in last year's Manchester Arena terrorist attack.

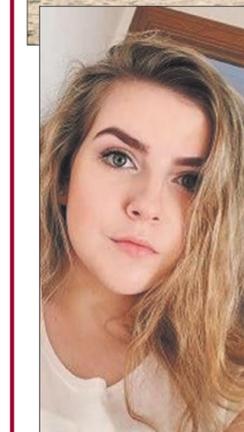
The Twin Otter aircraft was named in a family ceremony today (Wednesday) on the Traigh Mhòr, the beach which serves as Barra Airport's runway.

Father John Paul MacKinnon, of Barra Catholic Church, blessed the aircraft, which will fly on a service linking the Isles of Barra and Tiree, Campbeltown and Glasgow, before it flew back to Glasgow Airport.

Eilidh, 14, had gone to Manchester for an Ariana Grande concert. Her friend Laura MacIntyre, 15, also from Barra, was badly injured in the terrorist attack which killed 22 people in May.

Loganair managing director Jonathan Hinkles said: 'We are honoured that Eilidh's parents have consented to allow us to name our Twin Otter after their daughter.'

'We at Loganair hope that it may play a small part in ensuring that her spirit and presence endure long into the future. Every passenger on the aircraft will see the Spirit of Eilidh title as they board.'



Youngsters back at Mull messy play

HOME-START Mull's Bumps and Babies held its first messy play of 2018 on Thursday January 18.

Children aged up to three gathered in Salen Church Hall to guddle, splash and squish their way through buckets of jelly, water and spaghetti.

The messy play provides an opportunity for toddlers to socialise and enjoy sensory play and for parents to get together and enjoy a cuppa and a chat.

Bumps and Babies meets every Thursday (term time) 10am to noon at Salen Church Hall.

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Visit Scotland hits back after Skye ranked among destinations to avoid

THE ISLE of Skye has been ranked among the world's '12 destinations travellers might want to avoid' this year, according to CNN Travel.

In the list published on Tuesday January 23, the American media company said the island's infrastructure 'creaked under the pressure' from visitors last year.

CNN claimed: 'In 2017, the infrastructure of Scotland's largest island creaked under the pressure as thousands of tourists in coaches and cars piled its narrow lanes, making a beeline for the remote fairy pools at Glenbrittle, the iconic sunset spot at Elgol and the rocky Old Man of Storr, with traffic snarl-ups an inevitable

result. Eventually the residents of beautiful Skye said enough was enough after complaints of noise, overcrowding and even visitors urinating in public. Police advised visitors to stay away unless they had already booked places to stay.'

CNN advised people to visit outside the summer season 'when tourist numbers drop and sites can be explored without having to battle crowds'. Instead, the company said to explore the Small Isles of Rum, Muck and Eigg 'or go south and get lost on Jura'.

A Visit Scotland spokesperson said: 'We're concerned Skye has been highlighted as a destination to avoid and the effect this may have on

potential visitors to the region when, far from being avoided, it should be embraced by international travellers.'

'Infrastructure improvements are set to take place this year and we are continuing to work with partners to help grow the sector. Pre-booking is essential for any world-class destination and we would encourage visitors to Skye to do so and consider exploring this beautiful part of the world at all times of the year.'

Also making the list were Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Venice, Santorini, Bhutan, the Taj Mahal, Mount Everest (Nepal-side), Machu Picchu, Galápagos Islands, Cinque Terre and Antarctica.

Councillor calls for CalMac to locate jobs in Western Isles

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar's chairman of transportation and infrastructure has called on CalMac to locate jobs in the Western Isles.

The call comes as the ferry company advertises three managerial positions at salaries of upwards of £60,000.

Councillor Uisdean Robertson said: 'There is no obvious reason why these posts and similar positions could not be located in the Western Isles, among the communities CalMac serves. The impact of these salaries in the Western Isles would be much greater on the local economy than they are in the central belt.'

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Wind farm decision up in the air

COUNCILLORS urged to oppose a Knapdale wind farm with turbines 'eight metres short of the Blackpool Tower' have voted to see for themselves on a site visit.

EDF Energy Renewables (EDF ER) applied to build Airgh Wind Farm, composed of 14 wind turbines up to 145m tall and each generating 50.4-58.8 KW, in an area 8.4km south west of Tarbert.

The site would be accessed via the existing Alt Dearg Wind Farm entrance near Inverneill on the A83 and require 14km of new track to be laid and 16km to be upgraded. One hundred and sixty hectares (ha) of forestry would also need to be felled, with 130 ha replanted.

Argyll and Bute Council has been relegated to the role of consultee, since applications to build onshore power stations generating more than 50MW require the consent of the Scottish Government.

Planning officers are recommending councillors on the Planning, Protective Service and Licensing Committee object to the proposal because of its 'unacceptable, adverse and cumulative' visual impact on Knapdale's landscape viewed from West Kintyre, Islay, Jura and Gigha.

Last week Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust and Ardrishaig Development Trust signed a community ownership deal with EDF ER, which would bring in £5,000 per MW per annum, possibly totalling up to £8.82m over the wind farm's lifetime.

However, planning officers argued the economic benefits and contribution to renewable energy targets 'are not of sufficient weight to offset the adverse effects on the local environment'.

The report explained the Scottish Government had received six objections and three letters of support, one of which argued: 'Mid Argyll really needs employment and this project will bring that.'

One objector wrote: 'The turbines are to be the largest they can install at just under 150 metres high - eight metres short of the height of Blackpool Tower. Argyll and Bute regulations appear to limit turbine heights to 130 metres maximum.'

West Kintyre Community Council also raised objections, but Ardrishaig Community Council did not at its meeting on January 19. However, the report added: 'The committee is small and may not be representative of the wider community.'

Councillor Robin Currie said: 'The places most affected are Islay and Jura. There would be 12 construction jobs over two years, then 10 full time jobs. That is a major economic benefit.'

Councillors voted eight to three to hold a site visit to determine the visual impact.

Politicians urged to stand strong over Nancy Glen

COLIN CAMERON
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POLITICIANS must put aside party politics and be guided by 'human decency' as the bid to raise the *Nancy Glen* intensifies.

The call came from Clyde Fishermen's Association chairman Kenny MacNab as he confirmed that quotes had been received to raise the fishing boat from the bottom of Loch Fyne.

On the evening of January 18, 40-foot vessel *Nancy Glen* TT100 was fishing prawns on the loch not far from her home port of

Tarbert when she capsized and sank - despite intense efforts to save her. One crewman was rescued but skipper Duncan MacDougall and another crewman Przemek Krawczyk are believed to have gone down with the boat.

The Clyde Fishermen's Association is spearheading a move to raise the wreck from its position 140 metres under the surface - with a huge community fundraising effort backing the campaign.

Investigations into the tragedy are continuing by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch

and underwater surveys are planned - but the UK government agency has said it does not intend to raise the vessel.

Speaking on Sunday January 28, Kenny MacNab said: 'This doesn't mean it will not happen.'

Politicians on all sides in Holyrood and Westminster are being urged to lend support to the campaign to raise the *Nancy Glen* and Mr MacNab added: 'I would just say to all politicians, regardless of party, look to your humanitarian side and adopt some compassion.'

He continued: 'We have had

contractors interested in lifting the *Nancy Glen* giving fairly reasonable quotes. For the moment they have to remain confidential as we are waiting for others to get in touch.

'Our efforts to get funding from governments to return our shipmates carries on and we will never give up. So it's up to all the politicians to make it happen.'

The community spirit shown by the Tarbert community and surrounding areas for the affected families has been immense. The fundraising campaign was boosted on January 27 by a

single coffee afternoon which raised £13,000 - just one fundraiser among scores around the region. Online funds meanwhile total £175,000 and rising.

Mr MacNab praised the efforts of people near and far. 'Yet again I have to thank the community of Tarbert and now the world wide community for your support raising money and offers of help and comfort to the families,' he said. 'It is greatly appreciated. Let's hope our politicians and governments north and south are as strong as you are.'



Oban Tesco's John Hutchison and Shaun Frame with the service personnel. 17_205_armyrecruitment

Army weathers storm to boost recruitment

ARMY recruiters battled Storm Georgina last week when they arrived in Oban.

Strong winds prevented them from setting up at Oban's North Pier but the weather eventually calmed down and the soldiers made their presence known in Tesco car park.

'It was a wash-out at the be-

ginning,' said Captain Malcolm Dalzel-Job.

'But we got out and people were very friendly and welcoming. Lots of people wanted to talk and engage, which is good.'

The soldiers were looking to recruit people to the regular and reserve army. They were keen to make known the different type

of roles in the army, including human resources, information technology, electrician and chef.

'There are more than 200 apprenticeships. There are only two jobs you can't do, that's beauty and hairdressing,' they said.

To find out more visit www.army.mod.uk/careers

Help name an Argyll gritter

PRIMARY school pupils across Argyll are being invited to name a gritter.

Eddie Ross, BEAR Scotland's North West Representative, said: 'We're delighted to work with *The Oban Times* to help come up with a name for one of our gritters in Argyll.'

'A few winters ago we got involved with a competition to help name some of our 32-tonne gritters and reached out to local primary schools to come up with names.'

'We had a great response and now have the likes of Sprinkles, Mrs McGritter,

Sir Grits-a-lot, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang and Sir Andy Flurry out working on trunk roads across the north of Scotland - as well as the brilliantly named The Ice Destroyer picked by pupils from Dalmally Primary School.

'The spreaders can be spotted on Transport Scotland's online tracker. We're now looking for a name for another one of our gritters in Argyll and we can't wait to read your amazing entries.'

Primary schools can email their ideas to editor@obantimes.co.uk by Friday February 9.

Seil hut decision goes to hearing

A DECISION on whether to approve a hut built near Clachan Seil without permission by Deputy Lord Lieutenant Graham MacQueen for his disabled wife will go to a local hearing, after a vote by Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee last Wednesday.

The application has drawn significant public interest, including 114 letters of support and 15 in objection.

Holyrood watchdog begins salmon farm inquiry

THE SCOTTISH Parliament has launched an inquiry into the environmental impact of Atlantic salmon farming in Scotland.

The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, which scrutinises the Scottish Government's policies and expenditure, took evidence from the Dunbeg-based Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) on Tuesday. Earlier this month SAMS published its review of the scientific evidence.

'The lochs, voes and sheltered coastal waters of the Scottish West Coast and Western and Northern Isles provide ideal conditions for growing salmon in floating cages,' the report began.

'The aquaculture industry creates jobs. Nevertheless, its growth during recent decades has encountered economic, societal and environmental challenges which are likely to increase as the industry expands

from 163,000 tonnes in 2016 to about 200,000 tonnes in 2020, with the intention to produce up to 300,000 tonnes in 2030.'

The scientists identified many challenges ahead, including the potential for lice from salmon farms to infect wild salmon and damage their populations.

They said: 'More farmed salmon implies more sea lice (and thus more costs for farmers and more impact on wild salmon), unless mitigation improves. Sea lice populations also appear to be developing resistance to many existing treatment[s].'

'There is some evidence some disease is transmitted between farmed and wild fish by direct infection [or] by escapees.'

'Increased numbers and sizes of farms could lead to increased risk of infection of wild fish unless improvements in farm biosecurity and disease prevention outpace the expansion

of production.' Salmon farm organic waste accumulating on the seabed can also significantly degrade communities of seabed (benthic) animals, the report said. 'Sinking particulate organic matter results in a farm 'footprint' on the seafloor. Oxygen demand is much increased as the organic matter is degraded.

Reduced oxygen levels, coupled to the physical smothering effect of the particulates, makes the diversity of the community of seabed (benthic) animals much reduced. This footprint has an area of about half a square kilometre beneath a 1,500-tonne farm. Increased salmon production will lead to increased organic waste.'

There are also concerns salmon escaping from farms could interbreed with wild salmon populations, harming the wild fish. The report said: 'An average of 146,000 cultivated adult

salmon are reported to enter the sea from salmon farms each year in Scotland. The number is likely to be under-reported. The number of survivors is estimated to be significant in relation to numbers of wild salmon in Scotland (about a third of a million).'

'Increase in numbers of farmed salmon is likely to result in more escapees, unless farming practices are change[d].'

Another issue is the deterrence of predators by netting, or acoustic methods, or by shooting of seals, might harm populations of protected marine mammals and seabirds. Birds and mammals, especially seals, may take, injure or frighten farmed fish, or damage nets leading to escapees.

'Seals can be shot under Scottish government licence. Based on reported numbers of seals shot, current mortality levels represent a small proportion of Scottish seal populations.'

'Although current downward trends in seal shootings are encouraging, these may stabilise or reverse in case of significant future expansion of the industry.'

'Acoustic deterrent devices (ADDs), which produce a loud underwater noise, are widely used as non-lethal seal deterrents. There is, however, little evidence concerning the efficacy of ADD. Their use adds to underwater noise pollution, which is known to cause behavioural changes in acoustically sensitive marine mammals, in particular cetaceans.'

'A simple prediction is that effects on predators will increase as salmon production increases.'

'There is an urgent need to further develop and promote alternative non-lethal depredation prevention methods that do not also have such a widespread impact on the surrounding environment as ADDs.'

Lismore driver banned and fined

A 22-YEAR-OLD man from Lismore has been disqualified from driving for 12 months and been fined £400 for dangerous driving.

John Carmichael of Croft 5 Craignich, Lismore, overtook two cars on the A85 between Oban and the Halfway House filling station without a clear view of the road ahead.

The incident, on August 9, 2017, at 7.30am, was captured on an oncoming car's dash cam. Carmichael pleaded guilty to the charge when he appeared in Oban Sheriff Court on January 29.

Sheriff Thomas Ward said: 'If the complainer had not stopped, there would have been a crash.'

In Carmichael's defence, his solicitor Eddie Thornton said his client was heading to Appin to catch a ferry to Lismore. He said by the time Carmichael noticed the car coming towards him, he was already overtaking the second vehicle.

He added the incident was 'totally out of character' and Carmichael 'deeply regrets what happened'.

Ban for dangerous overtaking move

A 36-YEAR-OLD Oban man was found guilty of dangerous driving after overtaking two cars without a clear view of the road ahead.

Kevin Johnston, of 20 Drummore Road, was disqualified from driving for 12 months and fined £300 for the incident, which took place on the A85 near Achnaich Bridge, Connel, on April 28, 2017.

He pleaded not guilty to the charge when he appeared at Oban Sheriff Court on January 29, stating he could see the road ahead.

However, Sheriff Thomas Ward found him guilty after hearing evidence from two police constables who witnessed Johnston perform the manoeuvre.

Sheriff Ward said he thought Johnston might have had glimpses where he could see through the foliage but 'unless you are 100 per cent sure there is not a vehicle coming the other way, this is dangerous driving'.

Johnston was also found guilty but admonished for having tyre treads under the legal depth.

Carol is our lucky show winner

WE HAD a great response to our competition to win tickets to the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show this month - and the winner is Carol MacTaggart, from Polvinister Road, Oban.

Carol wins two tickets to the show, which is once again sponsored by one of Scotland's leading motorhome dealers BC Motorhomes. The show runs at Glasgow's SEC from Thursday February 8 to Sunday February 11. Congratulations Carol!

POLICE FILES with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

A CALOR Gas canister and regulator were stolen from a caravan at Barrarioch Farm, Glencruitten, sometime between Monday January 15 and Sunday January 21. Police are investigating and are appealing for anyone with information to contact them.

AT 10.25PM on Thursday January 25, on the A85 near Connel, a car was seen being driven carelessly after overtaking another vehicle. The car was later traced and stopped by police and the 49-year-old man was charged.

A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT 1.10PM on Friday January 26, a house in Hynish Crescent, Oban, was

searched by police. A 19-year-old man obstructed the search and was arrested. A woman, aged 22, and a man, 26, were both found to be in possession of a small amount of cannabis. They were both charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

A MAN, aged 24, was found to be in possession of cocaine when he was stopped and searched at 1.10am on Saturday January 27 at Queens Park Place, Oban. He was arrested and charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT 10.50PM on Saturday January 27, at a flat on Corran Brae, Oban, a 39-year-old woman breached bail curfew conditions imposed by the court by

failing to present herself at the door for a police check. Police arrested and charged the woman who was held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT 12.05AM on Sunday January 28, at Corran Esplanade, Oban, men, aged 20 and 21, behaved in an abusive and disorderly manner by fighting with each other. The men were arrested, charged and later issued with a recorded police warning.

SOMETIME between noon on Friday January 26 and 10am on Sunday January 28, in a quarry near Ardmor Road, Salen, Mull, the windscreen and front windows of a tipper lorry were

smashed. Police are appealing for anyone with information to contact them.

AT 2AM on Sunday January 28, in Shore Street, Oban, a small group of men damaged a car and behaved in an abusive manner. Police attended and two men, both aged 18, were traced and arrested. One of the men was subsequently found to be in breach of a bail curfew. Both were charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

ANY MEMBER of the public with information in relation to the above, or to any incident, should contact their local police office on 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Plans lodged to turn country house into luxury hotel

PLANS have been lodged to turn an Appin country house, which went on sale in 2015 for £1m, into a high-end hotel with the creation of up to 30 new jobs.

Achara House by Duror could sport 13 luxury bedrooms, a helipad, spa, restaurant and lodges around the grounds if plans submitted by Niall McLean of civil engineers Georpe in Ballachulish are approved by Highland

Council. The applicant's business case explains: 'The re-development of Achara House into a high-end hotel represents a strong opportunity to bring a large revenue generating business to the local area with benefits from direct jobs for the hotel as well as indirect employment for local suppliers.'

'It is projected that on phase one of the hotel's operation at least 12 full-time staff

will be required, with that number raising to in excess of 30 when the later phases are operational.'

'The hotel will offer 13 large, luxurious rooms and will feature a bar, lounge and restaurant. The later phases of the development will include a spa, open to non-hotel guests. There will also be individual lodges/pods high above Achara overlooking Loch Linnhe and buildings throughout the

grounds to cater for weddings and events.'

The hoteliers hope to capitalise on the Highlands' booming tourism: 'As of 2017, there were 16,000 direct tourism jobs and approximately £300 million GVA (gross value added) to the economy in the Highland Council area. This is the highest GVA and employed numbers outside Glasgow and Edinburgh.'

'There were 600,000 over-

seas visitors to the Highland Council area in 2017 and 1.7 million hotel nights, giving 68 per cent occupancy, again the highest outside Glasgow and Edinburgh.'

'Demand for hotel beds regularly outstrips supply and at the high-end of the market there is an acute shortage at peak times. Achara House can be converted to hotel use at a size that is economically viable for its market position.'

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Trust's £25k for Rockfield revamp

THE CRERAR Trust has given £25,000 to Oban Communities Trust (OCT) for the refurbishment of the main building of Oban's Rockfield Centre.

The trust is on track to raise the £3 million needed for the project through many funding options, including the release of community shares due in the spring of 2018.

Crerar Trust chairman Paddy Crerar said: 'We are delighted to have made this award to the Rockfield Centre. Crerar Hotels is committed to giving back to the community to help it grow and thrive.'

Gordon McNab, chairman of OCT, added the Crerar Trust has 'demonstrated its commitment to assisting the local community by awarding one of its larger grant allocations at this crucial stage of our development'.

'While we await other large funding decisions over the coming months, all of which will influence our timescale to start the work, the board is working hard on the planned release of community shares.'

Oban man set fire to vehicle

AN OBAN man has been sentenced to 100 hours of unpaid work for setting fire to a vehicle on Christmas Day.

Billy Kennedy, 19, of 8A Colonsay Terrace, Oban, admitted setting fire to and destroying an abandoned vehicle in a lay-by on an unclassified road between Oban and Kilmore on December 25, 2017. Sentence had been deferred for reports.

Defence agent Jane McLaren told Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday January 30: 'It was a stupid mistake, showing off in front of his cousins.'

Sheriff Patrick Hughes told Kennedy that, despite his 'very positive report', 'fire raising is a very serious offence' which could have prevented fire services from attending a real emergency.

Sheriff Hughes sentenced him to a community payback order of 100 hours of unpaid work, reduced from 150 hours, to be completed within 12 months.

Oban group urges locals to take pride in the town

DAVID MCPHEE
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk

KEEP Oban Beautiful is hoping to make Oban a litter free town by getting everyone involved in its new initiative.

Maurice Wilkins, who regularly organises litter-picks with the group, is asking people to take pride in Oban and help eradicate the rubbish.

Maurice kept a positive attitude after noticing rubbish scattered about the town, saying: 'We can do something about it.'

Writing to The Oban Times, he highlighted a number of

problem areas including McCaig's Tower, Jacob's Ladder, Star Brae and the Black Lynn.

'I went on to the viewing platform at McCaig's Tower,' he said. 'And leaned over the railings along with a number of other people who were enjoying the view. Looking down, the view was less attractive - bottles, cans, carry-out boxes and coffee cups littered the ground.'

'At the foot of the steps I've seen people step over rubbish which has been dropped within ten feet of a litter bin. I walk down Jacob's Ladder regularly and on every visit more rubbish

is evident.' Maurice also noticed litter surrounding Tesco car park, as well as the 'path' up to High Street.

'We know many caring people pick up litter in all of these areas and in other places too, and have done for years,' he added.

'What makes it such a soul-destroying occupation is the knowledge that by tomorrow, the next day or next week it will be just as bad. Picking up the litter is a quick fix but not the long-term solution. The only way to stop it is to educate, to persuade and to reward, to find a way of generating pride in Oban. Let's

get everyone involved, from young children upwards, through primary school, high school and beyond. Let's erect signs or banners to remind everyone of what we'd like to do and let's publicly thank those who do their best to make the town a cleaner place, as befits a beautiful west coast fishing and ferry port and a major tourist destination. Is it possible to imagine Oban might one day be declared a litter-free town?'

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Litter can have a huge impact on the area, causing problems for the

environment as well as having the potential to adversely affect the local economy.'

'Our amenity team works hard to ensure public spaces are maintained to as high a standard as possible but we don't have the resources to tackle the issue alone.'

'We need people to work together to ensure our towns and villages are kept clean.'

'I hope everyone will get on board with this wonderful initiative. Well done to everyone at Keep Oban Beautiful.'

To get involved, search 'Keep Oban Beautiful' on Facebook.

People urged to complain about bins

AN OBAN councillor is urging people to complain, rather than talk, about overflowing rubbish bins in the town.

There has been a recurring problem with rubbish in Oban since three-weekly bin uplifts were introduced in November 2016.

At Oban Community Council's January meeting, councillor for Oban North and Lorn Elaine Robertson pleaded with members of the community to make a formal complaint. She said: 'We have raised it together and raised it singularly. Every time we say what's happening, we are told there are no complaints. People are talking, but they are not putting in a formal complaint. Please, we need your backing.'

Councillor for Oban South and the Isles Roddy McCuish said: 'I asked every area chairperson do you have a problem with your bins and they said no. So why on earth are we having them?'

Referring to Soroba, Mr McCuish said that an area for additional recycling has been identified.

Church coffee morning

OBAN Congregational Church is holding a coffee morning on Saturday February 3.

The event, in the church hall at the top of Argyll Street, will run from 10.30am till 12.30pm with tea, coffee, home-baking and a sales stall on offer.

Proceeds will boost church funds.

Family hails baby CPR training event a success



Emergency service personnel join Fearghas, Natalie and family at the infant CPR training event on Saturday. 17_T05_BabyCPR01

AN OBAN family who almost lost their son last year have hailed an infant CPR training day they organised a success.

Fearghas and Natalie Lafferty's son Murray almost died last year when he stopped breathing. Thankfully, Fearghas knew how to carry out CPR and resuscitated his son while Natalie drove to hospital.

After telling the story to friends, who said they wouldn't know how to do that, the couple decided to organise a training event, which was held in The Rockfield Centre on January 27, from noon until 4pm.

Speaking at the event, Fearghas said: 'It's been really good. Loads of people came to the training and we have raised lots of money for good causes

- Glasgow Children's Hospital and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.'

'I was hoping people would come along and it's been really busy. People have been really generous, so it's good.'

'We planned it as a one-off but we have set up a Facebook page, so if people get in touch, we could organise another one.'

Natalie added: 'Annemarie Pattison from St Andrew's First Aid has been amazing. Lots of people have been impressed by her.'

Natalie and Fearghas thank family members who they 'managed to rope in'.

'All my family have really pulled together,' said Natalie. 'I also want to thank Oban Fire Station.'

Beneath the surface: all the news from SAMS

New project to help protect global seaweed industry

THE SCOTTISH Association for Marine Science (SAMS) is hosting early career researchers from three developing nations as part of our lead role in an international project aimed at helping sustain seaweed farming worldwide.

The scientists from Tanzania, Indonesia and the Philippines will be based at SAMS for six months, where they will work with our scientists on the GlobalSeaweedSTAR project before returning home to begin their own research.

The seaweed farming industry is a key employer in many third world countries. It is Tanzania's third largest industry and employs 25,000 farmers, 80 per

cent of whom are women. Over the four-year project, it is hoped to offer solutions for the threats posed to the industry, such as disease, pests and invasive species.

The project, funded by Research Councils UK, will improve education and networking throughout the industry globally. The research team also aims to learn more about seaweed farming practices worldwide.

University open day for prospective students

SAMS UHI will be hosting an open day for applicants and prospective students on Friday March 2. Visitors will get a chance to meet lecturers and current students and tour the campus. To find out more and to register, visit our website www.sams.ac.uk

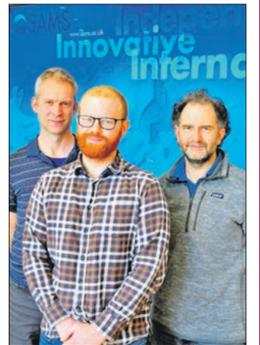
Congratulations, Dr Fraser

A FORMER Oban High School pupil and new SAMS staff member has successfully defended his PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh.

It was a double celebration in January for Dr Neil Fraser, who gained his doctorate shortly after his appointment as a physical oceanographer at SAMS.

Dr Fraser, from Easdale Island, was supervised by scientists from both SAMS UHI and the University of Edinburgh during his PhD on 'Winter time fjord-shelf exchange in Greenland and Svalbard'.

Professor Neil Fraser, centre, with examiner Dr Andy Dale, left, and supervisor Professor Mark Inall.



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Oban and Lorn Dementia support group provides respite for carers

AN OBAN charity has set up a fund to help dementia carers with holidays and respite.

Oban and Lorn Dementia Support Group established the Dementia Care Respite Fund in January.

The fund will pay for someone to cover the carers for a couple of hours and even help towards a few days holiday for the carer and the person they care for.

The group has been in place since June 2015 and is made up of volunteers who are, or have been caring for people suffering from the various forms of dementia.

The committee raises money through coffee mornings,

fashion shows, a stall on Charities Day and collection boxes.

A group spokesperson said: 'We donate money each year to North Argyll Carers Centre to help with the salary of a support worker for people with dementia. There are a lot of people in our area who have been diagnosed with dementia and we intend to keep on supporting them.'

'We are always looking for new people for our committee. We meet around once every six weeks.'

Those interested in joining or finding out more should call the chairwoman on 01631 566425 or the secretary on 01631 563740.



Christine Hammond, Jim Bowers, Anita Marshall, and Pauline Evans, of the Oban Dementia Support Group. 17_T05_DementiaSupportGroup

Snowdrops are a welcome sight

I HAVE snowdrops in the garden, thank goodness. The sight of the wee flowers blooming makes me hopeful spring isn't too far away and this year it can't come quickly enough, writes Oban town ambassador Kay McDonald.

It's been a dreich winter and with all the nasty bugs going about I think everyone will be glad to see it over.

We've also had a look at some of the cruise ships coming to visit and with Oban Live to look forward to as well, the year is showing lots of promise.

Let's just hope it's not as wet as last year.

I spoke last week about the Bid4Oban Customer Service Award as one of the ways we can recognise the good things that happen in the town. But that's not the only way we try to thank those who help to improve our community as we also award the Golden Broom.

Those of us who are slightly older - only slightly - will remember when shopkeepers used to be out every morning, bright and early, with brushes and mops to make sure their premises and the pavement outside were sparkling and ready to welcome customers. There are a good few who still

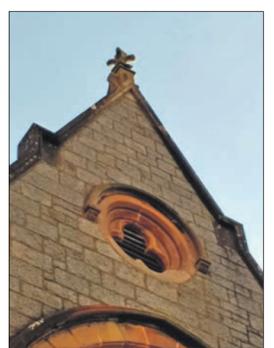
keep up those high standards, which is where the award of the Golden Broom comes into play.

It's our way of appreciating those who make the effort and trying to encourage those who don't that maybe it is worth doing.

Again, if you know of someone who deserves either award, let us know on 01631 569915 or at kay@bid4oban.co.uk or on the LoveOban Facebook page.

The photograph last week was of the British Telecom Building beside the library. This week we're back to the town centre.

WHERE IS THIS?



Campaign launched to save outdoor centre from closure

HARRY MCARTHUR AND SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

CAMPAIGNERS are fighting to save Oban's Kilbowie Outdoor Centre which could be closed by council cuts.

The 25-year-old centre on Gallanach Road, which employs 16 people, is owned and run by North Lanarkshire Council and offers all of the region's primary seven schoolchildren a low-cost, five-day 'education and residential experience' including sailing, hill-walking, canoeing, ski-ing, mountain biking, gorge walking, abseiling and tree climbing.

But it has been earmarked for closure to help plug a £9 million black hole in the council's budget.

A spokesperson told *The Oban Times*: 'No decision has been taken on the future of Kilbowie Outdoor Centre, however, it is one savings option that has been offered by senior council staff for consideration. We are carrying out a public consultation, which will help to influence the difficult decisions that will need to be made on savings.'

The consultation closes on Wednesday February 7.

The council's finances were revealed to be even more dire last week, after cabinet secretary for finance Derek Mackay admitted a blunder in his draft settlement

meant 10 local authorities are getting less than they thought.

The spokesperson continued: 'Since this consultation began, the Scottish Government has corrected an error in its draft budget.'

'On Tuesday January 23 it gave councils updated figures. This update means the council will be £765,000 worse off than we had envisaged and we require to find £8.92 million of savings from the consultation options, rather than £8.16 million.'

North Lanarkshire Council leader Jim Logue (Lab) said it now had to find an extra £700,000 of savings. 'A similar amount of money could protect council services such as the Kilbowie Outdoor Centre, which is so beloved by parents, children and our wider school community.'

Mrs Nikki Galbraith of Tayinloan told *The Oban Times* the centre provides 'a valuable service' for children's development and local employment: 'Kilbowie has, over 25 years, provided children with character building experiences which they could never have access to in the cities where most of them come from.'

'I know of adults whose only 'holiday' as children was at an outdoor centre and the positive

Doors could close on Kilbowie as council cuts bite

memories are still with them. We lost Achnamara Outdoor Centre a few years ago. I hope the same fate does not await Kilbowie. Once these facilities close they are gone forever.'

Campaigners also started a Facebook group called Save the Kilbowie Outdoor Centre and posted an objection letter arguing the centre 'allows children to experience a variety of activities that their home background may not facilitate and therefore can close the gap between the privileged and underprivileged. Kilbowie is the only council-owned residential outdoor centre. Most of the other outdoor activity provision in North Lanarkshire has already been cut.'

'North Lanarkshire schools and other establishments looking for alternatives to Kilbowie will find they are unable to find anywhere in the UK that can provide the current service for less than double the cost. There are no other providers in the UK that will offer a reduced

rate for pupils on free school meals or clothing grants. This will effectively put any similar experiences out of financial reach for these families.'

'The council has just completed a major refurbishment on the exterior of the building, costing more than £1 million. Closure of Kilbowie would effectively be a waste of this recent spending.'

The building, on Gallanach Road opposite the island of Kerrera, was formerly a residential hostel for children from the islands attending Oban High School.

It sits next to Kilbowie House, a Victorian, grade B-listed mansion recently converted into eight luxury flats costing up to £250,000 each.

One parent, Carole Henderson, who grew up in Tarbert but now lives in Cumbernauld, said: 'It would be a fantastic place to have a house, but for the benefits it achieves for young folk, it is far too much to give up just for someone to have a nice view.'



A youngster enjoys tree climbing during a stay at Kilbowie. But the outdoor centre has been earmarked for closure by North Lanarkshire Council which is facing difficult decisions on where to save money.



Permission granted for new Loch Awe country house

A LONDON architecture firm has been granted permission to build a country house on a site overlooking Loch Awe.

Denizen Works Ltd described the project as 'a seven-bedroom family home to accommodate our clients and their extended family with large entertainment

spaces, including room for an 18ft Christmas tree.'

The house is inspired by Scottish country residences of the past.'

But the building south of Dalnally has received mixed reviews on an Argyll-based Facebook group. One user said:

'It's quite a beautiful design, actually. Not to everyone's taste, I'm sure, but then nothing ever is.' Another person claimed: 'I'm all for modern architecture, but this looks like something my wee boy created in Minecraft.'

Murray Kerr, a director of Denizen Works, said: 'I'm glad the house is provoking healthy debate. We had a similar situation with a house on Tiree which was not to everyone's taste. It went on to be voted by the public as one of the best Scottish buildings of the past century and I believe the new house on Loch Awe will have a similar impact.'



MP O'Hara signs Holocaust book

ARGYLL and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara, above, has signed the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment.

In doing so, he has pledged his commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day and honouring those who were murdered during the Holocaust as well as paying tribute to the extraordinary Holocaust survivors who work tirelessly to educate today's young people.

Turn to page 10 for more.

Dunbeg upgrade gets under way

WORK costing just under £2 million to upgrade the problematic Kirk Road in Dunbeg is under way.

The area has been plagued by pot holes and a lack of street lighting and pavements. The upgrade is part of the Dunbeg Corridor Strategic Masterplan, which plans to build 600 homes between Dunbeg and Ganavan.

The first phase of the revamp, to install a new water main, started on Monday this week.

Work to remove trees to allow for the widening of the road is due to start on Monday February 5.

Traffic management will be in place for the duration of the work and there is the possibility of very short-term road closures during the tree felling.

Chairman of Dunbeg Community Council Sean MacIntyre said: 'It should have been done four years ago before

the houses were put in, as was promised. But I am just grateful it's happening now for the safety of the school children, dog walkers and people with prams.'

He added: 'The pot holes will be filled in and they are finally getting rid of the chicanes. I think they are going to put in a couple of sleeping policemen.'

'Hopefully it will be finished on time. I know they are three to four weeks late on starting. 'Hopefully we can also see a better bus service. If the buses can go down to the lab, why can't Marine Court get a better bus service?'

Kirk Road is the first area to receive money from the Scottish Government's Housing and Infrastructure Grant. It will be used to widen the road to six metres, with a three-metre footpath and cyclepath on one side and a three-metre verge on the other.

Chairwoman of Oban, Lorn

and the Isles Area Committee councillor Elaine Robertson, said: 'These improvements will make a real difference to the local community and will enable this very important housing development to be progressed. Not only will Kirk Road be widened, but a pavement and street lighting will also be installed. These are things the community have told us are important to them. 'We want to encourage people to live, work and visit this beautiful area and are committed to economic growth that benefits everyone. During the work, traffic management will be in place and we thank everyone for their patience and understanding while improvements take place.'

As well as the road improvements and 600 homes, the master plan includes retail and commercial development, green spaces, play parks and landscaping.

Argyll MSP welcomes action on road

ARGYLL and Bute MSP Michael Russell has welcomed a commitment by Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland, its operating company for north west trunk roads, to take 'immediate action' to repair sections of the A83 that have deteriorated badly this winter.

Mr Russell has been making representations

to Transport Scotland and the Transport Minister for several weeks following a sharp increase in complaints.

Sections around Inveraray, near Invernell and at Arrochar are badly potholed and road users have reported a number of incidents of burst tyres and damage to suspension.

MP renews call for government to halt RBS closures

ARGYLL and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara has called on the UK government to stop the Royal Bank of Scotland's (RBS) planned programme of closures.

Branches due to be shut this year include those in Inveraray and on Barra.

In a debate at Westminster on Wednesday January 24, Mr O'Hara repeated his call for the government to use its power as the largest shareholder to intervene and stop the 'socially damaging' closures of the branches in Inveraray, Rothesay, Campbeltown and on Barra.

And he launched a scathing attack on the RBS 'hatchet-men' for their lack of consultation with the communities affected before embarking on the decision to close 62 branches in Scotland, including the three in his own constituency of Argyll and Bute.

Mr O'Hara vehemently condemned RBS for its 'shameful betrayal of rural

communities' and warned the UK government it will be complicit in that betrayal if it refuses to intervene.

During the debate, Mr O'Hara asked Treasury Minister John Glen: 'Will the UK government choose to get involved or will it ignore the overwhelming opinion of the people of Argyll and Bute and choose to abandon my constituents to the RBS hatchet-men? My constituents want to hear from the government that it will bring Ross McEwan to the Treasury to tell him that, in the interests of our communities, the brutal branch closures will not go ahead. Anything less than that and the UK government will stand accused of being complicit in the shameful betrayal of rural Scotland.'

After the debate he said: 'Given that you, the taxpayers, are the majority shareholders, I would have expected RBS to consider the effects these closures will

have on these towns. Inveraray, a tourist hotspot, will be left without a bank. What do cafes and shops do with their daily cash transactions? How will overseas visitors change their currency to spend in the town? I, along with Argyll and Bute Council, Highland and Islands Enterprise and many others have worked hard to get over the message that we are open for business. This is just another kick to rural towns who already face enormous economic challenges.'

He added: 'I recognise the way we do banking is changing with the increase in online banking, but I would seriously question RBS's own figures for customer footfall. We have to remember many people still rely on face-to-face dealings with their bank - businesses with cash to deposit, the elderly, those with learning difficulties and those with no access to online banking.'

NHS appeal over flu outbreak

NHS HIGHLAND is asking people not to visit family or friends in hospital if they have flu symptoms or are in contact with someone with flu.

Catherine Stokoe, head of infection control for NHS Highland, said: 'Flu is circulating and it is really important everyone plays their part in limiting the spread.'

'We ask that hospital visits are limited to two visitors per patient and that children under the age of 16 and pregnant women refrain from visiting. We also ask that anyone with flu or respiratory symptoms don't visit hospitals or care homes.'

High school helps NTS celebrations

THIS year sees the 40th anniversary of the National Trust for Scotland's Angus Members' Centre.

One event to mark the occasion, on Friday March 23, is a Scottish concert at Glamis Castle from 7pm to 10pm.

Among the musicians performing is a group from Oban High School which was part of a project supported by the Angus Members' Centre some years ago.

A83 overnight closures ahead

THE A83 trunk road at Strone Point near Inveraray will close overnight for four nights from 9pm to 5am from Monday February 5.

Drivers will be diverted via the A819, A85 and A82. However, emergency vehicles will be granted access at all times.

The closures are part of BEAR Scotland's £1.6m improvements to the A83, involving realigning 360m of carriageway, which started in December.

Three phases of road closures will be required over the duration of the 28 week project. The next stage of the road closures are expected for late February.

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Western Isles

CREATIVE Scotland announced that An Lanntair, the major arts centre and creative hub for the Isles of Lewis and Harris, will receive £1.21 million in funding from its Regular Funding Programme for 2018-2021.

The award recognises the significance and diversity of An Lanntair's performing arts, cinema, exhibitions and music programme.

An Lanntair chief executive Elly Fletcher said: 'The team and I are delighted that Creative Scotland has recognised the importance of An Lanntair as a centre and hub for the arts, locally and nationally, and has made this crucial investment in our future.'

'This award belongs to each and every staff and board member who has worked so hard to achieve this recognition, every audience member who has engaged with and supported our programme, and all the incredible, talented artists out there who continuously create, produce and challenge us all through their work.'

Audiences can expect to see An Lanntair continue to grow its many world-class festivals and events. With new funding, the organisation will embed its role as a go-to support space for new and emerging artists and creative businesses, offering structured programmes of mentoring and opportunities for creative practitioners to develop their practice, share and network among each other, and create opportunities for showcasing the work of Hebridean artists far and wide.

An Lanntair will focus significant efforts on developing its role as a lead organisation for the Gaelic arts in the islands, supporting the growth of both contemporary and traditional Gaelic performing and visual arts and artists.

David Green, An Lanntair's chairman, said: 'The award of regular funding for the next three years is fantastic news for An Lanntair, especially when funding for the arts in Scotland is under such pressure.'

'Creative Scotland has shown faith in us, based on our achievements to date and the commitments we made in our application and business plan. Our brilliant team of staff will justify that faith, and An Lanntair will grow and flourish as never before.'

Appin

APPIN SWI's first meeting of 2018, a Corners Night, was held in Port Appin Hall on Thursday January 18.

It was a craft event with each corner making a poppy using a different craft.

Doreen Evans was in charge of the crochet corner, Linda MacLeod the knitting corner and Brenda MacLeod took the paper-making corner.

The patterns for the knitting and crochet poppies were created by the Scottish Co-op, which supports the ex-servicemen's charity, Poppy Scotland. 'It was a very enjoyable and productive evening,' the organisers said.

The result of the competition for three pieces of rocky road was: gold – Jessie MacKenzie and silver – Catriona MacKenzie.

Kilbrandon

KILBRANDON SWI kicked off the new year with a presentation by Siobhan Rafter, owner of ME, MYSELF I beauty salon in Oban.

Siobhan gave members advice on skin care and the importance of exfoliating, cleansing and moisturising. She also advised on nail care and answered questions about beauty products.

Siobhan is highly qualified in a whole range of treatments ranging from facials to reiki and massages. It was a very interesting evening.

Oban

THE Oban and District Provincial Mòd 2018 takes place on Friday and Saturday, June 1 and 2.

The closing date for entries is Thursday March 29 at 5pm. It is essential that organisers receive the full entry fee at the same time as the entry form.

The syllabus for both children's and adults' competitions will be published as soon as possible.

For more information, contact Duncan.MacNeil@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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Taynuilt



Adele Clark and her partner Andy Moore.

Adele runs up £1,000 for charity

A TAYNUILT-BASED runner's campaign to raise £1,000 for a mental health charity by covering 100km in January has received a £500 boost from local fish farm company Dawnfresh.

Adele Clarke has battled depression for much of her adult life and decided to take up the challenge to raise funds for MIND – a mental health charity. Throughout the month of January, she was running a combined total of 100km around the village of Taynuilt.

The campaign had reached a quarter of its £1,000 target when Dawnfresh Farming approached Adele with a donation of

£500. She had hoped to reach her donation target before the end of the month.

Adele said: 'I've had issues with depression and anxiety for much of my 20s and recently opened up about it in my blog – Nest and Dressed.'

'I was overwhelmed by the support I received and wanted to do more to raise awareness of mental health problems, particularly in my local area.'

'I'm still very much a beginner when it comes to running but that's the point. You don't need to be a professional athlete to get outside and run, jog or walk. I've had some great

support from local people, with friends and family joining me for runs and many generous donations.'

'My partner, Andy, works at the Dawnfresh site on Loch Etive and when I started the RED January challenge, he approached his bosses to see if they would be interested in supporting me. Neither of us were expecting such a generous donation and it's really great to see a local company supporting local people in this way.'

Alison Hutchins, farming director for Dawnfresh, said: 'We want to make sure our staff feel supported, particularly when it comes

to mental health. So, when Andy first told me about Adele's challenge, I knew this was something we had to support.'

'Most of our team are from the local area and we feel a deep connection to the community. To see the support Adele has received throughout the village was inspiring and the donation was the least we could do in getting her to that overall target.'

Adele is encouraging Oban residents to either donate via her Just Giving page (www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nest-and-dressed) or join her for a run and see the benefits for themselves.

Kitzsteinhorn



The Oban Times reached new heights recently ... 3,203 metres to be precise! Taking the newspaper on their skiing trip were, left to right, Edie and Alex Elliott and Ella and Ruaridh MacKechnie. Thanks to Lyndsay Elliott for the picture.

Islay

CHANGES to postal services on Islay are set to take place in order to make banking and mailing easier for residents.

The Post Office is planning on operating two new services in Ballygrant and Portnahaven, which would see both being used during set times as hosted outreaches. They are also planning on relocating the Bowmore branch 300m round the corner inside the Re-jig.

Kenny Lamont, Post Office area manager, said: 'We are making it easier for customers to get their cash, send and collect their mail and do their banking because we know how important these services are to local residents.'

For the Ballygrant and Portnahaven branches, Lamont explained: 'We are confident that this new hosted outreach service at the heart of the local community will meet customer needs. In order to restore services as quickly as possible we are planning to start the hosted service on Monday February 5. However, this does not affect the period of public consultation which is ongoing until March 2.'

On Mondays, the Portnahaven service would be available in the morning between 10am and noon; the Ballygrant service would operate early afternoon during the hours of 1.30pm to 3.30pm. The proposal suggests that the postmaster for Bowmore Post Office would run these services.

The branch relocation for the Bowmore branch would allow an extra 21 hours a week for the post office to operate. The opening hours would be 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 12.30pm on Saturday. These hours would mean an end to the early closing during the week as it would be open on Saturday mornings.

Mr Lamont said he is, 'confident that this relocated post office at the heart of the local community will meet customer needs'.

The services in Ballygrant and Portnahaven are set to start on Monday February 5, and the relocation for Bowmore is set to open today (Thursday February 1). There is a six-week consultation period between the Post Office and customers during which the Post Office are open to feedback on these proposals.

Mull



MULL entrepreneur Morven Gibson got a global boost to her business this month after being chosen to attend one of the world's most renowned executive education courses.

Morven, general manager at the South West Mull and Iona Development, will join three other entrepreneurs from the Highlands and Islands for the Entrepreneurship Development Programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston.

Morven, who is being sponsored by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), said: 'It is going to be a fantastic experience and extremely beneficial to our community, giving us the tools to build effectively on our success and share experiences with the other participants.'

Kirsten Logue, HIE's account manager for South West Mull and Iona Development, added: 'In taking part, she will gain the inspiration to take strategic decisions about the future of South West Mull and Iona Development.'

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At Random

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Delighted to see M&S coming

ISN'T it great news that Marks and Spencer is coming to Oban? The high street giant unfathomably refuses to confirm that it is to open a food hall in what was the Lidl store in the Lochavullin retail park but it is officially now the world's worst kept secret.

Demolition – or reconstruction, to be more accurate – has begun, local people have apparently been recruited to work in the new shop and we have seen the planning application on Argyll and Bute Council's website.

M&S recently opened in Fort William and admitted it has been keen to add an Oban outlet to its portfolio.

The good people of Oban and its surrounding areas will no doubt welcome the news, which shows a considerable optimism for the future of the local economy.

Yes, we are already pretty well served with Tesco, Lidl, Aldi and other stores, but increased competition is generally a good thing and keeps them all on their toes.

If I have any concerns, it would be for the small, independent shops – our butchers, bakers and so on. They often operate to tight margins and I'd be very sorry to see any of them suffer.

However, many of us frequent the independents as much as possible, while also shopping at the bigger supermarkets.

What a load of rubbish in Oban

THERE is never any shortage of issues to get me hyperventilating in righteous anger.

The latest is the seemingly never-ending saga of the failing refuse collection system, particularly in the Oban area.

Those poor souls who live in Soroba have easily been the ones suffering the most since Argyll and Bute Council brought in its three-weekly system of waste collection.

It simply doesn't work.

This system has now been in place for well over a year – in fact, since November 2016 – and has been the source of nothing other than anger, mess and problems for a cross-section of the population.

The council has made excuse after excuse for 14 months but still the misery goes on.

This week I walked past split open rubbish bags in the town centre – in Tweedale Street, to be precise – yet that is but a drop in the ocean compared to the mountains of rubbish in Soroba.

When is the council going to admit it got this wrong?

What a mess our roads are in

THE condition of many of our roads is a disgrace.

I make no apology for returning to this subject, having banged this particular drum on a number of occasions recently.

Despite numerous stories and an active campaign, the surfaces of many roads – even on the main arterial routes – have continued to deteriorate to the point where driving on them has become dangerous.

Cars are being damaged by the countless deep potholes and drivers are only narrowly avoiding collisions as they swerve across the carriageways to try to prevent thumping down into the craters.

But it is not just hazardous for motorists. We have had reports of pedestrians being hurt by flying chips of tarmac thrown up by passing vehicles.

I heard last week – though I cannot confirm it – that police were so worried about the state of the A85 main route through Connel on Thursday that they had issued an ultimatum to BEAR Scotland to fix it immediately or the road would be closed.

BEAR Scotland, to be fair, has a planned programme of repair work but this situation is awful and should never have been allowed to become this bad.

I trust the relevant authorities will act urgently to fix these roads.

What do you think?

WRITE to me at mlaing@obantimes.co.uk or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4 HB.

Memories of the West Highland Line

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

THE dramatic images showing a train derailed by a landslide between Glenfinnan and Lochailort last week must have brought back many memories to an older generation who used the line with the nonchalance of London commuters boarding a coach at Victoria.

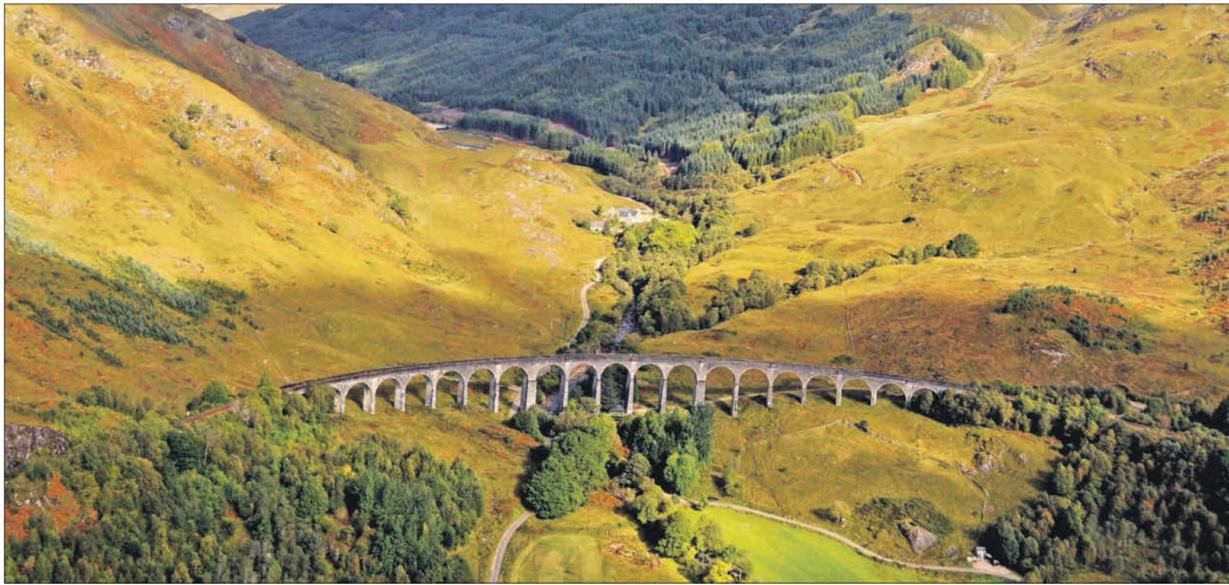
Doubtless the locals enjoyed the scenery just as much as the visitors, but for them it was often the wit and bonhomie of the characters who worked on this famous route which was its enduring attraction.

When a Bill was introduced in parliament in 1894 by the West Highland Railway Company to build a line from Fort William to Mallaig, it met with stiff opposition from Inverailort estate owner, Mrs James Head, who maintained that it would cut her deer forest in half and disturb the fish and the spawning beds in Loch Eilt.

Mrs Head raised a petition in the House of Commons against the course, which included a bridge over Loch Eilt at its narrowest point between Easan and Ranachan. She failed but when the railway company entered her property at the Glenfinnan end she managed to halt the work for 12 weeks, maintaining that the noise made by the navvies blasting the rock embankments would disturb a high-value deer-stalking lease. For this and the loss of land, she settled out of court.

Some of the compensation went into building a large stone jetty at Camus Driseach on Loch Ailort for the benefit of those travelling by boat to and from Roshven, Ardnish and Glenug. More importantly, perhaps, it preserved her privacy. The jetty is still there but little used nowadays.

One of the concessions, granted in perpetuity to the proprietors of Inverailort, which her lawyers stuck out for, was the right, with prior notice, to stop the train at a private halt near



The West Highland Line at Glenfinnan. Photograph: Iain Thorner

the most easterly boundary of the property between the Muidhie and Glenfinnan. This was very useful for stalking parties going to and from the deer forest when the public road was little better than a river-bed.

The concrete halt was removed in the 1970s when larger diesel locomotives were introduced, but the right to stop the train, apparently, still exists although it has not been exercised for some time and probably never will be again given its close proximity to the fine A830.

In the 1930s, the driver of the regular steam train was a keen violinist. He had a friend, also a musician, who was one of Mrs Head's shepherds and lived at Easan.

One day, when the train was carrying cattle from Mallaig and the Isles to Corpach for a forthcoming sale, the driver found he was running

ahead of schedule, so decided to stop at Easan for half an hour or so. Soon a fiddle and a dram were produced and the time flew by.

After a few hours, he thought he had better continue on his way but, on re-boarding the engine, he discovered that the boiler fire had gone out. As there was no dry wood to rekindle it, he and his friend stripped some of the heather thatch off the roof of a nearby byre. That wasn't a success so they let the cattle out of the wagons and onto the croft to graze, and retired to the house for another tune and a dram.

Meanwhile, the Fort William stationmaster, assuming that the now long overdue train and been derailed, set off in another engine only to discover the happy pair still swapping tunes. The driver was sacked on the spot and Mrs Head, who disapproved strongly of her

employees drinking, dismissed the shepherd.

The outcome resulted in both moving into Fort William where one of them opened a tobacconist's shop and the other began selling meat. They were such good businessmen that it wasn't long before they had a chain of successful shops and hotels scattered throughout Lochaber, which are still owned by their respective families.

Long before the railway came to Lochaber, local landowners and big farmers used to send their sheep away for wintering, accompanied by a shepherd.

Returning home after one such excursion, Alistair MacAlister, another of Mrs Head's shepherds had an awful tale to tell. On the way he was driving his flock over an area of open country at a place where the

hills were gradually getting lower and the glens widening out into grassy straths.

In the gloaming, Alistair found himself near a rounded hill. There he became aware of a terrible underground rumbling, so great that he maintained the earth shook. Then, suddenly: 'Out of a hole in the hill', announced Alistair, 'burst forth the ancient enemy of mankind, roaring and breathing smoke and fire and a clanking of chains. And he had a green eye and a red eye; and he was roaring and raging right upon me. And in the hour of fear I knelt in the road and minded to make the sign of the cross over me; and hardly was I finished with the making of it than he gave an awful damned screech and a wail and ran away with his chains and his big roaring, into another great hole in the hillside.'

Such was the effect of a railway engine coming out of one tunnel and going into another with a warning whistle on an old Highlander who had never seen a train before!

Before the arrival of the box-ticking brigade and at a time when everyone helped one another, life was a lot more fun.

Twenty or so years ago, I met a lady, whose father had been in charge of the railway between Perth and Aberdeen, who told me that often during the autumn, he allowed his train drivers to stop their engines on the moors to let the tourists out to pick heather.

On Inverailort estate, up until about 1960, stalkers, coming off the hills with a stag or a hind, and arriving at the railway line on the shores of Loch Eilt, would often flag down the Mallaig train. The carcasses would then be loaded aboard with the help of the guardsman and put off at the Lochailort station, thus sparing someone having to walk several miles round the loch to the opposite shore to fetch a boat.

Of course, every Christmas Mrs Cameron-Head made sure the railway staff had a haunch of venison each. It suited everyone until some awestruck visitor, not being in the way of seeing a yeld hind, still in its fur coat, lying in the corridor, complained.

The porter at Morar station seems to have been a great character and was often described as being worth 'a guinea a minute'. As he loaded his barrow, he would usually give a running commentary for the benefit of the villagers who had gathered to see who was coming off the evening train.

His best always came about Christmas when friends and old customers sent presents. 'A case of whisky for the doctor, a case of whisky for the schoolmaster', and then, with a great flourish, 'a case of books for the minister - leaking'.

Iain Thorner
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Mrs James Head successfully halted the West Highland line for 12 weeks (photograph: Highland Archives, Fort William); left, the River Ailort at Arieniskill beside the West Highland Line and Lochailort. Photographs: Iain Thorner

Islay prepares to honour war dead

ISLAY schoolgirl Isobel Ferguson this week played at the grave of Private Roy Muncaster of the 20th Engineers (Forest) regiment in the US Army, as national and local commemorations for the First World War were launched.

Private Muncaster is one of hundreds of soldiers and crew who died when the British ship SS Tuscania, carrying American troops, sank off the coast of Islay. He is the only US soldier still buried on the island.

Islay will host a year-long programme of events marking the island's contribution to the First World War and the loss of two British troop ships carrying American soldiers to fight alongside the Allies. The sinking of SS Tuscania and HMS Otranto off the island's coast saw around 700 US servicemen and British crew members killed.

Taking place on Friday May 4, the WW100 Scotland day of commemoration, in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, forms the centrepiece of the programme, with a service taking place at the American monument on the Mull of Oa followed by a public service at Port Ellen war memorial, where dignitaries will lay wreaths in honour of Islay's war dead.

Community events will take place on Monday February 5 and Saturday October 6, 100 years to the day since the sinking of the SS Tuscania and the HMS Otranto respectively.

As well as the valiant rescue efforts of the community when the ships went down and efforts to give the dead proper burials, the events will remember the 1100 who served and around 200 who died during the war.



Isobel plays her pipes at the grave of Private Roy Muncaster.

Lord George Robertson of Port Ellen, whose grandfather was the police sergeant on Islay at the time, said: 'My maternal grandfather, Malcolm MacNeill, had the distressing job of reporting what had happened and attempting to identify the bodies, noting any distinguishing marks that could help identify the drowned men. There were so many bodies that their descriptions filled 81 pages in his notebook.'

'When they were finally buried, it fell to my grandfather to correspond with the families in the United States. They wrote with information which they hoped could be used to identify the bodies of their sons, husbands or brothers, and, in an extraordinary example of compassionate public service, my grandfather replied to each letter, providing what information he could.'

WW100 Islay chairwoman Jenni Minto said: 'Every village on Islay lost men in the Great War but the SS Tuscania

and HMS Otranto disasters brought the war directly to Islay's shores. In addition to remembering the soldiers and crew who died in these tragedies, the Islay 100 programme recognises the contribution made by the local community to the rescue of survivors and its dedication to respectfully burying the casualties.'

'It is also an important opportunity to reflect on the loss of Islay's own throughout the war. At the time, Islay had a population of around 6,000, approximately 1,000 of whom went to war. Sadly, more than 200 did not return and the impact on the community was significant. Our aim is to leave a lasting legacy that can be revisited by individuals and communities in the future.'

On February 5, a commemorative service will be held at the island's American Monument on the Mull of Oa, followed by a ceremony at the graveside of Roy Muncaster in Kilnoughton Commonwealth War Graves

Commission Cemetery, where many of the dead from the SS Tuscania were temporarily buried. There will be a Gaelic bible reading, piping by Isobel Ferguson, and singing by pupils of the Port Ellen Primary School Gaelic Choir. A reception will be held at No 1 Charlotte Street, where survivors of the sinking were billeted.

On October 6, a service and wreath-laying ceremony will be led by the minister at Kilchoman Military Cemetery, where the HMS Otranto casualties were laid to rest and many of the crew still lie, followed by a reception at Kilchoman Distillery.

Carrying more than 2,000 US troops to Europe, SS Tuscania was on its way from New Jersey to Liverpool when it was torpedoed by German submarine UB-77, sinking off Islay and Northern Ireland on February 5.

On October 6, HMS Otranto sank near Machir Bay after a collision with HMS Kashmir. Many lives were saved after heroic rescue missions, not least by the Royal Navy who on the fateful night of the sinking of SS Tuscania rescued some 1,800 US servicemen.

However hundreds of American troops and British crew members perished - around 210 from the Tuscania and 470 from the Otranto - with many of the bodies washing up on Islay. The Americans were reinterred at Brookwood cemetery and memorial in Surrey or repatriated to the United States. The American monument, a lighthouse-like tower above the Mull of Oa, was commissioned by the American Red Cross.

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Viewpoint



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

The news this week that Barra's police officers have been awarded two accolades for exceptional work as they supported the island community after the devastating terrorist bombing at the Manchester Arena in May is fantastic news.

The Barra community team received the Team of the Year as well as the Deputy Chief Constable's award at Tuesday's Scottish Policing Excellence Awards.

At the event, Deputy chief constable Rose Fitzpatrick said: 'The tireless efforts of our colleagues – recognised by their peers and managers through their nominations

– all contribute to our aim of keeping Scotland's people safe. The achievements of all those nominated are an inspiration.'

And we would echo that sentiment. There is no amount of training that could have prepared them for the level of care they offered the families of Eilidh MacLeod and Laura MacIntyre and the wider community following the attack at Manchester Arena. But the compassion, time and selflessness with which they obviously went about their work is humbling and inspiring. We congratulate each one of them.



Days gone by – 1937

Iain Thornber sent us this atmospheric picture, which, he said, shows 'a deer forest in September: Black Mount, Rannoch Moor. Photograph by Seton Gordon 1937'.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL
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THIS piece, while not a direct reply, was aroused by the correspondence which appeared in the letters to the editor a few weeks ago in which the writer made comment on the Highland Clearances.

The wrongs of the past should not be the cause of bitterness or aggression in the present or the future but neither should they be forgotten and they should certainly not be denied.

The period of the Highland Clearances, while complex, was a cruel chapter in our history and it was preceded and followed by a sustained attack on the Gael that has lasted well into living memory. There is no doubt that some who emigrated before, during and after the period referred to, did so willingly and with the hope of a better life.

However, there is similarly no doubt that tens of thousands were forced, against their will, to leave their homes and their homeland in brutal fashion.

The following is a translation from Gaelic of the eyewitness account of Catherine MacPhee, Iochdar, South Uist, of the South Uist Clearances of 1848, taken from Carmina Gadelica, Volume 3 by Alexander Carmichael.

'Many a thing I have seen in my own day and generation.

'I have seen the townships swept, and the holdings being made of them. The people being driven out of the countryside to the streets of Glasgow and to the wilds of Canada, such as them that did not die of hunger and plague and smallpox while going across the ocean.

'I have seen the women putting the children in the carts which were being sent from Benbecula and the Iochdar to Loch Boisdale, while their husbands lay bound in the pen and were weeping beside them, without power to give them a helping hand, though the women themselves were crying aloud and their little children wailing like to break their hearts.

'I have seen the big strong men, the champions of the countryside, the stalwarts of the world, being bound

on Loch Boisdale quay and cast into the ships as would be done to a batch of horses or cattle in the boat. The bailiffs and the constable and the policemen gathered behind them in pursuit of them.

'The God of life and He only knows all the loathsome work of men on that day.'

As well as eyewitness accounts that were recorded at the time such as the one above, there are many hundreds of songs that exist to this day, written at that time, describing the extent of the mass clearings and the ruthless manner in which they were implemented. Some will be featured in next week's article.

There were very few corners of the Highlands and Islands that were not affected and the scars of this sad episode can be clearly felt to this day.

The Highland Clearances were a stark reflection of the worst traits of humanity and, given their significant role in driving the Gael to the edge of existence, they should be remembered as the very dark period of human history they were.



Social media

The design of a new country house on the shores of Loch Awe sparked plenty of comments.

Kenny Harris: 'I think it'll look great, they can't all be like fairy tale castles or something off a shortbread tin forward thinking and innovative just what's needed....'

Justin Forsythe: 'That's never a county house, a city house for a city maybe?? Its not very fitting in to the shores of awesome!!'

Duncan John Blainey: 'In the link it is a private house. So only one person needs to like it the one who's paying for it.'

'Why should it look like everything else. Nothing would change cars, clothes and hair cuts.'

'You sometimes need to like things for what they are not just for your taste.'

I like its style would not build one for myself but like it.'

And plans, revealed at a public meeting of Oban Phoenix Cinema last week, to develop a new second screen, shower, kitchen and genderless toilets, prompted a lively debate.

Mandy Anfield: 'I was at the agm and they are looking to offer showers for people passing through town. Exactly the same as the new development on the pier. The outside is a disgrace at the moment. It looks manky and you'd hardly know it was a cinema.'

Angus Telfer: 'It's losing its identity as a cinema.'

Nikki Warham: 'ITS A CINEMA! Why do they insist on changing so much stuff? They seem to want to do anything but

Press policy

WE AT The Oban Times endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please

let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timeous, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with

our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

Fantastic care at Lorn and Islands Hospital

Sir,
Recently I had to have a procedure done at Lorn and the Island General Hospital in Oban and I cannot praise the nurses and doctor enough.

We are well aware that the NHS is struggling and we hear all that is negative and little that is positive. Those of us who live in this area of Argyll are lucky to have very good service in that we have a shorter waiting time than a lot of areas, and an excellent hospital with hard-working staff.

So, to all the staff in ward A, the doctor and nurses in the endoscopy theatre on January 23, I give you my bouquet and thanks for your professionalism and care.

Ruth Hawke,
Isle of Mull.

Beautiful Oban is blighted by litter

Sir,
I notice from talking to people and from posts on Facebook that an increasing number of residents are becoming exasperated by the amount of litter which pollutes our pavements and public places.

The street sweepers do a great job in keeping George Street and nearby areas as clean as possible, but you only have to leave the sea front and within 50 feet the rubbish is a serious problem. I went on to the viewing platform at McCaig's Tower the day after the Hogmanay fireworks display and leaned over the railings, along with a number of other people who were enjoying the view. Looking down, the view was less attractive; bottles, cans, carry-out boxes and coffee cups littered the ground.

At the foot of the steps I've seen people step over rubbish which has been dropped within a few feet of a litter bin. I walk down Jacob's Ladder regularly and on every visit more rubbish is evident, mostly thrown over the fence by those who use the two seats, or dropped beneath the seats by those who can't be bothered to throw it.

Down below you can see cans lodged in the bushes, clothing caught up in the trees and years-worth of rubbish down the banks and lying behind the distillery wall.

Another of my favourite paths is Star Brae, a useful route if I'm going down in the direction of Tesco or Homebase. This path, with its wonderful views, is ruined by the amount of rubbish which is dropped here or thrown over the fence.

If, at the bottom of the Brae, you cross over into Gibraltar Place, you will be met by more rubbish, both at the entrance of Tesco car park and along the bank behind the recycling bins, while around the bins themselves regular heaps of recycling or rubbish are piled.

The car park is no better, with litter in the shrub beds, the trolley parks and the informal path up to the High Street, which is a disgrace. The car park on the other side of Lochavullin Road is no improvement and this leads up natural-

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
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GED A THA MÒRAN geamhraidh fhathast romhainn, saoilidh mi gum bheil mi a' faicinn beagan de shnuadh earraich is mi a' sgrìobhadh seo air madainn shocair, shoilleir, agus nach sinn a tha a' cur fàilte air a leithid! Cha b' iongnadh ged a bhiodh sund dhaoine beagan iosal ri linn na droch aimsire a th' air a bhith a' leantainn fad sheachdainean a-nise, agus nuair a chuirear sin an lùib naidheachdan duilich mu bhàs charaidean is eòlaich, 's e toiseach car dubhach a th' air a bhith air a' bhliadh' ùr. Nach math ma-thà togail fhaotainn a leasachadh aimsire, agus le solas an latha gu follaiseach a' sineadh tha fhios gum bu chòir dhuinn ùrachadh dòchais agus spioraid fhàireachadh.

Ach cha ghabh fìorachd seachnadh, agus dhan mhòr-chuid de shluagh na dùthcha tha naidheachdan gainnid agus an tuilleadh ghearraidhean air ionmhas poblach na fhìor adhbhar iomagain. Chan eil lasachadh air an fhàsghadh air seirbheisean poblach, eadar na tha comhairlean a' libhrigeadh, neo seirbheisean slàinte, neo an taic airgid dha carthannais a tha cho

ly to the much-maligned Black Lynn, a dumping ground for all the usual rubbish with the addition of supermarket trolleys. Rafts of bottles and cans clog the surface of the burn – far more, I expect, have sunk to the bottom.

Other parts of the town suffer equally, I'm sure, but these areas are the ones I know best. Can it be that many passers-by have become used to the situation and no longer notice it?

So what is the purpose, you may ask, of yet another letter on the subject of litter? We know that many caring people pick up litter in all of these areas and in other places, and have done for years. What makes it such a soul-destroying occupation is the knowledge that by tomorrow, the next day or next week it will be just as bad.

How come I'm writing under the banner of Keep Oban Beautiful when our professed intention is to stay positive at all times? The answer to that question is simple – we can do something about it!

Picking up the litter is a quick fix but not the long-term solution; the only way to stop it is to educate, to persuade and to reward, to find a way of generating pride in Oban. We discuss this on the Keep Oban Beautiful Facebook page.

Let's get everyone involved, from young children upwards, though primary schools, high school and beyond. Let's erect signs or banners to remind everyone of what we'd like to do, and let's publicly thank those who do their best to make the town a cleaner place, as befits a beautiful West Coast fishing and ferry port and a major tourist destination.

Is it possible to imagine that Oban might one day be declared a litter-free town?

Maurice Wilkins,
Keep Oban Beautiful.

Disputing impact of salmon farms

Sir,
Given that Salmon & Trout Conservation (S&TC) commissioned its report from the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA), it is not surprising that it confirms its claims that sea lice from salmon farms are killing wild salmon and sea trout. After all, that is exactly what it paid for. NINA conveniently failed to include anything that might contradict S&TC claims about the impact of salmon farming.

According to S&TC, the River Awe last year recorded the lowest number of fish since 1964. However, the rivers Tweed and Tay also recorded some of the worst fishing for decades. These rivers are located far from the nearest salmon farm.

Your article (*The Oban Times*, January 18) states that 'the review of more than 100 scientific papers found that up to 50,000 wild salmon die as a result of the parasites in Norway'. This is something I would dispute but will make an assumption here that NINA is correct.

I also note that Dr Dianne Baum of the Lochaber Fisheries Trust (as well as Andrew Graham-Stewart (of the

S&TC) say that the sea lice in Scotland are the same as those in Norway. Therefore, applying the same conversion of deaths per tonne of production as in Norway (one dead fish for every 24 tonnes of production) and applying it to Scottish rivers, then the number of deaths of wild migrating salmon (smolts) expected would be 7,500 fish per year.

This equates to about the same number of eggs produced by one wild hen salmon. More relevantly, while the expected total mortality of smolts in Scotland due to salmon farming would be 7,500 smolts, the number of adult breeding salmon and sea trout killed in 2016 by anglers for sport was 9,096. It seems that Mr Graham-Stewart and his fellow anglers are doing more damage to wild fish stocks than any salmon farm.

A long-term study of the impacts of salmon farming in Ireland found that the mortality of wild salmon smolts due to sea lice was just one per cent. By comparison, 95 per cent of wild salmon smolts currently die before they are able to return to their home rivers, even when their home rivers are located hundreds of miles from the nearest salmon farm. S&TC conveniently ignores this huge mortality, preferring to deflect the blame onto local salmon farms.

Dr Martin Jaffa,
Callander McDowell, Manchester.

A82 road is in a terrible condition

Sir,
Having read Rob MacCallum's letter ('Argyll roads have never been so bad', *The Oban Times*, January 18), I would suggest he avoids travelling between Fort William and Spean Bridge.

I can almost guarantee it will frighten him more than any of the latest hi-tech rides you find at a theme park.

Just how Transport Scotland and its agent, BEAR Scotland, can just carry on replacing road surfaces without investigating the failures on some of the not-so-old surfacing work seems a total waste of money.

Is it narrow carriageway widths or lack of foundations that is one or more reasons for the diabolical state of our only major connection between Fort William and Inverness? And is it really all about the harsh winter weather?

In the mountain areas of France, a much bigger country than Scotland, it has the kind of severe winters that we have, but their road surfaces are far superior when compared with the A82.

If the specifications are right and the workmanship is acceptable, then will the government make the urgent decision and start spending our money wisely instead of seeing year after year resurfacing over poor infrastructure.

Thankfully, we now have CityLink's luxury coaches, which help to cushion the A82's imperfections, as we use to think we were riding on Blackpool's old wooden roller coaster.

Alan Robinson,
Spean Bridge.

Ailean Caimbeul

curomach anns gach dòigh feadh choimhearsnachdan na dùthcha. Nuair a thòisich na caomhnaidhean seo bho chionn beagan bhliadhnaichean bha an riaghaltas a' gealltainn nach maireadh am pian ach fad beagan ùine agus gun tilleamaid gu suidheachadh nas cofhurtail agus nas adhartach nuair a bhiodh cumntasan ionmhas air an cothromachadh. Chan e a-mhàin nach do thachair sin ach tha na gearraidhean a' sìor dhol am meud gach bliadhna ionmhas agus tha seirbheisean a' fulang chun na h-ìre 's gum bheil cùisean a' dol air ais seach air adhart! Tha mi a' creidsinn gun aontaicheadh a' mhòr-chuid gun robh beagan saill ann am maoinicheadh bhuidhnean poblach roimhe agus nach bu mhiste teannachadh a dhèanamh orra gus an dèanadh nas èifeachdaiche. Ach an dèidh bhliadhnaichean den spùilleadh air an cuid airgid cha ghabh e bhith nach eil obair nam buidhnean sin a-nise a' fulang. Ri linn sin tha luchd-pàighidh chisean a' call agus cha tèid aig buidhnean poblach air an dleastanasan dhan t-sluagh a choileanadh. Chan e glaoth ùr sam

bith a th' ann cluinntinn dhaoine ag èibheach gur còir stad a chur air taicean eillean gus an t-airgead a chur an sàs a' càradh thuill air na rathaidean, ach 's e dealbh gu math dorcha a th' againn mura tèid aig tè de na dùthchannan as beartaiche air an t-saoghal air a cuid sluaigh a fhrithealadh ann an dòigh nas buannachdaile. Càite neo cuin a thig crìoch air an t-suidheachadh?

Chan eil farmad idir agam ris na buill thaghte air comhairlean agus buidhnean poblach a dh'fheumas co-dhùnaidhean doirbh, agus cràiteach, a dhèanamh a' roinn sporain ghann!

ANY lingering new year euphoria must be seriously dented by the reality of continuing swingeing cuts in public sector budgets.

The majority of taxpayers do not believe that 'further efficiency savings' are possible, and as they face more diminution in services it is perfectly understandable that they should be asking when and where this will end.

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

Your letters

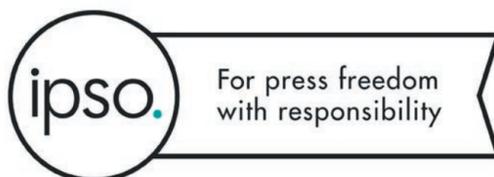
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The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith.

A daytime telephone number

is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed.

Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk



Keeping our communities healthy



Over the coming year The Oban Times will be running a series of fortnightly articles championing the work carried out by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles locality. Each article will feature a specific service provided by the HSCP and will focus on the staff who provide that service and the role they play in making a positive difference for the people living in Oban and surrounding areas.

THE HSCP itself only came into being in 2016 when, as part of Scottish Government policy, health and social care services were integrated across Scotland. In Argyll and Bute, this meant that all health services provided by NHS Highland and social work services provided by Argyll and Bute Council were integrated to form the HSCP. This new partnership has an integrated budget of more than £260 million.

In the Oban area, the HSCP provides a whole range of health and social care services and the one that many of our readers will be most familiar with is Lorn and Isles hospital. Lorn and Isles hospital is a rural general hospital, one of three in NHS



Highland, opened in 1995. It provides acute services to Oban and the surrounding area, as well as medical and surgical services to a population of approximately 43,000 people, a number which increases significantly during the tourist season.

It hosts visiting specialists from Glasgow and serves as a hub for specialist treatment and diagnostic services for Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership. There are

three wards, HDU facilities and a full rehabilitation facility as well as 24/7 Accident and Emergency service, backed up by continuous medical, surgical and anaesthetic consultant cover, and 24-hour theatre availability. The out-of-hours GP service operates from the hospital and is integrated with A&E.

Diagnostics include endoscopy, X-ray, ultrasound and CT, echocardiography and cardiac diagnostics, pulmonary function

testing, and on-site 24-hour haematology and biochemistry laboratories.

Chemotherapy is given in a new Macmillan unit, and there are dedicated physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, podiatry and community paediatric units. The Oban Dental Centre is on the hospital site.

There are a number of specialist consultant-led clinics such as dermatology, oncology, oral, orthopaedics/fracture, ob-

Lorn and Isles hospital is one of three in NHS Highland and provides acute services to Oban and the surrounding area, as well as medical and surgical services.

stetrics/gynaecology, ENT, respiratory and ophthalmology.

All of these services are delivered by clinical staff who are assisted by administration and support staff who also have a key role in the hospital.

Lorn and Isles hospital is the most visible sign of the activity carried out by the HSCP but there are also a wide range of health and social care services delivered within the community, including within people's own homes. These are provided by social workers, community nurses and a range of allied health professionals. The HSCP also works closely with other partners and stakeholders, including Argyll and Bute TSI to build stronger resilient neighbourhoods, deliver community-based support services all to support people's health and wellbeing.

Caroline Henderson, who manages the services provided by the hospital, said she is really excited about working with *The Oban Times*, saying that all staff have a key role to play in the delivery of health and social care services and they all help deliver high quality professional care for the local communities they serve.

She added: 'These forthcoming articles are a great way to highlight the good work that staff carry out and the challenges they face in delivering services in a remote and rural setting.'



Inspector Julie McLeish and David Bracken at the event.



PC Lauren Bradley on controls and Chief Superintendent Hazel Hendren taking part in the Wii Challenge.

Police Scotland wellbeing event well supported in Lochgilphead

POLICE in Lochgilphead held a successful wellbeing event for their officers and staff based in Argyll and Bute last week.

The official event was well attended and supported by police officers and staff, with many thanks to all the local service providers, police partners and local businesses which attended to offer their support.

These included David Bracken, artistic woodturning and custom drums; Becky Dale of Kilmartin Museum; Madge and Danny

Dobbie of Starlight Therapies providing sample sessions of reiki and kinesiology; NHS senior improvement specialist Jennifer Dryden; Argyll Pharmacy pharmacist Susan Paterson providing health advice and promoting the many services of the pharmacy; Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service; ArtMap Argyll; MAYDS; Argyll and Bute Youth Services; Heart of Argyll Wildlife; and MS Centre Lochgilphead.

Also from the wider police

support network was the Police Credit Union, Axa and Optima and PMAS (Police Mutual) attended to distribute literature and discuss their services.

The healthy soup and homemade bread were well received, as was the home-baking donated by staff and police friends. 'The Jump' Wii Fit ski competition was extremely popular and the divisional commander, Hazel Hendren, especially enjoyed demonstrating her newly acquired skills.

Police Scotland is committed to the health and wellbeing of its staff and their families, ensuring that they have support on a wide range of issues.

The emergency services perform a role that cannot be compared to any other job and is undeniably an essential service for our local communities.

The wellbeing of Police Scotland officers and staff is fundamental to the delivery of policing in Scotland and staff are Police Scotland's primary asset.

Partnership opens up awards to all staff

LAST year Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) introduced an awards programme for nurses and midwives to recognise excellence in the delivery of care by this group of staff.

And the programme was so successful the HSCP has decided to widen the awards so that they are now open to all staff.

Liz Higgins, lead nurse for Argyll and Bute HSCP, who launched the awards last year, said: 'In 2017, we launched our Nursing Excellence Awards for nurses and midwives working for Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership.'

'We were really pleased by the high standard and number of nominations that were received, and were delighted to present awards to a number of worthy

winners. There was huge enthusiasm for the awards last year and a very positive response from practitioners. Due to this success we have decided to widen the awards so that all HSCP staff have an opportunity to be recognised for the contribution they make.'

'If members of the public would like to nominate a particular HSCP employee whom they feel has gone the extra mile, then the nomination forms and guidance, including a list of the various categories, can be accessed on our website: www.bit.do/ABexcellenceawards

'We have a great team of people working for the HSCP, both in our hospitals and the local community, and they make a real, positive difference across Argyll and Bute.'

'It is therefore only right that

we recognise this through these excellence awards and I look forward to reviewing the nominations once again.'

The categories are:

- Nurse/Midwife of the Year
- Therapist of the Year
- Social Care Worker of the Year

- Admin Secretarial Worker of the Year
- Support Worker of the Year
- Pat Tyrrell Award for Caring Behaviours

- Chief Officer's Outstanding Contribution to Health Social Care
- Outstanding Individual
- Outstanding Team
- Patient/Service User Choice Award

Nominations will close on Friday March 2. The winners will be informed by March 9.



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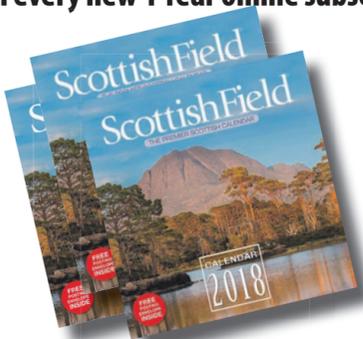
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Remembering the Roma

This year's theme for Holocaust Memorial Day, which took place on Saturday, was the power of words. Here, Jess Smith, pictured below, a researcher in Scottish traveller history and author of a number of books on the subject, sheds light on the ill-treatment of the Roma people down the centuries, which eventually led to their suffering at the hands of the Nazis.

THE ROMA people of Europe call it PORRAIMOS (the devouring).

It is believed that the Romany people of Europe emerged from north-west India more than 1,000 years ago. They travelled across the countries working as metal smiths, entertainers and traders. In the fifth century, they travelled to Persia (Iran) and began trading from northern India to southern Europe, living mainly in tents. The first official mention of the Romany people was in Serbia in 1345.

Little is known about them as individuals and, as they wandered from place to place, a lot of fear and suspicion followed in their footsteps.

It is known that their craftsmanship was superior to local metal smiths and this led to guilds complaining to the church and state about the intrusion of the Roma. They were soon relegated to a position of an outcast minority and faced banishment from one country to another. They also were advanced in medicinal herbs and their children were never ill, which led to ignorance and people saying that the Romany were in league with the devil who looked after them.

They were denied citizenship because they refused to assimilate and integrate.

They had their own beliefs and would not conform to those of the state.

Between 1416 and 1774, laws and decrees were passed in German states against Romanies.

In 1554, English law imposed a sentence of death for simply 'being' a gypsy.

In 1709, the district of Ober Rhein ordered the Romany to be deported.

In 1714, Mainz decreed that all captured Romany men be executed.



Since they first appeared in Europe their existence has been marred in such a way that the image of the 'thief', 'vagabond' and 'rogue' has only volumised.

Generations believed this forced the 'wandering foot' to remain an alien in his own land.

Simeon Simeonis, a monk visiting Crete in 1322, says: 'They scarcely ever stop in one place more than 30 days ... they move from field to field, with their oblong tents, black and low, like the Arab.'

In 1528, Martin Luther edited a small book on them titled *Liber Vagatorum*. He admits that he did not write the book but it was the first volume of propaganda to make an impact on monarchs across Europe, including Britain.

Luther writes: 'I have studied the "cant" language of these people and there is no doubt it is "Hebrew".'

This was to lead to the belief that both of these groups were an insult to mankind and should be annihilated.

With the Nazi rise to power and their belief in the pure blood of the German race, came the desire to control and eventually wipe out groups who did not conform to this 'ideal'.

They included Jews, criminals, the institutionalised,

handicapped and, of course, the Romanies. Later they were to add the Poles.

Early 1933 saw the passing of two laws dealing with the 'Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring' and 'Regulations for the Security and Reform of Habitual Criminals and Social Deviants'.

Romanies were involuntarily sterilised.

In 1939, the round-up began.

The mass deportation began in May 1940, when 2,500 German Romany were deported to Poland.

In November 1941, 5,000 Romanies were gathered for extermination in a camp setting for the first time.

In Auschwitz, the Romanies were tattooed with a camp number, their heads were shaved and their possessions taken away.

45772, 40298, 28229 and 36116 were the numbers tattooed on Romanies who went to Auschwitz, Ravenbruck and Buchenwald.

How many? Any reliable figures are impossible to validate. Before being rounded up into ghettos and then removed on to camps, groups of Romany were being massacred by roving death squads.

The collation of known figures gives a total of 200,000 murdered, starved or dying.

Adding those who died from 'euthanasia' programmes, forced labour or 'enemy action', the figure could rise to 500,000 but every year more and more evidence comes forward, so who knows what the actual figure was.

It has taken the Romany people years to heal the scars left by the Nazi genocide.

For more information about Jess Smith and her work, visit www.jesssmith.co.uk



These photographs of Romany people during the Second World War are published from the Robert Dawson Collection with thanks.



Argyll National Trust for Scotland group launches Facebook page

THE Argyll Members' Group of the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) has now launched a Facebook page where members can be kept informed of the activities of the group.

Search for Argyll Members Group, National Trust for Scotland on Facebook.

The group is open to all members of both the NTS and the National Trust. Its purpose is to support the work of NTS

by bringing local members to get together for events and outings, and raising money for the trust.

Lunchtime talks are a regular feature, there is a Christmas lunch and also an annual four-day summer holiday to different parts of Scotland to visit NTS properties and other sites of interest.

This year's holiday in June will be heading north and be based in Dornoch, visiting

places such as Inverewe Garden, Dunrobin Castle and Fort George.

Details of all the events can be found on the new Facebook page.

Group chairman Dr James Fenton said: 'We are always looking for new members and would encourage all trust members to join.'

'This new Facebook page is a great asset which enables members to keep abreast of

our activities, and which also provides a forum for local trust members to post their own pictures and stories.'

Argyll National Trust for Scotland properties within the local area are Arduaine Garden (pictured below), Crarae Garden, Iona, Staffa, Burg (on Mull) and Glencoe.

For further information, contact James Fenton at jamesfenton362@btinternet.com or phone 01852 300545.



The National Trust for Scotland has many properties in Argyll, such as Arduaine Gardens, near Oban.

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Workshop focus on cyber security

AS THE digital world grows, so too does its impact on business.

As a result, the need for online security becomes an even greater priority for every organisation, large or small. It's a common misconception that some businesses are too small to be attacked.

A UK government survey in 2017 found that more than a third of firms with two to nine employees had experienced a cyber security breach or attack.



In 2015, a Scottish hairdressing business was hacked, which resulted in a loss of all their appointment data.

Improving your cyber security doesn't mean you need to be an expert in IT or digital technologies. There are many simple actions that will reduce the risk to your business.

Business Gateway Argyll and Bute is now offering a free workshop to help small businesses improve their cyber resilience.

The new Cyber Security Digital-Boost workshop will take place during March in Dunoon, Helensburgh,

Lochgilhead and Oban. To find out more or to secure your place, call 01546 808363 or email business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

Business Gateway can also offer advice to those not able to attend. It might sound obvious, but making sure that all of your software is up to date is vital because updates include the latest security patches from the developer.

Changing passwords regularly is also important, as is being aware of

the signs of phishing emails. Another trick scammers use to make their emails look credible is by using logos of well-known brands. If an email asks you to click on a link to provide your bank details or other personal information, alarm bells should be ringing.

Securing your customers' data is essential. You should take the time to review individual areas of your business.

New regulations on data protection

will come into force on May 25 and you should be aware of how they will impact your business. The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) raises the standards of how data is obtained and how it is stored so if you haven't already looked into this, you should start now.

Business Gateway has a range of free downloadable guides on its website. Go to www.bgateway.com/business-guides/grow-and-improve/digitalboost-guides



Fiona and Ali Campbell at The Larder at Arrochar.

Firm has a taste of things to come

THE owners of an Arrochar craft gallery showcasing the work of independent designers have been thrilled by the response to their new venture which offers customers the very best of Scottish food and drink.

Mansefield Studios, run by Fiona Campbell and her husband Ali, has been operating for 15 years selling a range of lambswool accessories, textiles, ceramics, jewellery, Harris tweed homeware and other traditional crafts.

Earlier this year, with support from Business Gateway Argyll and Bute, Fiona decided to expand their offer and open The Larder, selling high quality Scottish produce including artisan chocolate, condiments, smoked salmon, meats and gin.

Based in a former store room for the gallery, The Larder has proved to be a hit with regulars as well

as visitors to the area since it opened in May.

Fiona said: 'The gallery presents the work of independent, Scottish craftspeople and makers and we have carried that ethos across to The Larder. We promote local and independent producers as much as possible, benefiting from the exceptional food in Argyll and letting others know all about it. We came up with the idea for The Larder as we felt the area needed a food and drink outlet, not just for the tourists but the local community also.'

'Business Gateway has been a big help to us as we sought to expand the business. We were given growth grant support which will help the business become a destination and we received one-to-one which helped us with a number of areas including digital and online marketing.'

As well as the gallery and The Larder, Fiona has added in a children's play area, an ice-cream bike and exterior seating.

She has also seen an increase in online sales of the soft furnishings and accessories which she hopes will continue over the long term.

Fiona added: 'Our aim is to become a destination for all the family and, given the response we've had this summer, I think we're well on our way to achieving this.'

'In addition, we want to ensure our online shop continues to do well and increase our customer base from outwith the local area.'

'To find out more visit www.mansefieldstudios.co.uk or for advice on how Business Gateway can help your enterprise, call 01546 808363 or visit www.bgateway.com/argyll-and-bute.



Zero Peden Ltd based in Dunoon was launched by Eloise and Craig Peden.

Dunoon company is going places

A HUSBAND and wife team are using their own experiences to set up a business leasing and repairing mobility vehicles.

Zero Peden Ltd based in Dunoon was launched by Eloise and Craig Peden last year after the couple realised they could fill a gap in the market and help people with mobility issues get around the town more easily.

With support from Business Gateway Argyll and Bute, the business is now steadily increasing its customer base with plans to expand.

The idea for Zero Peden came when Eloise, who has spina bifida, wanted to take part in family days out with Craig and their children. Buying a second-hand mobility scooter, Craig, a mechanic, repaired and adapted the vehicle to make it more fun and reflect Eloise's personality.

The couple realised there were many more people like them in the area, including older people who struggle to walk long distances and began the process of finding premises and sourcing vehicles that could be hired out.

Now, Zero Peden Ltd has a workshop and office at Alexandra Parade and have begun hiring out scooters to locals and visitors to the town.

Eloise said: 'We know what it's like to live with a disability and that's why we want to provide solutions that will help people.'

'Business Gateway were a great support and we have benefited from one-to-one advice and the free workshops in the area.'

Craig added: 'We aim to be as flexible as possible and help our customers make the right decision for them. Already we have a mix of

people as customers and the feedback has been great.'

'We feel like we are moving in the right direction and hopefully this continues. Our ultimate aim is to also sell brand new vehicles which we can then adapt to suit each person's individual personality and needs.'

Barbara Halliday, of Business Gateway, said: 'Eloise and Craig prove that you can set up a business that offers solutions to people based on personal experience.'

'With our advice, fully-funded workshops and DigitalBoost programme, Zero Peden Ltd is now up and running and looking forward to future success.'

To find out more about how Business Gateway can help you set up and develop, call 01546 808363 or visit www.bgateway.com/argyll-and-bute.

Oban Airport is base for new air business

OBAN Airport is to be the base for a new airline business offering flying lessons and sightseeing trips.

Cloud Global Group, an aviation specialist firm which owns Perth airport operator ACS, has announced the acquisition of Border Air Training, a flying school business, gift experience provider and aircraft charter business.

Having offered specialist flight training from its offices in Cumbernauld and Carlisle for the past 25 years, the business incorporates the newly re-branded and re-energised airline Fly Scenic Scotland, as well as Fly Scenic Lake District.

Operating a range of sightseeing flight experiences suitable for both the consumer and corporate markets, the airline has added new routes, launched a new web-

site and added Oban Airport as a new location at which to board.

Border Air also provides aircraft for a range of specialist activities such as agriculture, construction, photography, surveying, observation, patrol and aerial advertisement.

'Although already a well-established business in its field, Border Air and Fly Scenic Scotland offer us yet more scope for expansion and development, as we continue with our strategy of developing various divisions of aviation,' said Graeme Frater, director of Cloud Global Group.

'We are delighted to announce the acquisition, and have immediately launched a new logo and website with easy secure payment options for Fly Scenic Scotland,' he added. 'We have quickly made significant new connections in Oban, where there is now the po-



Graeme Frater, managing director of ACS Aviation.

tential to link up with tour group operators, cruise ship providers and the incentive market.'

Cloud Global will additionally be looking to recruit and train

more pilots for Border Air, with the future aim of developing a commercial arm.

Launched in 2010 and specialising in flight training, aircraft

maintenance, leasing, component support and aviation recruitment, Cloud Global has a fleet of more than 20 aircraft, a staff of 30 and a turnover of £4 million.

Oban woman Fiona meets singing star

A SLIMMING World manager from Oban was congratulated on helping slimmers to lose weight and change their lives by singer and TV presenter Peter Andre.

Fiona Manwell, who manages Slimming World groups in Oban, was delighted to get a chance to meet Peter when he presented the annual Slimming World awards. The singer co-hosted the event with the organisation's founder and chair Margaret Miles-Bramwell OBE.

Fiona said: 'I couldn't be prouder of the members in Oban. Throughout 2017 they have lost fantastic amounts of weight, with many of them hitting their target weights, improving their health and boosting their confidence. 'It's so rewarding to see people



Fiona with Peter Andre.

being able to do things that they didn't think were possible before losing weight, whether that's having more energy, feeling happier, wearing smaller clothes, taking up new hobbies, reducing medication or doing more with their family and friends.'

Your ambition. Our support. Together we can make your new business happen.

Free, practical advice and support to help start your business. Call your local office on 01546 808 363 or visit www.bgateway.com/argyllandbute



Arena

> radio and what's on listings > leisure ideas > local events

WHAT'S ON

IN OBAN

In partnership with Oban Town Diary
bid4oban.co.uk



Thursday

1st February
Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club
Royal Hotel
Admission £4
7.30pm

Friday

2nd February
Intermediate Food Hygiene
Argyll College
9am-11am

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans

Crooked Reel from 9pm
Free entry

Saturday

3rd February

Coffee Morning
Oban Congregational Church Hall
10.30am-12.30pm

Intermediate Food Hygiene

Argyll College
9am-11am

Roller Disco @ Atlantis Leisure

£4.10 including skate hire, £14.50 for a family of 4
Bring your own skates (with rubber wheels only) for a discounted rate.
10-10.45am to 11-11.45am

Cèilidh na Clionne/Children's Cèilidh

Masonic Lodge
Admission £5
Under 5's free, family ticket at door
7.30pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans

Chunks from 10pm
Free entry

Cearcall Còmhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group)

Furan Gaelic Centre,
12pm-1.30pm

Pool Inflatables Sessions @ Atlantis Leisure

8 years and over and must be able to swim 2 lengths of the pool.
12.45-1.30pm - £3.30

Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban

DJ The latest and greatest hits.
Party the night away until 2am

Sunday

4th February
Intermediate Food Hygiene
Argyll College
9am-11am

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans

QUIZ NIGHT at 9.30pm
£1 per person, max of 6 per team
Win £20 bar voucher
Watch out for the £100 cash prize accumulator

Monday

5th February

Intermediate Food Hygiene
Argyll College
9am-11am

Oban Photographic Club Meeting

Regent Hotel
7.15pm-9.30pm

Tuesday

6th February

Intermediate Food Hygiene
Argyll College
9am-11am

Irish Dancing Classes

St Columba's Cathedral Hall
4.15pm-5.45pm

Wednesday

7th February

Intermediate Food Hygiene
Argyll College
9am-11am

Practical Basic Book-Keeping

West Highland Housing Association, Oban
Please call to reserve space 01546 604551
10am-3pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban

First Lorne Pub Quiz of the year
Starting at 9pm

£25 bar voucher prize and free pizza at half time

WHAT'S ON

IN OBAN

WHAT'S ON

IN OBAN

WHAT'S ON

IN OBAN

Argyll gardens blossom as part of festival

TWO Argyll properties are set to open their gardens to the public as part of one of Scotland's most spectacular outdoor garden festivals.

Blossoming across the country until March 11, the Scottish Snowdrop Festival comprises of more than 50 events nationwide, with venues displaying carpets of snowdrops in their gardens and woodlands, signalling the end of winter and the promise of spring.

Organised by garden tourism organisation Discover Scottish Gardens, the annual festival is supported by VisitScotland and Scotland's Garden Scheme.

Local venues taking part in the festival include Ardmaddy Castle near Seil and Maolachy's Garden in Lochavich, near Taynuilt.

Located south of Oban, the walled gardens at Ardmaddy are shielded by mature woodlands and visitors can enjoy a range of rare and unusual shrubs and plants, as well as the snowdrops.

Meanwhile, Maolachy's Garden by Taynuilt boasts three acres of woodland garden at an altitude of 450 feet.

Now in its 12th year, the Snowdrop Festival helps to encourage locals and tourists to enjoy the wonders of Scotland's gardens during the snowdrop flowering period and to highlight the diversity of the country's array of snowdrop collections.

Over the years, many Scots have fallen in love with the versatile herbaceous plant, scientifically known as Galanthus. There are now over 2,500 named varieties of the winter flower and its adaptability and hardiness means it grows in a great range of locations across the world.

Research shows that around one in three visitors to Scotland make a trip to a forest or woodland park during their stay while 43 per cent visit a country park or garden.

Catherine Erskine, chairwoman of Discover Scottish Gardens and founder of the Snowdrop Festival in Scot-

land, said: 'We are very lucky in Scotland to have a fantastic climate for snowdrops, with many species thriving here and creating stunning displays.'

'Many of the festival venues are within the grounds of some of the country's most historic buildings with beautiful surroundings. Adding snowdrops to these landscapes create a spectacular sight for any visitor.'

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland regional director, added: 'Over the 12 years, the Scottish Snowdrop Festival has grown to become an annual highlight with the arrival of these dainty little flowers heralding that spring is just around the corner.'

'It's great to see these properties included as part of this year's line-up, as the festival provides a welcome boost for the local area during a traditionally quieter period of the year. I hope as many people as possible will get out and about to enjoy this great seasonal sight.'



The Oban Times supports local charities and not-for-profit event organisers

Let us know about your forthcoming event to appear for free in our listings, in association with Oban Town Diary.

We have reduced our community noticeboard box adverts to just £10 plus VAT (where VAT is applicable)

Put your event in front of 25,000 readers and also see what we can offer you by promoting your event online - we have more than 11,000 followers on Facebook and 36,000 monthly visitors to www.obantimes.co.uk

It pay to advertise with The Oban Times - first for community news, business news and events throughout Oban, Lochaber and the West Highlands.

Contact Nadine or Rhona on 01631 568000



Artists give stamp of approval to Erraid

AN ARTISTS collective called 6°West has released four unique postage stamps created to commemorate the life and work of Robert Louis Stevenson and his connection to the Isle of Erraid.

Formed in 2011, artists Anne Devine, David Faithfull, Alicia Hendrick and Mhairi Killin lived in the lighthouse-keepers' cottages during their time on the Erraid, a tiny island off the south-west of Mull. They individually pursued their own perspective on the history and topography of the

island landscape. Incorporating Stevenson's relationship with the island, where, in his youth, he contemplated his future as a writer and traveller.

Funded by Creative Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council and Aodana, the Erraid residency will embark on a small touring exhibition of the four unique stamps and accompanying prints.

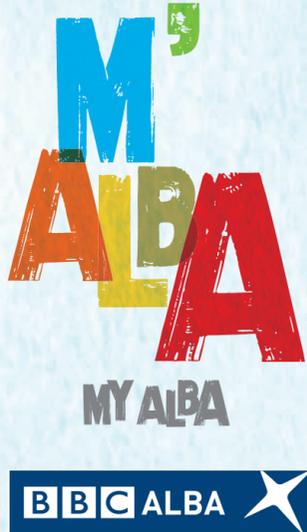
For further information contact 6°West at sixdegreeswestinfo@gmail.com or visit www.6degreeswest.blogspot.co.uk



6°WEST artist member David Faithfull on Iona posting a letter featuring one of the four unique postage stamps created by the collective following their residency on the Isle of Erraid. Photograph: Mhairi Killin

Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details.

To list your event, please call **01631 568000**



DIARDAOIN 01 GEARRAN

THURSDAY 01 FEBRUARY
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **Eileanan Fraoich** - Eigge (rpt)
19.35 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **ÙR/NEW: Balaich a' Bhiobaill**
21.15 **DIY le Donnie** (rpt)
21.45 **Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Aimsir** (rpt)
22.00 **Gaol @ Gael** (rpt)
22.30 **ÙR/NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich** - competitive fishing around the world
23.20 **Binneas - Na Trads** (rpt)
23.25 **Air an Rathad** (rpt)

DIHAOINE 02 GEARRAN

FRIDAY 02 FEBRUARY
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
18.35 **Maichair** (rpt)
19.00 **An Là** - News

19.25 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)
19.30 **Aibisidh** (rpt)
20.00 **Òran na Mnà** (rpt)
20.30 **Kerry is Kirsty: Caol Reatha gu Drochaid Sheille** (rpt)
21.00 **Splaoid nan Cioabar** (rpt)
22.00 **Third Lanark** (rpt)
23.00 **Aghaidh ri Aghaidh** - Pepsi v Coca-Cola (rpt)
23.50 **Dhan Uisge** - Cuan Sound (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 03 GEARRAN

SATURDAY 03 FEBRUARY
16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
17.35 **Maichair** (rpt)
18.00 **ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership** - Heart of Midlothian v St Johnstone
20.00 **Aibisidh** - Quiz Show (rpt)
20.30 **Turas a' Bhradain** (rpt)
21.00 **Ceòl Country** (rpt)
22.00 **Fleasgaich an lasgaich** - competitive fishing around the world (rpt)

22.45 **Binneas - Na Trads** (rpt)
22.55 **Scottish Premiership** - Heart of Midlothian v St Johnstone (rpt)

DIDÒMHAICHA 04 GEARRAN

SUNDAY 04 FEBRUARY
16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
18.30 **Seachd Là**
19.30 **Alleluia** (rpt)
20.00 **Balaich a' Bhiobaill** - students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)
20:45 **Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Èideadh** (rpt)
21.00 **Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach** (rpt)
22.00 **Ceòl Country** (rpt)
23.00 **Aghaidh ri Aghaidh: Puma v Adidas** (rpt)
23.50 **Dhan Uisge** - Cuan Sound (rpt)

DILUAIN 05 GEARRAN

MONDAY 05 FEBRUARY
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** -

Children's programming
19.00 **An Lot** (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **ÙR/NEW: Kerry is Kirsty: Asainnte**
21.00 **ÙR/NEW: Trusadh** - Gin: Spiorad an t-Sineabhair
22.00 **Port** (rpt)
22.30 **Air a' Chanàl** - Calum and Niall Iain explore Scotland's canals (rpt)
23.30 **Gaol @ Gael** (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 06 GEARRAN

TUESDAY 06 FEBRUARY
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **Eileanan Fraoich** - Eigge (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **ÙR/NEW: Leugh Mi**
21.00 **ÙR/NEW: Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach**

22.00 **Trusadh - Gin: Spiorad an t-Sineabhair** (rpt)
23.00 **Òran na Mnà** (rpt)
23.30 **Alleluia** (rpt)

DICIADAIN 07 GEARRAN

WEDNESDAY 07 FEBRUARY
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **An Lot** (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **ÙR/NEW: Turas a' Bhradain**
21.00 **Air a' Chanàl** - Calum and Niall Iain explore Scotland's canals (rpt)
22.00 **Air an Rathad** (rpt)
22.30 **Port** (rpt)
23.00 **DIY le Donnie** (rpt)
23.45 **Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Èideadh** (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 08 GEARRAN

THURSDAY 08 FEBRUARY
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming

19.00 **Eileanan Fraoich** - Raasay (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **ÙR/NEW: Eòrpa**
21.00 **DIY le Donnie** (rpt)
21.45 **Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Deoch** (rpt)
22.00 **Cuirim @ Celtic** - The Great Gathering (rpt)
22.30 **ÙR/NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich** - competitive fishing around the world
23.15 **Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan** - Gavin James
23.25 **Air an Rathad** (rpt)

Your local radio listings

OBAN FM Community Radio - your local radio station
Tune in to 103.3 or listen live at www.obanfm.com

For requests, competitions or questions please email: studio@obanfm.org.uk or call us on 01631 570057

MONDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 9.00 Monday Morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds on Monday, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland Fling with Rosie Macoll, 20.00 John McLuckie's Show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Station close down

TUESDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday Morning, 13.00 Macky on FM, 17.00 Drivetime Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest Praise - Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Archie Darlings Mix, 22.00 Clyde 2

WEDNESDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 09.00 Sound Scottish Repeat, 10.00 Comfort Zone, Doug Carmichael, 11.00 Comfort Zone, 12.00 Comfort Zone, 15.00 The Wednesday Jukebox with Michelle 17.00 Drivetime with Campbell, 19.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll - Len + Ken, 20.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll, 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre

THURSDAY: 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13.00 Molly's Mix, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen, 17.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 18.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christines Collection, 20.00 Christine's CD Collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight, 11.00 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny, 17.00 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 17.30 Drive Show, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 20.00 Lewis Bingham, 21.00 Peter Rainnie

SATURDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Stephen 10.00 Sat Morning Live, 11.00 Saturday Morning, 12.00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowther, 12.03 Sat Morning Live, 12.05 Saturday Morning Live, 13.30 Clyde, 18.00 Sports View - Dream Team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight

SUNDAY: 09.00 Sunday Morning With Breege, 10.00 Sunday Morning, 11.00 Sunday Brunch With Archie, 12.00 Sunday Brunch, 16.30 Archie Darling, 18.00 Ken's Friends - Ken Hunter, 19.00 New Country Show - David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Station Close Down

Award-winning theatre group tours Highlands and Islands



THE SCOTTISH Gaelic theatre company Theatre Gu Leòr will be coming to Oban and the Highlands and Islands with a production of *Cèilidh* on March 24. The tour will begin in Glasgow on March 7 and will end in Stornoway on March 30, with 13 stops in between including Islay, Lochaber, Barra and North and South Uist. In 2016, Theatre Gu Leòr won the Arts and Culture award at the Scottish Gaelic Awards for their production *Shrapnel*. The true Irish and Scottish Gaelic meaning of the word *cèilidh* is to visit someone socially, where usually stories and songs were exchanged.

This performance includes live music and song and is suitable for all ages, with or without Gaelic. *Cèilidh* takes place in the village of Rodel in Harris, where the residents are unaware that they may be evicted to make way for a resort full of hi-tech bothies and a golf course. For information on *Cèilidh* tickets, go to www.theatreguleor.com *Cèilidh* will be at Bruichladdich Hall, Islay, March 13; Caol Community Centre, March 14; Ullapool, Macphail Centre, March 20; Plockton Village Hall, March 21; Skye, Kilmuir Hall, March 22, and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, March 23; Oban, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, March 24; Barra, Sgoil Bhàgh a' Chaisteil, March 27; Plockton Village Hall, Saint Peter's Hall, March 28; North Uist, Carinish Village Hall, March 29; Stornoway, An Lanntair, March 30 and 31.

full of hi-tech bothies and a golf course. For information on *Cèilidh* tickets, go to www.theatreguleor.com *Cèilidh* will be at Bruichladdich Hall, Islay, March 13; Caol Community Centre, March 14; Ullapool, Macphail Centre, March 20; Plockton Village Hall, March 21; Skye, Kilmuir Hall, March 22, and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, March 23; Oban, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, March 24; Barra, Sgoil Bhàgh a' Chaisteil, March 27; Plockton Village Hall, Saint Peter's Hall, March 28; North Uist, Carinish Village Hall, March 29; Stornoway, An Lanntair, March 30 and 31.

Oban Burns Club's annual supper is resounding success

MORE than 100 people made their way to the Regent Hotel on Friday evening for Oban Burns Club's annual supper. The yearly event, which celebrates the life and poetry of Robbie Burns, has been going in Oban for more than 70 years. John MacLean, who

has been the chairman of Oban Burns Club for five years, said: 'The Oban Burns Night annual supper has been going since 1947. It's the highlight of our year. I love it. It's a great night. Roughly 110 people attend, however, we are always hoping for new members. Just come along to the supper.'

The principle speaker was retired QC George Moore. Music was provided by Angus McColl, Scott Sinclair, Angus MacPhail and Kenneth Pearson. Those interested in attending next year's event, or to join the club, search for Burns Club of Oban on Facebook to get in touch.



The top table of Oban Burns Club. 17_T05_BurnsSupper01

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD
If you would like to advertise in the Oban Times Community Noticeboard please call 01631 568000

Comunn Gàidhealach an Obain
Presents
Cèilidh na Clionne/Children's Cèilidh
OHS Traditional Group/Rockfield & St Columba's Primary Schools
Soloists from OHS, Rockfield, Dunbeg & St Columba's
Fear an Taighe: Duncan MacNeil
Saturday 3rd February 2018, 7.30pm
Masonic Lodge. Admission £5
Under 5's free, family ticket at door
Tea, Coffee, Raffle. All welcome

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Fashion designer Patrick Grant on his love of Edinburgh

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THE LOVE MACHINE - How the tiny village of Gretna Green became the nation's wedding capital

THE TIMELESS MURIEL SPARK

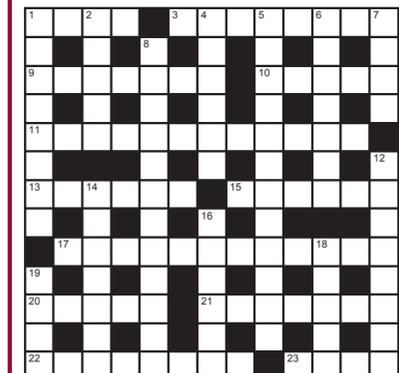
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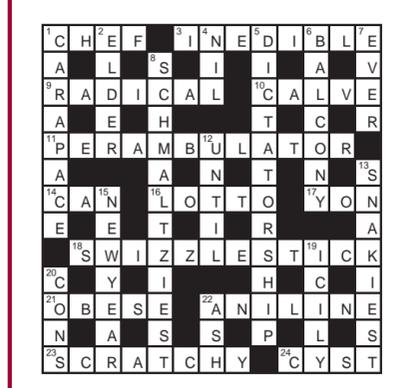
THE LOVE MACHINE
How the tiny village of Gretna Green became the nation's wedding capital

www.scottishfield.co.uk

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Support (4)
 - 3 Super! (8)
 - 9 Many-armed being (7)
 - 10 Type in (5)
 - 11 Joint defendant (2-10)
 - 13 Referee in tennis (6)
 - 15 Gripping tool (6)
 - 17 Obliging (12)
 - 20 Uniform shade (5)
 - 21 Vibrating effect (7)
 - 22 Rubbish (8)
 - 23 Tear up (4)
- Down**
- 1 One branch of the trachea (8)
 - 2 Provide food for (5)
 - 4 Flock leader (6)
 - 5 Binoculars (5,7)
 - 6 Strong (7)
 - 7 Surround (4)
 - 8 Use a symbol instead of a letter (12)
 - 12 Minor planet (8)
 - 14 Amines from putrefactive bacteria (7)
 - 16 Succulent (6)
 - 18 Lasso loop (5)
 - 19 Similar to (4)



Arena

> cinema, radio and what's on listings > leisure ideas > local events

Festival team expands after cash boost

The 35th Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival, set this year for May 3 to 6, is advertising a new PR post thanks to £6,800 funding from Event Scotland, writes Aidan Donaghy.

Organisers say this year's festival will be 'bigger and better than ever' due to the extra cash, which will help to recruit a marketing and development officer.

Festival chairwoman Breege Smyth said: 'The continued success of the festival depends on growth in participation, especially in the music sections. The appointment of a marketing and development person recognises this importance and we are delighted Event Scotland supported our plans.'



All smiles at the latest funding are, left to right, Riona McCormick (music convener), Breege Smyth (chairwoman) and Caroline Boyle, secretary.

Anyone interested in the job should contact Breege via breege@journalist.com by February 3.

This year the festival is celebrating the Year of Youth, an initiative aiming to provide

young performers with a platform to entertain audiences through music, song and dance.

Any young musician or performer who wishes to be involved should contact info@obanfestival.com.

Fèis Mhuile returns

FÈIS MHUILE returns this year with another feast of traditional music and Gaelic tuition and fringe events for children and adults alike, writes Harry McArthur.

The main Fèis event brings two full days of music, Gaelic song, and sport to children aged eight to 18. Music and games activities will also be run in the Fèis Bheag and a Cròileagan (nursery) for children aged three to four.

There will also be a separate programme of events for adults, including Gaelic singing classes and step dancing. Starting on Saturday February 10, the adult singing classes will take place in Bunessan School, 4-5pm, and the step-dancing class will follow in Bunessan Hall from 5.15pm-6.15pm. The classes cost £8.50 for one class or £15 for two.

The Fèis are also preparing a busy weekend of social events, including a tutors' cèilidh at the Argyll Arms Hotel from 8.30pm on the Friday night and the annual

Fèis dance at Bunessan Hall from 8pm the following evening.

The Fèis will conclude with the participants' concert at 2pm on Sunday at Bunessan Hall. All these activities are open to the public.

Last year's Fèis saw around 50 children from across Mull and Iona being tutored by top-flight musicians from Mull and Argyll.

This year, a number of tutors are returning, including BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year finalist, Hannah MacRae, pictured, of Fort William.

Jennifer Johnston, Fèis Mhuile chairperson, said: 'We're lucky to have another fantastic line-up of tutors from Mull and across Argyll and the Highlands and Islands at the Fèis who will provide fantastic support to the participants as well as superb entertainment at our tutors' cèilidh and Fèis dance.'

The Fèis Mhuile will take place from February 9 to 11 in Bunessan Hall, Mull, and at other satellite destinations around the village.



ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

Glasgow Letter

Burns at Celtic Connections

Last Thursday, I sang on the BBC Radio Scotland Burns night celebration in the CCA on Sauchiehall Street. Also performing that night were Rachel Newton, and MG Alba Folk Band of the Year, Talisk.

It was a really nice night to celebrate our national bard – hosted by Scottish tenor Jamie MacDougall, and BBC Scotland poet in residence Stuart Paterson.

Òran Nan Gàidheal is a roaring success

The scale of Celtic Connections, built up over the past 25 years, makes certain events achievable that (under most normal circumstances) would be outwith the realms of possibility.

One such event was Oran Nan Gàidheal last Friday night, which saw a host of Gaelic singers perform alongside the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

At the end of the evening, all the singers were in agreement that this was one of the most special concerts we had been involved in. We each sang two songs and then came together at the end for a couple of singalongs.

Most of the night, however, had been

spent with all the artists at the side of the stage watching on and marvelling at the power of the orchestra as one another went on to sing their songs.

The audience were incredibly appreciative and a standing ovation was received after the encore. Needless to say, a second encore was beyond us as you can't spontaneously throw something together when there is a full orchestra involved.

What gratitude we all have for Donald Shaw for having dreamed up and organised this concert, as well as doing a lot of the orchestral arrangements, and, of course, for Steve Bell for getting such a stunning sound out of his orchestra.

The concert was recorded for BBC Radio 3 and filmed for BBC Alba and, as soon as I know the transmission dates, I will note them here.

Enlightening Tìre Burns supper

For 10,000 people in the Hydro last Saturday night, Bothy Culture and Beyond (featuring Niteworks, Danny MacAskill, and the GRIT orchestra) was a breathtaking evening.

I attended a slightly smaller scale but no less enjoyable evening that night – the Tìre Association Burns supper.

Highlights included a very interest-

ing, light-hearted, and informative Immortal Memory speech and toast by writer Mike Hughes, who spoke about Burns's history and poetry and drew comparisons with Sir Walter Scott – while also tying everything in nicely to Tìre itself.

Kenneth MacLeod performed a flawless rendition of the satirical Death and Doctor Hornbook, complete with walking stick and half bottle!

The singing of DI Brown, Catherine Lees, and the playing of myself and John Omand completed the evening; not forgetting the competitive table singing which was absolutely hilarious.

It was a very enjoyable evening in great company.

Dancing all night at Take the Floor!

Sunday night was a great evening of dancing as *Take the Floor* recorded live from Celtic Connections – to be broadcast this Saturday.

I was delighted, honoured and nervous in equal measure to play my first *Take the Floor* broadcast with the hastily thrown together Robert Robertson Dance Band. I say hastily thrown together on account of the fact I had only played with fiddler Graham MacKenzie for the first time that morning!

Alasdair MacCuish and his group were the other band and Gary Innes did a wonderful job in steering things along.



An unforgettable evening for everyone involved in Òran nan Gàidheal.

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Mànran dedicate song to the Keppoch Bard

Mànran



SCOTTISH trad rock band Mànran are celebrating the work of Scotland's earliest poet laureate, Iain Lom MacDonald from Lochaber, with their new single *Là Inbhir Lòchaidh* ('The Battle of Inverlochy'), writes *Harry McArthur*.

Iain Lom, which translates from Gaelic as 'Iain the bald', lived at Allt a' Chaorainn near Laggan Dam amid the turbulence of the 17th century.

Despite his other nickname Iain Mann-tach, 'stammering John', his Gaelic poetry earned him fame as the Keppoch Bard, and as poet laureate to Charles II.

Iain Lom's monument lies near his home in the burial ground of the 15th-century St Cyril's Church (Cille Choir-

ille) in Glen Spean. This Friday (February 2), 373 years to the day since the second Battle of Inverlochy, Mànran will release their take on Iain Lom MacDonald's most famous poem *Là Inbhir Lòchaidh*.

Famously stating, when offered a sword to battle, 'You battle - I'll tell', Iain Lom sought out a high vantage point above the battleground to record a blow-by-blow account - often in gory detail that would make the most hardened *Game of Thrones* viewer flinch.

Ewen Henderson, a singer, fiddle player and piper with Mànran who hails from Fort William, said: 'In marking the anniversary of the battle with this new single, we hope to spark a new interest in this fas-

cinating and important time in Scottish history while encouraging a renewed respect for the wealth of Gaelic historical sources and the role they have to play in creating a broader, more nuanced view of Scottish history.'

Set against the backdrop of the 'War of the Three Kingdoms', the Battle of Inverlochy took place on the morning of a freezing February 2, 1645, on a hill beside Inverlochy Castle, near Fort William.

The battle saw a force of 1,500 Irish and Highland Royalists fight against 3,000 Scots Covenanters. Aside from its wider political importance, the battle was of enormous local significance as one of the largest and most decisive clashes in the centuries-long struggle

for Highland supremacy between the MacDonald and Campbell clans. Ultimately, the MacDonalds defeated a Campbell army twice their number and forced the Marquess of Argyll to flee in his galley before the fray had even started.

Iain Lom, bard to the Keppoch MacDonalds, played an important role in the build-up to the action, guiding the Royalist forces on the final stage of their heroic counter-march through 30 miles of wintery mountain passes and providing the crucial intelligence that helped surprise the Campbell force lying in wait at Inverlochy.

Mànran: *Là Inbhir Lòchaidh* (The Battle of Inverlochy) will be released on Friday February 2.

New songs to be unveiled in Oban as part of Scotland Sings

NEW SONGS by Karine Polwart and Alex Hodgson will be sung at a workshop taking place at the Corran Halls in Oban on Sunday February 18.

Karine's *Come Away In* and *Mauchline Belle* by Alex have been commissioned by Scot-

land Sings as part of a project to get more people singing together.

They are both inspired by the life and work of Robert Burns and will be taught for the first time in Alloway, Birnam, Lauder, Inverness and Oban.

Burns's wife, Jean Armour, was known as the Belle of Mauchline and is the inspiration behind Alex's song, while *Come Away In* celebrates the notion of hospitality from Burns's poem *The Wren's Nest*.

Alison Burns, Scotland

Sings co-ordinator, said: 'The great thing is that the songs are brand new so everyone will be learning them from scratch.'

They'll be included in a book we're putting together of all the songs we've commissioned over the past

four years from some of Scotland's top songwriters, including Mairi Campbell and David Francis, Rab Noakes and Eric Bogle.

'Everyone is welcome, whether they sing every week in a choir or haven't sung in years.'

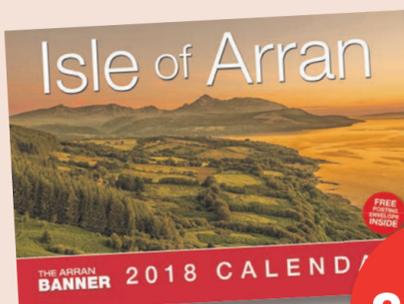


Karine Polwart

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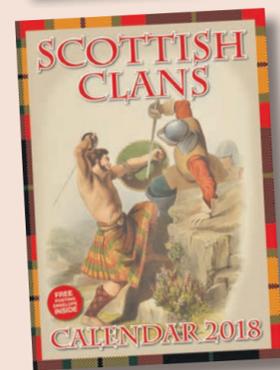
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Fort William Mountain Fest celebrates the great outdoors

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

CELEBRATE everything the great outdoors has to offer at the Fort William Mountain Festival 2018.

Held in association with the Nevis Landscape Partnership, Heritage Lottery Fund, the Outdoor Capital of the UK and the Highland Council, it is being staged in and around Fort William from Wednesday to Sunday, February 21 to 25.

From armchair adventurers and weekend warriors to the UK's mountain communities the Fort William Mountain Festival is an energising experience for everyone.

A spokesperson said: 'Visiting Lochaber in February for the mountain festival is the perfect time of year to experience the stunning landscape first hand, with the best winter walking, climbing and snow-sports conditions of the year.'

'The festival offers the added bonus of another superb line-up of uplifting talks from top climbers and mountaineers, mountain bikers and mountain film-makers, together with exhilarating film screenings from cutting-edge outdoor athletes and adventurers; mountain skills workshops and exhibitions.'

The five-day programme includes:

Launch night: on Wednesday there will be a torchlit descent of Aonach Mor on ski, board and mountain bike to kick things off. Then settle in at the Pinemarten Cafe Bar at the Nevis Range for an entertaining evening with Spike and Sudy's Tall Tales of Nevisport, Nevis Range and Mountain Rescue.

Film competition: on Thursday relax and watch the winning outdoor adventure films, presented by Paul Duffley.

The climbers' summit is a new 'all things climbing' night of chat and films with Robbie Phillips and Dave MacLeod, also on the Thursday.



Fort William Mountain Festival has a packed programme of events. Photograph: Mike Pecod, Abacus Mountain Guides

Running Without Fear: Friday is a talk on life without limits with adventurer and broadcaster Lowri Morgan.

Big Picture Night: Friday sees ecological science and visual storytelling thinking about a wilder Scotland.

Monster Cracks and Desert Adventures: Saturday, Upside-down journeys with the Wide Boyz, masters of crack climbing Tom Randall and Pete Whittaker.

Great Divide Bike Race: Saturday - 2,745 offroad miles from Canada to Mexico with Lee Craigie, introduced by Emma Holgate's Bikepacking Havanas adventures.

After party: Saturday. Grab a partner for the party with the Riska ceilidh band. Sponsored by Thistle Access NDT Ltd and supporting the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

Banff Centre Mountain Film

Festival World Tour: Sunday. The finest mountain films to entertain and inspire from the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour.

The recipients of both the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture and the Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture will receive their awards at a special ceremony during the festival. These awards recognise and celebrate lives spent in the hills, exploring everything the land has to offer while inspiring others.

Arts programme

Photographing Scotland: Thursday. Glasgow-based adventure sports and landscape photographer Dougie Cunningham introduces his new photo-location and visitor guidebook.

Art Lochaber - Pop-up Gallery and Shop: Friday to

Tuesday February 27. At Nevis Range selling outdoor themed paintings, mounted pictures and cards.

Wainwright Revealed: Saturday. Hear from film-maker and author Richard Else who filmed the original BBC films with Alfred Wainwright.

Cameron McNeish: Saturday. Book presentation and signing from one of Scotland's best known wilderness men.

Workshop programme

Festival organisers have put together a range of workshops with plenty of opportunities for both novices and experts to hone their mountain skills.

Crack Climbing Masterclasses with the Wide Boyz: a crack climbing masterclasses with Pete Whittaker and Tom Randall. One hour crack coaching and a free roll of tape (taping is part of the masterclass) at Three Wise Monkeys, Fort William.

Winter walking skills, avalanche awareness, Ben Nevis guided walk, performance winter climbing. Regular mountain festival supporter and local guiding company, Abacus Mountain Guides, will team up with the mountain festival once again with a selection of workshops. This is the perfect opportunity for everyone of all abilities to learn new skills.

Dave MacLeod will again run climbing masterclasses during the festival. The full-day classes will be run at his own climbing wall in Roy Bridge.

Join the ride out and coaching with West Coast Biking taking in some of the best single track available. Qualified guides and coaches will be on hand to show fundamental techniques and new mountain biking skills.

For the second year running, Penny, from Mountain Yoga,

Kinlochleven, will take inspiration from the mountains and bring her yoga to the festival.

Learn to work on fix your bike yourself with tuition from some of the best mechanics in the business from Nevis Cycles.

Joining for the first time will be Atlas Mountaineering, teaming up with snow sports instructor Duncan Goldthorp, to offer a range of winter mountain skills, including navigation and avalanche transceiver use.

Exhibition zone

Explore the exhibition zone, open daily before the main programme's events and during intervals. Exhibitors include: Abacus Mountain Guides, East Lochaber and Laggan Community Trust, Ellis Brigham, The Highland Bookshop, Jamie Hageman, John Muir Trust, Lochaber Environmental Group, Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers, Nevis Cycles, Nevis Landscape Partnership, Rare Breed Productions, the West Highland College School of Adventure Studies, Scottish Mountain Heritage Collection, Three Wise Monkeys, Urban Uprising and West Coast Biking.

A spokesperson added: 'The Fort William Mountain Festival celebrates our wild landscape and the opportunities it presents. The mountains and glens influence our culture in many ways. We want to promote the value of the landscape of Lochaber as the best destination in the UK to live, work and play.'

'The festival includes a superb line-up of top climbers and explorers, mountain films, inspirational speakers and skills workshops. It's not just for adventure addicts though - anyone who appreciates the landscape of the Outdoor Capital of the UK will find something for them.'

To find out more, go to: <https://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>/Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/fort.william.mountain.festival>

Dunbeg scientist reveals threat to polar bears

RESEARCH carried out at the Dunstaffnage-based Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) has shown that a predicted population decrease of polar bears by around 30 per cent over the next three to four decades may have been underestimated.

Already bleak population predictions have considered the reduction of sea ice in the region as a loss of habitat, restricting the bears' movements, hunting prospects and cubs' survival.

But research led by SAMS scientist Thomas Brown, published in the journal PLOS ONE, has highlighted how the polar bear diet relies heavily on the production of microscopic algae that grow underneath the sea ice. The algae are eaten by zooplankton and this energy works its way up the food chain to the region's top predator.

Looking at three polar bear communities in the Canadian Arctic, Dr Brown showed that, on average, 86 per cent of the energy consumed was derived from sea ice algae, as opposed to open ocean algae.

Dr Brown said: 'Polar bears rely on sea ice as their habitat. Consequently, conservation assessments of polar bears identify the ongoing reduction in sea ice to represent a significant threat to their survival. However, the additional role of sea ice as an indirect source of energy to bears has been overlooked.'

'The polar bears' reliance on carbon (energy) derived from sea ice algae was surprisingly high and shows that the reduction of sea ice means more than just a loss of habitat. It threatens the success of the entire food web in the Arctic as we know it.'

'We know that carbon from sea ice algae is important for Arctic animals, but we need to quantify how much of that carbon is consumed in order to understand the full impact of sea ice loss.'

Dr Brown has devised a method to measure how much of a species' diet is derived from Arctic sea ice by tracing a chemical produced by sea ice algae, known as IP25, all the way up the food chain.

THIS WEEK'S WALKS

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

The walk leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk. Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk.

Thursday February 1 Beinn Mich Mhonaigh, Glen Orchy

This Corbett is prominent in the view up Glen Strae but well hidden from most other directions.

It is a new walk for our group.

Start from the Eas Urchaidh CP at NN242321 on B8074. Cross the River Orchy and take the track leading N up through the forest for approx 2km. Turn right at a junction at NN232332, cross the Allt Broighleachan on the footbridge, then turn left and follow the path W to the forest boundary.

Exit the forest at the stile near Airigh Chailleach Shielings, at NN209335. Climb NW up the slope to reach the crest of the SW spur of Beinn Mich Mhonaigh, turning NE to reach its summit, 796m.

Continue NE to a group of small

lochans, then turn S down the slope to the forest boundary.

Relocate the stile at Airigh Chailleach Shielings and return by the outward route.

Grade: M+; Distance: 13km; Height to climb: 730m; Map(s): LR50, EX377. Meet at Longsdale car park, Oban, at 9am or Glencoe village car park at 9.15am. Start of walk at 10am. Leader: Toril Frantzen 07788 264007.

Saturday February 3 Laudale coastal circuit, Loch Sunart

A walk from Laudale Ho on the S shore of Loch Sunart with splendid views up and down

the Loch. It is a new walk for our group.

The estate operates a seaplane to bring in the guests.

Start from the end of the public road at NM756599. Follow the track along the shore, cross the bridge over the Laudale River and fork left on to a footpath at NM733603. Follow this up through the forest, heading NW to a gate in the fence at NM719612. Stay on the track, somewhat overgrown, for a further 150m to a junction, then turn sharp right and zig-zag down to Dubh Lochain. Cross the burn issuing from the lochan and pick up the track leading NE down

to the coastal track between Laudale and Glencripesdale. Turn left to reach Rubha Aird Earnaich, 1.8km, for fine views W down Loch Sunart to Carna and Ben Laga. Return SE along the track to the Laudale River bridge and follow the outward route back to the start.

Grade: L; Distance: 13km; Height to climb: 200m; Map(s): LR40/49, EX383. Meet at Corran Ferry slip for 10.15am sailing. Start of walk at 11am. Leader: Andrew Gilbert 07808 924722.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Please see full walk details at www.nevishillwalking.club. If

anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevishillwalking.club.

Sunday February 4 Beinn a' Chreachain, Beinn Achaladair

Head NE along a track and a path to Crannach Wood, having crossed Allt Coire Achaladair, and cross a footbridge over the railway at NN349454 (alternatively, stay on the track, cross the river by the footbridge, which is not marked on the map, and go under the railway by an underpass.) Continue east to

reach the Allt Coire an Lochain and follow it to the lochan.

Ascend up grassy slopes to the NE ridge of Beinn a' Chreachain (1081m). Go SW to attain the summit. Descend NW to the col at the rim of Coire an Lochain and climb SW up to the level ridge of Meall Buidhe. Descend and follow the rim of Beinn Achaladair's NE coire to its summit (1038m). Continue over the south top and descend to the head of Coire Daingean, then NNW back to Achaladair farm.

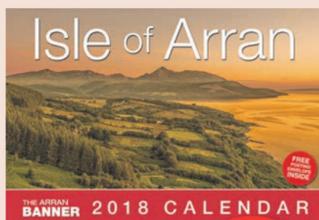
Distance: 17km; Height to climb: 1,200m. Suggested by Anne Scouler and Chris Tracey; coordinated by Anne Scouler.

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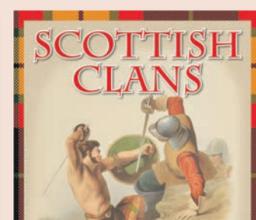
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Crofters call for local abattoirs

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

THE Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) is calling on the Scottish Government to support the creation of small local abattoirs that can underpin the meat niche market Scotland seeks.

'The abattoir situation is very vexing,' said SCF chairman Russell Smith. 'We all agree that the niche, high provenance meat market is the way forward for Scotland, whatever happens regarding Europe.'

'Yet high quality meat producers' efforts are stymied by having such a scarcity of abattoirs and thus poor traceability. Animal welfare is compromised by vast transport distances and there is the added cost of travelling to and from the abattoir, which can make direct selling unprofitable for small producers.'

'Inexplicably, this cannot be compensated for in Less Favoured Area support. Look at a map showing red meat slaughtering facilities in the UK. It is not great elsewhere

but Scotland is shamefully neglected, it is an abattoir desert.'

Mr Smith continued: 'The Skye abattoir is particularly frustrating. After seven years of campaigning and a huge input of voluntary time and effort, the community group now have fully-costed, detailed plans for a micro-abattoir, and a site with planning permission. Their project is at a shovel-ready stage but they are held back by the Scottish Government's interpretation of state aid rules which places a limit on public sector funding.'

'We believe that this restriction should not apply. A case could be argued for there being market failure and that the abattoir will operate as a not-for-profit service to the crofting and farming community in a fragile rural area.'

'The objectives of ensuring the highest standards of animal welfare and traceability are in line with Scottish Government food policy. We have taken this argument to Scottish Government and it will be revisited, we are told. The feasibility study showed this to be the best

business model and it could be replicated in other areas. Other European countries use micro-abattoirs to great socio-economic effect.'

'The sudden, unexpected closure of the Orkney abattoir was also announced recently, putting at risk the islands' reputation for high-quality food. It is clearly unacceptable to transport animals for slaughter to the nearest facility in Dingwall, 150 miles away across the roughest stretch of UK coastal waters. Some of the islands' unique, high-provenance products, such

as North Ronaldsay mutton, could simply disappear.'

Mr Smith concluded: 'If Scotland's food and drink industry is to thrive post-Brexit, the producers serving local, niche and high-quality markets must be enabled to do so, and, in the crofting areas, that means having access to local abattoir services.'

'Without them, some of the country's most iconic designated food products will be at risk, as well as the culture, landscape and environment of hill livestock production.'

NFUS backs sheep carcass scheme

NFU SCOTLAND is backing the Scottish Government's proposed introductions of mandatory sheep carcass classification and price reporting but with caveats attached.

Representatives on NFU Scotland's Livestock Committee agreed with the government's proposal but did so on two conditions: that there is no additional cost to the industry and the data collected from the mandatory price reporting should be owned by the Scottish sheep industry.

The union has called on the Scottish Government to expand on the consultation before the proposition begins to move forward.

NFU Scotland is looking for further clarity as to which government department will collect and publish reported prices. It is also requesting further details on how much information will be reported to the chosen statutory body, with the quality of published information for farmers being dependent on how it is interpreted by the statutory body.

NFU Scotland is also keen to find out what costs, if any, will come from these introductions and is eager to ensure that any costs do not fall on industry, especially with such tight margins for sheep farmers in the current market.

Charlie Adam, NFU Scotland Livestock Committee chairman, said: 'It was clear from the discussion at our national Livestock Committee meeting last Thursday that the consultation documents provided by the Scottish Government were not comprehensive enough for the committee to come to an overwhelming decision.'

'The committee members are willing to back mandatory carcass classification and price reporting for sheep, but only if a number of concerns over the details of the proposals can be addressed.'

'With profits so tight on Scottish farms and crofts, we cannot allow for the introduction of any regulation which is not beneficial to the bottom line of farming businesses.'

Farmers urged to take up BPS loan

RURAL Economy Secretary Secretary Fergus Ewing has announced that the 2017 BPS loan scheme will close on February 9 and has encouraged farmers who haven't yet applied to do so to ensure they get the loan they are entitled to.

The announcement was welcomed by NFU Scotland.

Mr Ewing said: 'My priority is and will continue to be to protect and grow the rural economy. That is why, in September, I announced a loan scheme for Basic Payments 2017, and I am pleased that more than 13,000 farmers and crofters have so far taken up that offer.'

'This has injected more than £300 million into the rural economy, earlier than ever before, helping to safeguard jobs and investment.'

'However, I am conscious that some farmers and crofters have yet to take up the offer of a loan. Those who wish to do so have until February 9 to confirm they wish to accept the offer that has been made to them. With two weeks until the scheme closes, I would therefore encourage all farmers and crofters, who are yet to accept the offer of a loan, to do so as soon as possible.'

'This is their money. It does not take anything away from the NHS or other public services. Its theirs, they deserve it and they should have it.'

NFU Scotland director of policy Jonnie Hall said: 'In what has been a very challenging year



Fergus Ewing, left, announced the date for the BPS scheme to close, which was welcomed by Jonnie Hall of the NFU Scotland.



for many farmers and crofters, the £311 million already injected in to the rural economy through the current loan payment scheme will have been invaluable and accounts for more than 75 per cent of the expected BPS and Greening pot.

'While more than 13,000 have taken up the loan, it is a surprise and a concern that so many have not. Many of the 4,500 who have declined

the loan or not yet opted in are likely to be smaller farmers but, with the deadline of February 9 now set, it may be appropriate for them to reconsider their decision.'

'The winter weather, and the difficulties many have experienced in making and sourcing fodder and bedding, means hill farmers and crofters will be keen to see Scottish Government build on its

speedy delivery of the BPS and Greening loan scheme by meeting its timetable for delivering Less Favoured Areas support and coupled payments for beef calves and hill ewe hogs in April and May.'

'For those farming in Scotland's LFA, these payments are often more important financially to the unit than BPS and Greening and those payment are still several months away.'

Scottish farmers' union prepares for annual two-day conference

PREPARING Scotland's farmers and crofters for post-Brexit change is the theme running through NFU Scotland's packed two-day AGM, dinner and conference being held in Glasgow this month.

For the second year in succession, the event will be staged at the Radisson Blu Hotel in

Glasgow on Thursday and Friday, February 8 and 9.

The event comes at a time of great challenges and opportunities for Scotland's farming, food and drink sectors as the clock ticks towards the UK's intended exit from the EU on Friday March 29, 2019.

The morning session on the first

day leads with the presidential address by Andrew McCornick, in which he will map out the union's next steps as it seeks to ensure that Scotland's farmers and crofters secure the very best Brexit deal in terms of support, policy, trade and labour.

The Thursday afternoon will commence with a session on

growing the food and drink industry, Scotland's largest manufacturing sector, led by Dennis Overton, while the hot topic of agriculture and environmental stewardship will be addressed by Terry A'Hearn, CEO of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

In terms of future trading

arrangements for Scotland and the UK, much has been made of the 'Norwegian model'. Following an NFUS study trip to Norway in the autumn, delegates will hear from Eirik Magnus Fuglestad of Ruralis, the Norwegian Institute for Rural and Regional research.

Day two of the conference

opens with Scottish farmers and crofters being challenged to engage with the public and show what farming delivers in terms of food production, the environment and the local economy.

The session concludes on Friday morning when Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing delivers the keynote speech to delegates.

Around the markets

STIRLING - United Auctions on Thursday January 25 sold 5056 prime sheep comprising 3362 old season lambs selling to an average of 184.5ppkg and 1694 ewes and rams. Old season lambs (3362) - Harviesmailing (B) £120.00; Longfauld (Tex) £111; Gilston (Chev) £96.50; Cluneskea (X) £96.00; Drummie (Suff) £96.00; The bothy, Glenferate (BF) £92.00; Gilston (Chev/Mule) £89.50; Coulshill (Mule) £89.50; Parks of Keillour (Hamp) £84.50; Meikle Gourdas (Swale) £80.00.

(Suff) £113; West Lethans (Tex) £112; Glenferate (BF) £69.

STIRLING - Caledonian Mars Ltd on Thursday January 25 sold 172 cattle, comprising 96 prime bullocks, heifers and young bulls, 76 cast cows and bulls. Bullocks averaged 214p, heifers averaged 227p, beef cows averaged 135p, dairy cows averaged 89p, cast bulls averaged 113p. Bullocks sold to 250p for a Limousin from Learielaw - Broxburn purchased by T Johnston, Butchers, Falkirk and to £1752.24 for a Charolais from South Flanders - Kippen. Heifers sold to 250p (three times) for Limousins from Knockhouse - Crossfield, Learielaw - Broxburn and Faskine - Airdrie to Hugh A Black & Sons and G Kirk & Son, Butchers, Denny. Leading prices: Bullocks pkg: 245p & 238p Learielaw 235p Moorfield 232p Nethermyres 230p Moorfield Heifers pkg: 245p Knockhouse & Learielaw 240p Meadowend, Moorfield, Borlick (twice) 235p Borlick & Knockhouse (four times) 235p Moorfield,

Knockhouse, Craigend (Crawford) & Boquhan (Hyslop) Bullocks pph: £1644 South Flanders £1589 & £1587 Learielaw £1586 & £1539 Faskine £1534 Turniemoon £1530 Nethermyres & Meadowend £1526 Nethermyres Heifers pph: £1593 Boquhan (Hyslop) £1580 & £1556 Knockhouse £1530 Learielaw £1508 Knockhouse £1494 & £1488 Borlick Bulls sold to £1781.50 for a Limousin from W Dick & Son, Mains of Throsk. Also forward were 76 cast cows and bulls. All classes of cows were easily sold to our large ringside of buyers. Beef cows sold to £1480 for a Limousin from Meadowend - Clackmannan and to 178p for the same beast. Cast bulls sold to £1540 from Upper Kinneil, Linlithgow and 144.5p for the same beast. Dairy cows sold to £810 from The Glen, Falkirk and to 143p from Barbeth, Cumbernauld. Other leading prices. Beef cows per head: £1460 Mains of Throsk £1450 & £1400 Meadowend £1370 Mains of Throsk £1360 Meadowend £1350 Seggersdean & Beild £1330 Beild £1300

Gelvan View Beef cows per kilo: 171p Meadowend 170p Seggersdean 169p & 163p Mains of Throsk 160p & 159p Beild 157p Seggersdean & Golland Dairy cows per head: £700 Barbeth & Blairmains £680 Lower Greenyards £670 Barbeth & Balgowrie Mains £660 Glen Dairy cows per kilo: 106p Glen 104p Barbeth 103p Lower Greenyards & Blairmains

DINGWALL - Dingwall & Highland Marts on January 24 sold 1,191 sheep of all classes. Lambs (828) averaged £54.69 and sold to £83 for a pen of Beltex from Upperton, Balnain. Ewes (270) averaged £46.13 and sold to £99 for Suffolks from Whitebog, Rosemarkie. Rams (83) averaged £46.34 and sold to £140 for a Cheviot from Cuilaneilan, Kinlochewe. Feeding sheep (10) sold to £72 for Texel cross wedders from Cambusmore Estate, Dornoch and a Suffolk gimmer from Bogallan, North Kessock. Other leading prices per head. Lambs:

TexX - Top Park Farm, Strathpeffer, £79.50; SuffX - Broynach Farm, Thurso, £79; Chev - Achosnich, Dornoch, £76; BeltX - Inshes Farm, Inverness, £68; Cross - Lairgandour, Daviot, £68; Mule - Achnabat, Torness, £64; Tex - Teanluick, By Beauly, £64; BF - Achnabat, £61.50; CharX - Lairgandour, £60; Ewes: SuffX - Lairgandour, £96; Suff - Marian, Evanton, £88; TexX - Lairgandour, £83; BFL - Whitebog, £79; Belt - Upperton, £74; Chev - Ashley, North Kessock, £71; Zwb - Marian, £55; BF - Achnabat, £49. Rams: Chev - Garbat, Garve, £102; Suff - Lairgandour, £74, Tex - Lairgandour and Charlestone, North Kessock, £70; BF - Satran Sheep Stock Club, Carbost, £58. Feeding sheep: SuffX wdr - 192 The Doll, Brora, £68; Chev wdr - Achagour, Glenferness, £66; BF wdr - Higher Tullochgriban, Dulnain Bridge, £62; TexX wdr - Cambusmore Estate, £61.

STIRLING - United Auctions on Wednesday January 24 sold 925 store cattle and young bulls, and 177 cast cows and forward cattle, also sold 1907 store and feeding sheep. Bullocks (498) averaged 221.92p to 271.10ppk for a 332kg LimX from West Shawtonhill, and to £1360 for 603kg AAX from Croftjane. B&W bullocks (53) averaged 155.56p to 194.10ppk for a 386kg HOX from Crosshouse, and to £1270 for a 661kg HFX from Woodend. Heifers (369) averaged 216.01p to 255.20ppk for a 386kg LimX Crosshouse, and to £1310 for a 592kg BRBX from Biggarshiels. Young bulls (5) averaged 202.00p to 209.10ppk for a SimX from Nether Pratis, and to £1030 for a BAX from South Brownhill. Cast cows (141) averaged 135.21p to 193.20ppk for a BRBX from Whithrighill and £1570 for a CHX from Mid Cambushinnie. Dairy cows (30) averaged 98.71p to 147.70ppk for a HOX from Nether Braco and to £945 for a HFX from West Lochdrum. Forward cattle (6) averaged 163.33p to 186.20ppk for a SimX

from Balmonth and to £1270 for a SimX from Balmonth. Bullocks: Up to 205kgs - Little Kilmory £530; Insh 245.3p; 250-300kgs - Lower Luthrie £770; Gateside 267.0p; 301-350kgs - West Shawtonhill £900, 271.1p; 351-400kgs - Eastwood £990; Kildavaig 270.9p; 401-450kgs - Riverview £1060; Nether Dalkeith 248.1p; 451-500kgs - Blairmore £1200; High Bent 248.9p; 501-550kgs - Biggarshiels £1250; Compstonend 243.0p; 551-600kgs - Gillmill £1290; Croftjane 234.0p; 601-650kgs - Croftjane £1360, 225.5p; 651-700kgs - Gillmill £1310, 192.1p. Heifers: Up to 250kgs - Meikle Hareshaw £535; Corsecon 239.6p; 251-300kg - Lower Luthrie £715, 244.9p; 301-350kg - Kildavaig £840, 252.3p; 351-400kgs - Crosshouse £840, 255.2p; 401-450kgs - Ardacher-annor £1050, 250.0p; 451-500kgs - Ardacher-annor £1170, 242.7p; 501-550kgs - Low Arklund £1205; South Brownhill 227.8p; 551-600kg - Biggarshiels £1310, 225.4p; 601-650kgs - Crook-edstonemuir £1255, 202.4p. Young bulls: 401-450kgs - Nether

Pratis £870, 209.1p; 501-550kgs - South Brownhill £1030, 188.0p. OTM cows: £ per head - Mid Cambushinnie (CHX) £1570; Sorn Mains (LimX) £1570; Meikle Camoquihill (AAX) £1510; Whithrighill (BRB) £1430; Blackburn (SimX) £1430; Quixwood (BS) £1230; Quixwood (STX) £1190; Meikle Camoquihill (Cont) £1110; Mid Cambushinnie (Sal) £1050. PPK - Whithrighill (BRB) 193.20p; Whithrighill (LimX) 188.90p; Quixwood (AAX) 178.20p; Preston (SimX) 177.90p; Quixwood (BS) 172.20p; Mid Cambushinnie (BS) 164.20p; Meikle Camoquihill (Cont) 140.50p; Mid Cambushinnie (Sal) 132.20p; Quixwood (STX) 132.20p. OTM bulls: £ per head - Dykebrae (Lim) £1690; Balleny (CHX) £1530; Balmonth (Sim) £1470. PPK - Whithrighill (Sim) 186.30p; Dykebrae (Lim) 149.00p; Balleny (CHX) 123.80p. United Auctions also sold 1907 store & feeding sheep. Top prices: Hoggs - Suffolk - 67.50, Little

Raith Texel - £94.00, Nether Pratis Beltex - £91.00, Mains of Struie Cheviot - £68.50, Haddington Farms Cross - £82.50, Townhead Mule - £72.00, Little Raith Blackface - £65.00, Townhead Ewes - Texel - £124, Nether Pratis Mule - £62, Blackwaterfoot

North Argyll Branch Blackface Sheep Breeders Association

AGM

Thursday 8th of March at 8pm in the Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel
The annual stock judging will be held on Friday 9th February at 7.30pm at Dalmaily Auction Mart (by kind permission of United Auctions).

Registered Whitebred Shorthorn Bulls

DOB 01/07/16 & 25/04/16
for sale in North Argyll for details call Mob: 07768855022 Evenings: 01967431422 Email: peterresipole@gmail.com

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POST & IN PERSON: Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB. Office hours: Mon - Thurs 9- 5pm, Fri 9 - 4pm

E-MAIL: adverts@obantimes.co.uk
Please remember to give your name, address, postcode and phone number.

KICK START YOUR NEW CAREER IN 2018 ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE

Flexible working location
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We are looking for sales staff to join our busy and successful team at Wyvex Media, the parent company of Scottish Field magazine and the Oban Times.

We also publish a plethora of lifestyle magazines, tourist maps, holiday publications and business directories covering all corners of Scotland.

We are looking for our next advertising sales star and will offer flexible working patterns and working location for the right person.

Experience in advertising sales is not necessary, as full training will be given.

We offer excellent pay, benefits, training and the opportunity to work for a professional company that believes in rewarding success and effort. A full driving licence is essential.

Please submit CV and covering letter to ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk

WYVEX MEDIA



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 vacancies

Internal Sales Administrator

This full time position is within our Sales Department. We are looking for a forward thinking, enthusiastic person who is quick to learn. This is an important role and the successful applicant will be responsible for the administration of all sales and be of vital support to our Sales team.

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 working knowledge of SAGE accounting system would be advantageous. Full training will be given. A full driving licence is essential for this position.

This position is predominantly based within our new Administration offices at Malin House, Dunbeg

Office Assistant

Based at our Administrative Offices, this is a full time position.

Applicants should have a at least 1 Scottish Higher at grade C or above or a HNC in Administration, Business or Finance, be highly motivated and able to work within a small team.

No previous experience is required as full training will be given.

There is the possibility that, in time, the successful candidate may be offered the opportunity of an AAT apprenticeship.

A list of duties for each position will be supplied on application.

Salaries for both positions are dependent on experience and will be discussed at the interview stage.

Hours of work: Mon – Fri 8.30am to 5.00pm

Please apply by sending a covering letter and enclose a current C.V.

Closing date for applications is Monday 5th February 2018.

All applications to Mrs E Divers

Fusion Marine Ltd, European Marine Science Park, Malin House -Suite 5, Dunbeg, PA37 1SZ email:edivers@fusionmarine.com



Dawnfresh Farming Ltd, part of the Dawnfresh Seafoods Group, is the largest Trout Farming Company operating in the UK. Our Marine and Freshwater farms are located throughout Scotland and Ireland. We are looking to recruit for the following positions at Loch Etive, Tainui:

Net washing Technician

This is a full time position is based on our net washing team, working a 40 hour week, Monday to Friday including weekend cover on a rota basis.

Fish Farm Technician

This is a full time position is based on our harvest team, working a 40 hour week, Monday to Friday including weekend cover on a rota basis.

Working outdoors as part of a small team, it is focused upon all aspects of successful trout production including fish health, feeding, grading, harvesting, net changing and other general farm maintenance tasks, including boat handling.

Previous aquaculture experience is desirable but not essential as full training and support will be provided. A full driving licence is essential.

You would be expected to undertake additional hours as required in order to accommodate the needs of the business. We offer attractive salaries dependent on experience along with pension scheme.

If you are interested in applying for this position please send your CV, to:

HR Department, Dawnfresh Seafoods Ltd, Bothwellpark Industrial Estate, Uddingston, G71 6LS. Office - 01698 810008, E-mail: hr@dawnfresh.co.uk

Closing date for applications is: **9 February 2018**

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Vacancy: Freshwater Operative

Location: Ardtaraig Hatchery, Loch Striven, Dunoon
Details: Full Time, Permanent

Cooke Aquaculture Scotland is a leading company in the Scottish Salmon Industry producing exceptionally high quality products for an increasingly demanding market. We have operations throughout Scotland, Cumbria and the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, together; we pledge a strong dedication to achieving a sustainable aquaculture industry.

We are currently seeking a Freshwater Operatives for our Ardtaraig Hatchery, Argyll. As part of a small team, you will assist your colleagues in building strong key relationships and ensuring a safe working environment for all.

The Role:

The successful candidate will find themselves reportable to the Freshwater Manager for Ardtaraig.

Requirements for the role:

- Interest in the aquaculture industry
- Ability to participate in an 'Alarm Duty' rota system
- Candidate must be flexible with regard to hours worked, weekend working will be required
- Be a good team player but have the ability to work alone when required
- Inter-personal and excellent communication skills
- Clean UK driving licence

The ideal candidate will be committed to achieving the best results in a challenging environment and delivering the highest standards of performance possible. In return, we offer a highly competitive salary, employer pension contribution, company bonus scheme and salary sacrifice programmes.

If you feel you have the necessary attributes to successfully fulfil this position and contribute to a progressive, results orientated company, then please send your covering letter and CV to Krystal Flett, krystal.flett@cookeaquaculture.com by 14 February 2018.

INVERARAY CASTLE SEASONAL STAFF REQUIRED Full/Part-Time TEAROOM/GIFT SHOP

Please send your current CV to:
Mrs J Young, Castle Manager
Inveraray Castle, INVERARAY PA32 8XF
E-Mail - manager@inveraray-castle.com

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 10TH FEBRUARY

Cleaning staff required

Fri - Sat - Mon 9am - 4pm
Transport provided.
Overtime available.
Tralee Bay Holidays
Immediate start. £11 per hour
Contact 01631720255

Education and Outreach Officer

£24,000 per annum pro rata (0.6 FTE)
22.5 hours per week

An exciting opportunity has arisen at Kilmartin Museum for a part time Education and Outreach Officer. Initially, this position is a one year post with possibility of further extension. The role will focus on delivering the Museum's very successful archaeological and natural heritage education programme, working with schools, adult learners and volunteers. The service delivers activities in the Museum and in various outdoor locations.

For an application pack, please see the 'Get Involved' section of our website www.kilmartin.org/home/get-involved/vacancies/or_email_admin@kilmartin.org

Deadline for applications will be February 23rd 2018.
Interviews will be held in Kilmartin Museum on March 5th 2018.



The Creagan Inn, Appin has various job opportunities (full & part time) for hard working and dependable people at our busy restaurant & bar.

Chef de Partie/Catering Assistant:

- Food preparation
- Preparing and plating dishes
- Any other general duties as required

Waiting Staff/ Bar Person

- Welcoming & seating customers
- Order taking & table service
- Bar work (18+ Only)
- Cash handling - Light cleaning

Previous experience or a relevant qualification in hospitality is desirable but not essential, as full training will be given.

Wages dependant on experience plus excellent tips. Accommodation available, if required, for exceptional candidates.

To apply please email eat@creaganinn.co.uk or call (01631) 730250



LAGAVULIN

Senior Operator - Lagavulin Distillery

We are a growing business in the local community and we have an exciting new opportunity as a Senior Operator to work at the world class Lagavulin distillery. We are looking for someone who understands what world class manufacturing excellence looks like. The person must have effective decision-making and problem solving skills that are effectively used within a team to deliver site, business and brand objectives.

Celebrating diversity and actively creating an inclusive, collaborative culture without bias is core to our purpose of celebrating life every day, everywhere. For our business to thrive, we depend on having the right people with the right skills and capabilities.

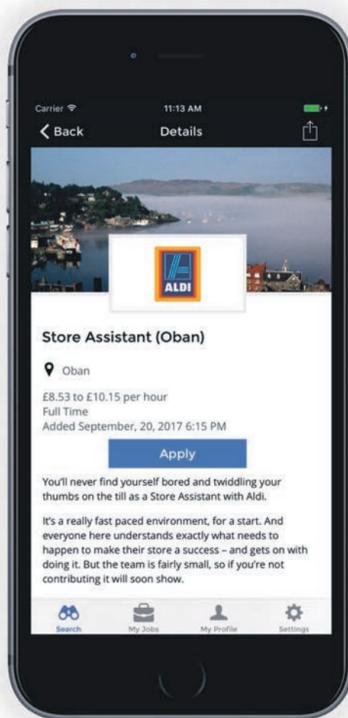
This opportunity, as Senior Operator, will work annualised hours during a total of 216 shifts per year.

This role requires:

- Control and monitoring of all site process and ancillary activities.
- Supporting a range of activities on site to ensure targets are met relating to safety, quality, efficiency, energy and cost.
- Full compliance with all statutory regulations and Diageo procedures relating to site Risk, HM (Revenue & Customs) and Environmental.
- Mobility across sites and the flexibility to adapt to different shift working practices and patterns

Closing Date: 6th February 2018

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MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
12 Private Moorings – Ardchattan Pier, Loch Etive, Argyll

Notice is hereby given that Mrs S H Troughton has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of 12 Private Moorings at:

Location	Latitude	Longitude
Ardchattan Pier,	56° 27.645'N	005° 17.450'W
Loch Etive,	56° 27.645'N	005° 17.612'W
Argyll	56° 27.680'N	005° 17.618'W
	56° 27.692'N	005° 17.411'W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Connel Post Office

Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Licensing Operations Team, Marine Scotland, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or by email to: MS.MarineLicensing@gov.scot, quoting reference:

MCMS No.: 06599
Applicant: Mrs S H Troughton

First Registration of a Croft

Mr J D Morrison has registered their croft Penmore Mill, Kilninian&Kilmore 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 25 Oct 2018

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C4849

First Registration of a Croft

Ruth Fitzsimons has registered their croft 20, 22 and 24 Inverroy, Kilmornaig 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 October 31, 2018. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is I2361.

Argyll and Bute Council

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (DISABLED STREET PARKING – OBAN, LORN & THE ISLES) (VARIATION)(No.3) ORDER 2018

On Monday 29th January 2018, Argyll and Bute Council made the above named Order in terms of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended.

The restrictions, which come into operation on 19th March 2018 makes it an offence for anyone to park in a marked disabled persons' bay as described within the Order, unless they are a holder of a valid blue badge and are using it in accordance with the national blue badge legislation.

This order affects the following streets in **OBAN** – Drimvargie Road, Kerrera Terrace, Longdale Crescent and Croft Road.

A copy of the Order and plans relative thereto can be inspected by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/trafficorders or viewed during normal office hours at:-

(i) Argyll and Bute Council, Customer Service Point, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban;

(ii) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Any person, who wishes to question the validity of the Order or any provision contained in it on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or on the grounds that any requirement of that Act or any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order may, within six weeks from 2nd February 2018, apply to the Court of Session for this purpose.

Jim Smith, Head of Roads & Amenity Services, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 - 13:30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead 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.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
18/00033/PPP	Site for the erection of croft house	Land West Of Mannal House Mannal Isle Of Tiree Argyll And Bute	Tiree Area Office
17/03038/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of access	Plot 7 Imerval Port Ellen Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
18/00082/PP	Erection of shed (13.5m x 9m) for storage of plant and equipment	Land Approx 440M South Of North Ardnacloch Farm Appin Argyll And Bute PA38 4BA	Sub Post Office Port Appin
18/00004/MFF	Modification of fin fish farm (Atlantic Salmon) from 16 x 100m circumference cages to 12 x 120m circumference cages, including increasing biomass to 2500 tonnes and retention of feed barge	Poll Na Gille Salmon Farm Shuna Island Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
18/00060/PP	Alterations and partial change of use of dwellinghouse to form office	Craiglora Cottage Connel Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1PH	Sub Post Office Connel
18/00075/PP	Use of land for the siting of 3 portable buildings with a connecting canopy to provide a plant maintenance workshop with offices and storage, associated parking area and formation of access track and new junction with the public road	Land Southeast Of Lag An Fhiodhain North Connel Oban Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Connel
17/03176/PP	Alterations and change of use of domestic garage (class 9) to form gin micro-distillery (class 4)	The Steadings Tiroran Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA69 6ES	Sub Post Office Bunesan Isle of Mull
17/03309/PP	Erection of 3 holiday pods and installation of septic tank	Land West Of Keepers Cottage Barcaldine Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1SF	Sub Post Office Connel
18/00162/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle ref. 14/01771/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land South Of The Cottage Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1JE	Sub Post Office Taynuilt

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation to the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Councils website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED

G Reid
3 Airds Bay, Ardchattan & Muckairn
83531
0.116 ha
Reason – Amenity Ground Condition – Fencing
Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

69%
of the business community read the regional press

www.highland.gov.uk

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

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk> or electronically at your nearest Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z

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
18/00038/FUL	2 Erracht, Banavie Fort William	Erection of residential annex/holiday letting unit
18/00266/TPNO	Land 480M NE Of Old Poor House Acharacle	Erection of 15m high telecoms mast, ancillary equipment and cabinets within fenced compound and formation of 410m long access track
18/00338/FUL	Former Lochyside Roman Catholic School Lochyside Fort William	Erection of 60 houses (Amendment to planning permission 17/00114/FUL - change to size of plots 47 and 48)
18/00163/FUL	Achara House Duror, Appin	Change of use from house to hotel, erection of 2 no extensions, installation of treatment plant, formation of access, formation of internal roads.
18/00330/FUL	Land 35M North Of St Marys Roman Catholic School, Fassifern Road Fort William	Student accommodation building comprising 40No bed spaces, associated shared & ancillary facilities
18/00340/LBC	6 High Street Fort William	Replacement of fibre and copper cabling
18/00257/FUL	Steam Inn, Mallaig	Proposed Staff Accommodation
18/00175/FUL	Land West Of Mount Alexander Scrap Yard Camaghael Fort William	Erection of storage units
18/00252/FUL	Land 890M NE Of 1 Camus Salach Ardgor	Installation of 15m high telecoms pole and associated works

Time period for comments is 14 days & 21 days for 18/00340/LBC
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

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Construction industry unites to reduce unnecessary costs caused by disputes

Six leading institutions, and two of the UK's biggest employers, have launched the Conflict Avoidance Pledge, aiming to put an end to the number of disputes in construction and engineering.

The pledge, created by the Conflict Avoidance Coalition Steering Group – who work to help the industry reduce the costs of conflict, and ensure major infrastructure and property developments are delivered on time and budget – is a voluntary commitment self-assessment open to any organisation or firm regardless of size or location.

The pledge

The pledge is the focal point of a wider campaign, set out by the steering group to drive behaviour change in the way relationships and disputes are managed throughout the construction and engineering sector.

The ambitions of the steering group are to reduce financial and other costs associated with disputes. This involves promoting cooperation between contracting parties; and helping people and organisations to understand and use conflict management measures, which will ensure projects are delivered on time and on budget.

Over 50 industry bodies have signed the pledge, with a key ambition of the steering group to encourage more organisations to join the coalition.

Benefits

Moving forward, the steering group is developing guidance and toolkits which will inform organisations about the value of conflict avoidance and early intervention techniques, and how to access and use them. These toolkits will be available to all signatories of the Conflict Avoidance Pledge.

For more information about the Conflict Avoidance Pledge and Conflict Avoidance Coalition, please visit www.rics.org/capledge, or contact Hannah Lambert: t +44 7977 213 282.

The steering group

The steering group is comprised of senior representatives of six leading professional/member bodies and two of the UK's major employers. These organisations are:

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
- International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) United Kingdom
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
- Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb)
- Dispute Resolution Board Foundation (DRBF)
- Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors (ICES)
- Transport for London
- Network Rail

Launch event

The pledge was launched on Monday January 29 at the Institution of Civil Engineers. Guests heard from chief executive of the Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group, Rudi Klein, London Transport Commissioner Mike Brown and speakers from Transport for London and Network Rail, who are already using conflict avoidance techniques.

The view from RICS

Too often, employers encourage contractors to submit compliant bids for the best price, while contractors, on the other hand, apply a commercial strategy to win the bid. Both sides then seek to manage contracts to their terms. The result is a recipe for disputes, which is built into contracts before they even start.

On average, the ultimate price of a construction project can come to around 30-40 per cent higher than the original contract target price. Employers and contractors can all too often end up not focusing their energies on the successful delivery of projects, but on arguing over 20 per cent of the overall costs.

It is only when the industry unites to tackle these all too common issues that we can deliver real change. We look forward to more organisations and companies joining our campaign by signing up to the Pledge and making the running of construction and engineering projects, hopefully across the world, more streamline.

Dr John Fletcher,
RICS Product Group Director ADR

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SOME ELECTRIC VEHICLES ARE RISING IN VALUE

AS SALES in the electric vehicle (EV) sector continue to surge, analysis from automotive data experts hpi shows that savvy motorists could already be making a profit on a vehicle they bought just 12 months ago.

A combination of factors including the rollout of clean air zones, cheaper running costs, increased charging points, incentives to drive and wider availability from manufacturers has helped pique interest in EVs.

A car bought at one year old could be run for 12 months and 10,000 miles and be sold for more money than its purchase price. A Peugeot Ion appreciated 8.6 per cent adding £425 to its value. The Vauxhall Ampera's average appreciation is 5.3 per cent or £725 in value and the most popular EV on the market, the Nissan Leaf, has an average appreciation of 4 per cent or £456 on its original.

Hybrids too represent a savvy purchase with the Toyota Yaris Hybrid appreciating on average 2.6 per cent or £292 and the Lexus GS Hybrid average appreciation of 0.7 per cent or £178 on top of purchase price. Over 60,000 new AFVs took to Britain's roads by summer 2017 with no signs of a slowdown. Chris Plumb, Black Book editor at cap hpi, commented: 'Sales continue to soar in the EV market as drivers have weighed up the benefits of ownership such as greatly reduced motoring costs and other incentives around driving an alternative to petrol or diesel.'

'Our latest analysis shows that drivers who buy the right EV can still make money on a sale after running it for a year and adding 10,000 miles. This will be a major factor in persuading more drivers to go down the EV road. EVs and plug-in hybrids provide a good balance between range and efficiency plus the economic benefits for motorists can be enormous, offering big savings on fuel and tax costs as well as much lower maintenance costs.'

Average Black Book Movement % 1yr10k moving to 2yr20k by Generation (Jan17 to Jan 18)

AVERAGE of Mov%	AVERAGE of £Mov	
PEUGEOT ION (11-)	8.6	425
VAUXHALL AMPERA (12-15)	5.3	725
NISSAN LEAF (10-)	4.0	456



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PERSONAL

HAPPY BIRTHDAY COLIN LINTOTT FROM BRIAN



Thank You

May Webb would like to thank everyone for gifts and cards and to all who attended her 60th birthday celebration in The Ben Nevis Hotel and made it such a memorable occasion. Money in lieu of flowers amounted to £50 and will be donated to two local charities.

DEATHS

CAMERON - Alastair (Alec) Stewart. Passed away peacefully on Saturday January 20, 2018, after an illness courageously fought. Dearly loved husband, father, grandad and great-grandad who will be sadly missed by all of us. Thank you to all nursing staff at RSCH and Worthing Hospital for their care. Funeral service to take place at 1.00 p.m. on Friday March 9, 2018, at Worthing Crematorium. Family flowers only please but donations, if desired, can be sent in Alec's memory to a charity of one's choice. For all enquiries, please contact Ian Hart Funeral Service Ltd., 92-94 Broadwater Street West, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 9DE. Tel 01903 206299.

CAMPBELL - Peacefully at Eadar Glinn Care Home, Oban on Saturday January 27, 2018, in her 85th year, Isabel, beloved wife of the late Hugh Campbell, much loved mum to Margaret and the late Robert, a dear granny and great-granny. A requiem mass will take place from St. Columba's Cathedral, Oban on Friday February 2, at 10.00 am, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection/donations if desired for Eadar Glinn Care Home Resident's Comfort Fund.

CATTANACH - Mhairi daughter of the late Johnnie passed away December 31, 2017. Much loved mum of Rhona and Calum.x

COOPER - Peacefully at home in Roy Bridge, on January 24, 2018, Joan (Joey) (née Cameron) Cooper, aged 100. Funeral service will take place in St Margaret's, Roy Bridge on Thursday (today) February 1 at 12 noon. RIP.

MACDOUGALL - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on January 29, 2018 aged 85 years. Jean Bowie MacDougall (née Cameron), devoted wife of the late Malcolm MacInnes MacDougall, committed and loving mother to Andrew and Margaret. A priceless treasure. Greatly missed by her family and friends. Funeral service to take place in the Oban Associated Presbyterian Church, Campbell Street on Thursday February 8 at 1 pm. Thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Donations, if desired, to UK Dementia Research Institute.

MACTAGGART / DEARLEY - Elizabeth/Ishie died peacefully at home with family on January 5, 2018, in her 70th year. Beloved mother of Fiona and Neil, mother-in-law to Nicola and granny to Cameron and Jessie. Sadly missed by family and friends far and wide.

ROBB - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital Oban, on Friday January 26, 2018, Beri Robb (née Craigie) of Carraig-An-T'Uachdar, Cullipoil, Luing. Beloved wife of Alasdair, Mother of Iain, Ann and Keith and Granny to Luke and Ben. Funeral to be held at 1pm on Tuesday February 6, 2018 at Kilchattan Graveyard, Luing. All friends respectfully invited.

ROBERTSON - Peacefully at Inverclyde Royal Hospital on Monday January 22, 2018, Colin Fergusson Robertson, much loved dad of Donna, Elizabeth and Johanne, dear father-in-law of William, Jeff and Joe and dearly loved Babie and Papa of Tomas, Emilia, Morghan, and Ellie and a loving brother, uncle and good friend to many. Funeral service at Greenock Crematorium on Saturday February 3 at 11am to which all friends are invited. Family flowers only please. There will be a retiral collection in aid of Ardgowan Hospice.

WHITE - Geoffrey died peacefully, from Lewy Body Dementia, on January 24, aged 81, at Moss Park Nursing Home. Deeply loved and respected husband of Anne. Father to Hilary and Adrian and step-father to Cathy and Chris. Grandfather to Richard, Emma, Jonathan, Daniel, Jack, Luke and Joshua. Great grandfather to Joseph, Nyla, Finlay and Fleur. Funeral service to be held on Monday, February 12, at 11am, at Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Portnacrois, Appin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HOUGHTON - David and family would like to thank everyone for all their kind messages of sympathy and support after their sad loss of Muriel. Thanks also to everyone who attended the services at church and the crematorium.

McDOUGALL - Anne and Janet wish to thank most sincerely all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy and support they have received following their recent sad loss of Joey. They also wish to express their heartfelt thanks to Dumfries District Nurses and Marie Curie Nurses for their exceptional care of Joey. Grateful thanks to FrRoddy McAuley for his very comforting Mass and to John McLellan Funeral Directors for their professional guidance, especially Scott Greenlees for his support to all the family. Also, a huge thank you to all that came to the service and graveside to pay their last respects and to those who donated generously, in aid of Marie Curie Nurses.

TOMAN - Frances, Jacqui, Christine and families of the late Francis Toman (Frankie) would sincerely like to thank all family, friends, neighbours for all the many phone calls, messages, cards, gifts following the sad loss of our Dad. Thanks also to the doctors and district nurses of the Lorn Medical Centre for all their care and support shown to Dad. Special thanks to Gaynor our guardian angel whom we will always be eternally grateful. To lovely Andrea for her help, kindness and support shown to Dad and to all of us through the difficult nights. To Father James for his comforting words and Michael for his funny compassionate speech. To Ian and all the staff at D&A Munn for their very caring, efficient service, to Moreen for the beautiful flowers, to all staff at the Royal Hotel and finally to all who attended the church and graveside and who generously donated the amount of £524.54 for ABCD and Oban Hospice.

PORTER - Treasured memories of Wife and Mam, Flora "Patsy" Porter who passed away February 2, 2016. We think of you in silence. We often speak your name. All we have are memories. And your picture in a frame. Your memories are our keepsake. With which we'll never part. God has you in his keeping. We have you in our hearts.

MEMORIAMS

CAMPBELL - David (The Bear), 2/10/60 - 5/2/12 Miss you always. Memories stay fresh telling our stories to grandson Hamish (Always with us). - Mary, David, Maree and Hamish, Glenn and Drew.

CAMPBELL - Cherished memories of my dear son David who died February 5, 2012. When you were called away it left a space in my heart That nothing can replace.

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of my young brother David (the Bear), who passed away on February 5, 2012. Gone are the days we used to share, but in our hearts you are always there. - Diana, Mel, Gwen and Lorna, sister, brother-in-law and nieces.

CAMPBELL - David (Bear) taken on February 5, 2012. In loving memory of those who are forever present in our hearts. - Marina, David, Davina and Iona, sister, brother-in-law and nieces.

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of our dear Mum and Nana, Mairi who passed away on January 28 2017. Happy and smiling always content. Loved by all wherever you went. Always so thoughtful, loving and kind. What beautiful memories you left behind. Always in our thoughts. - Margaret Ann, Roddy, Catherine, Derick and Arlene.

KENNEDY - Angus. February 1, 2015. The flowers I place upon your grave May wither and decay But my love for you who sleeps beneath Will never fade away. - Fiona.

KERR - Always remembering our father, father-in-law, papa, great-papa, Willie, who died January 29, 2015. - Love John, Morag and family.

MACCOLL - Remembering Margaret, our mum, who passed away in Kilmore on January 24, 2013. Always in our thoughts. - Morven, Christina, Deirdrie, Duncan and their families.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of my dear wife Catherine MacDonald, Churchfield House, Kinlochewe who passed away on February 1, 2007. Also remembered at this time my dear cousins Hugh MacDonald, Stronaba Farm, Spean-Bridge who passed away on February 1, 1984 and Robert MacDonald who passed away on January 17, 1990 at Maidstone, Kent. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away - Malcolm MacDonald

MACLACHLAN - In loving memory of Ian who died February 2, 2005. Formerly of Glen Feochan, Kilmore and Lynn Court, Oban. Fondly remembered always. - Nephew Gordon, cousin Sheena and dear friend Joseph, London SW4.

MCLEAN - Cherished memories of Ian Matheson (Cleasy) a much loved son, brother and uncle, who died February 5, 2004. There is a place in our hearts. That is yours alone. - Mum, Dad, Ann, Sandra and families.

POULTON - Treasured memories of my dad Chris, who died so suddenly on January 30, 2006. Loved and remembered always. - Hannah, Tobermory.



Organisations appeal for Oban volunteers to help with new mentoring project

DID YOU have a role model growing up, someone you trusted and could rely on? Was there someone there to help you talk to the people close to you when things went wrong?

Many young people living in Oban and Lorn do not have that essential support. With time, kindness and understanding, two new projects about to be launched will help children cope with the difficult challenges they face, in a way which will last a lifetime.

So, could you be a trusted adult, supporting a young person involved in the child protection processes? Or could you be a weekly mentor (three hours per week) to a young person struggling to feel valued?

The projects will begin in Oban, Lorn and the Isles next month and organisers are searching for people with a sense of fun, fairness and a strong commitment to children's rights.

Children 1st, Scotland's national children's charity, is one of 13 partner organisations funded by the Scottish Government, set to deliver Intandem, Scotland's first national mentoring programme for looked after children, who are living at home.

Maggie Farrell, Intandem mentor co-ordinator for Argyll and Bute, explained: 'Looked-after children, living at home in Scotland, are not leading equal lives to their peers. Their mental health, education and abil-



Could you help support a young person struggling to feel valued?

ity to express their feelings are compromised by the challenges they face.

'Weekly mentoring sessions might include taster sessions of a new hobby, help with establishing new routines and habits; planning and goal setting; listening to their stories about the good days and the bad days.'

Research carried out by Dr Susan Ellesley and CELCIS - Scotland's Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children, revealed that children living at home, whose safety and well-being is legally protected by the local authority, have the poorest

outcomes of all children in Scotland.

There was an huge turnout recently at an event organised by Mr Kevin Champion DHT Oban High School (OHS) showing the US documentary *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and The Science of Hope*.

The film explores the correlation between poor health outcomes, physical disease and the toxic stress associated with adverse childhood experiences.

Ms Farrell added: 'Local communities tirelessly offer a wealth of opportunities which equip children with sporting, music and

life skills. However, they do not necessarily know how best to help improve the lives of these distinct groups of children - looked-after children, living at home and those involved in the child protection system.'

Volunteer mentoring can build resilience and break down young people's fears when trying to cope with really difficult circumstances, as well as introducing young people to new skills and experiences.

Children 1st's Intandem and the Family Group Conference Project are working closely with Argyll and Bute Council's Children and Families teams, schools, Argyll College and third sector charities to value local knowledge and find great community mentors and supporters to work with children in need.

Find out what the power of mentoring and supporting children and young people can do for you, a young person and your community. Get in touch to find out dates for application meet-ups and training.

Maggie Farrell, Mentor Coordinator, Children 1st Intandem, maggie.farrell@children1st.org.uk 07958 357188

Caroline Thomson, Children 1st Family Group Conferencing Coordinator, caroline.thomson@children1st.org.uk 07951 188159.

Comhairle flies flag at half-mast as it pays tribute to former councillor

THE Convener of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has paid tribute to former councillor, Rev Kenneth M Macdonald, who passed away aged 83, on January 20, 2018.

Rev Macdonald was

elected to represent the new Coll ward when Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was formed in 1974, serving until 1976. He then went on to serve in the ministry at Rosskeen Free Church, near Allness.

Convener, Norman A Macdonald, said: 'Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Reta, the children, the grandchildren, the wider family circle and his friends.

'We are very much aware

of the enormous efforts he and his family made to find their daughter, Alison, who went missing in August 1981 in Kashmir.'

The Comhairle flag in Stornoway is flying at half-mast.

Thought for the week

IN 1790 GEORGE Washington, the first President of the United States of America, wrote to the Hebrew congregation of Newport Rhode Island, people who had fled persecution in Europe.

'May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants; while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree there shall be none to make him afraid.'

There are echoes of the Bible here. Washington wanted the settlers to be made welcome. The vision of the founders of his nation was for religious freedom, a vision that had to be embraced by everyone, starting at the top.

Robert Burns had supported the cause of the American Revolution.

He championed internationalism and the brotherhood of men (and women). As many celebrate his birth this month they will hear familiar words,

'For a that, and a' that It's coming yet for a' that, That man to Man, the world o'er, Shall brethren be for a' that.'

Rev Dr Malcolm Kinnear
Church of Scotland minister
Kinlochleven and Nether Lochaber

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Feathers fly at Argyll and Bute schools badminton championships

TUESDAY January 23 saw Oban High School host the Argyll and Bute Secondary Schools Badminton Championships with teams from Campbeltown, Dunoon, Oban, Rothesay and Tobermory competing.

There were five categories - boys singles, girls singles, boys doubles, girls doubles and mixed doubles - across U14, U16 and U19 age groups.

In the U14 girls competition Campbeltown dominated, with Jane Scott winning the singles and Jennifer McMurchy, also from Campbeltown, runner up.

The Campbeltown girls teamed up for the doubles and defeated Nuria Clowes and Anneloes Hutton, from Tobermory, in the final of the U14 girls doubles.

Jennifer and Ewan Dott, also from Campbeltown, won the U14 mixed with Jane Scott and Scott Oman, of Campbeltown, runners up.

In the U14 boys singles, a fantastic final saw Marcus Keith, from Dunoon, triumph over Morgan Gemmell, from Oban. In the boys doubles, a tight final saw Morgan Gemmell and Kyle MacDougall, from Oban, beat Marcus Keith and Nathan



Prizewinners from the Argyll and Bute Secondary Schools Badminton Championships.

Shield of Dunoon 23-21.

In the U16 events, Alan Mollins, from Dunoon, had a productive day taking all three titles, singles, doubles and mixed. Alan was the only player to win all three titles during the day. He paired up with An-

drew Tyre for the doubles and Niamh Evan for mixed. Fergus Carmichael and Finlay France, from Oban, were the runners up in the boys doubles and Kathryn Lindsay and Ceiron Danks, from Dunoon, were the runners up in the U16 mixed.

In the girls U16 singles, Kathryn Lindsay, from Dunoon, was the overall winner with Niamh Evans, also of Dunoon, runner up.

The girls paired up to take the U16 girls doubles title, with Oban girls Zoe Cook and Katie

MacCorquodale taking second place.

In the U19 competition, the honours were again evenly spread between Oban, Campbeltown and Dunoon. Alasdair Ferguson from Campbeltown was the U19 boys singles

Badminton

champion with Jordan McIlkenny, from Dunoon, runner up. Craig MacCorquodale, from Oban, who missed out on the U19 final by one point, teamed up with Angus Neil to

take the U19 boys doubles prize with Jordan McIlkenny and Jason Convery, from Dunoon, runners-up.

In the U19 girls event, Kirsty MacCorquodale from Oban took the top spot with Susan Shaw of Campbeltown taking second place.

Susan however, paired with Nicola MacKerel, won the girls doubles with Kirsty and partner Claire Reid coming second.

The U19 mixed doubles was a great conclusion to the afternoon with gold going to Oban's Kirsty MacArthur and Craig MacCorquodale with Alasdair Ferguson and Nicola Thomson taking silver.

Denise Gemmell, PE teacher at Oban High School, who organised the event, said: 'The standard of play was very high within all age groups and events, with some keenly contested games even early on in the competition.'

'Sportsmanship, enjoyment and fair play were all part of an excellent day of badminton for the Argyll and Bute region.'

A highly competitive day of badminton saw a great deal of talent on display from keen young Argyll and Bute competitors.



Macmillan Cancer Support is urging cyclists to claim the last Etape Loch Ness places to help them break the £1 million milestone.

Cancer charity looking for pedal power at Etape Loch Ness sportive

THE LAST remaining places for the Etape Loch Ness cycle sportive could help a cancer charity break the £1 million fund-raising milestone.

Macmillan Cancer Support is appealing to cyclists to snap up the last few places in Etape Loch Ness and use their pedal power to raise much-needed funds.

Only a handful of places remain for the popular cycling sportive - which sold out to general entry within hours - and the places are being made available to riders who pledge £100 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

It is hoped the combined efforts of 'Team Macmillan' cyclists will help the charity - the official charity of Etape Loch Ness - to break the milestone of £1 million raised over the past four years of the event.

Etape Loch Ness will follow a 66-mile route around the shores of the world-famous loch on April 29. More than 5,500 riders have already signed up to take part in the sportive, which takes place on traffic-free roads.

Macmillan's challenge events programme manager Eleanor Hoare said riders who don the charity's distinctive green jerseys have the chance to be part of something special.

She added: 'During the 2017 event, we had 964 riders taking part for Macmillan and they raised £291,907 - by far the biggest and

best year yet for us at Etape Loch Ness. This year we are once again calling on cyclists of all abilities to help us and we could reach a special milestone.'

'Since our partnership with Etape Loch Ness started in 2014, we have raised more than £730,000.'

'We hope that after this year, with the help of our fantastic 'Team Macmillan' riders and their supporters, that the partnership will have raised more than £1 million for people living with cancer.'

'£1 million would cover the cost of approximately 36,000 hours of Macmillan nurses.'

The money raised at Etape Loch Ness will go towards helping Macmillan achieve its aim to reach and improve the life of everyone living with cancer, including funding their invaluable team of nurses. The charity also provides financial support for cancer patients and their families.

Etape Loch Ness event director Malcolm Sutherland said: 'When we launched Etape Loch Ness four years ago, we wanted to give cyclists an unforgettable and thrilling ride in one of the world's most beautiful places.'

'But, more than that, we wanted to create an event that would benefit the local community and which would provide a lasting legacy. The fund-raising undertaken by

Cycling

riders in aid of Macmillan is helping to deliver that.

'In just four years, Etape Loch Ness has become one of the most popular sportives in the country, with places selling out within hours of going on sale. But what makes us equally proud is the impact it is having on a charity that plays such an important role to those affected by cancer.'

Beginning in the Highland capital of Inverness, the Etape Loch Ness route follows the A82 along the northern side of the loch, before passing through Fort Augustus onto the south side.

It is there riders will take on the most challenging leg of the course - the timed King of the Mountain stage - a 4.8 mile climb which rises to 380m.

The route continues around the southern side of the loch before returning to the event hub at Eden Court in Inverness. The event takes place on traffic-free roads, giving riders a unique experience.

To sign up, visit www.etapelochness.com. More information about the event is available on social media on Facebook www.facebook.com/etapelochness and Twitter @EtapeLochNess

Mid Argyll indoor athletics

RESULTS: Under 7 Girls - 1 Emma Innes, Lochgilphead; 2 Neve Bowden, Lochgilphead; 3 Jessica MacRae, Ardrishaig. Under 9 Girls - 1 Jemma MacDonald, Lochgilphead; 2 Jorja MacDonald, Lochgilphead; 3

Jodie Allan, Ardrishaig. Under 11 Girls - 1 Beth Johnstone, Tarbert; 2 Ruby-Jo Phillips, Glassary; 3 Eleanor Dale, Ardrishaig. Under 13 Girls - 1 Kirstin Blair, Lochgilphead; 2 Amy

Athletics

Anderson, Lochgilphead; 3 Izzy Crawford, Lochgilphead.

Under 15 Girls - 1 Karis Kidd, Lochgilphead; 2 Hazel Selfridge, Lochgilphead.

Under 17 Girls - 1 Jodie Robertson, Lochgilphead.

Under 7 Boys - 1 Ethan Kerr, Tighnabruaich; 2 Ruairidh Charnock, Lochgilphead; 3 Blair Houston, Ardrishaig.

Under 9 Boys - 1 Cameron Gilmour, Ardrishaig; 2 Luke MacVicar, Tighnabruaich; 3 Ollie van Well, Ardrishaig.

Under 11 Boys - 1 Callum Green, Ardrishaig; 2 Joe Anderson, Glassary; 3 Roan MacVicar, Tighnabruaich.

Under 13 Boys - 1 Murray MacDonald, Lochgilphead; 2 Logan Allan, Lochgilphead; 3 Ewan Ferguson, Lochgilphead.

Under 15 Boys - 1 Jake Gillespie, Lochgilphead.

Under 17 Boys - 1 Shaun Doy, Kilmichael.



Left to right: Under 9s champion Jemma MacDonald, with second-placed twin sister Jorja and Jodie Allan, who was third.

Lochaber club lottery numbers

BALLACHULISH Lotto numbers for January 28 were 9, 17 and 19.

There were no winners, so there is £400 up for grabs this week. Caol Regeneration Lotto numbers for January 25 were 7, 8, 16. The winner of the £100

jackpot was T Corbett. The next draw will be on February 1 when there will be another £100 jackpot. Caol Community Centre bingo lotto numbers for January 28 were 4, 6 and 16. There was one winner - I Love. Next week's jackpot is £100.

Lottery

Fort William Golf Club's lotto numbers drawn on January 25 were 6, 9 and 10. No winner, so the jackpot for the draw today (Thursday) is £200.



Spean Bridge Golf Club recently held its annual awards night.

Spean Bridge Golf Club trophy winners

SPEAN Bridge Golf Club held its annual awards night recently with the full list of 2017 trophy winners as follows:

Medals Category 1: May - G Martin; June - A Morrison; July - W Atkinson; August - J MacLennan. Final - T Richardson.

Medals Category 2: May - J B Graham; June - B Martin; August - C Astleian; October D Swanson. Final - D McSweeney.

Senior: May - J Paterson; June - T Richardson; July - L McFarlane; October - L McFarlane. Final - T Richardson. Stableford Pairs - J MacLennan/W Atkinson; Stableford Singles - T Richardson; Greensome Cup - K Dalziel/T Richardson; McLaren Trophy - J MacLenna; Bogey Cup - G Martin; Drummond Cup - G Graham; Captain's Prize - W

Atkinson; Pairs Trophy - J MacLennan/W Atkinson; Club Championship: scratch - G Martin; Club Championship: handicap - J MacPhee; Gordon Pearson Trophy - C Donaldson. Ladies: Championship - Aeleen Campbell; Handicap Champion - Ameila Stewart; Ferguson Cup - Aeleen Campbell; Medals: June - Pat Davidson; July - Nicola MacRae; August - Katherine Ann

Golf

Munro; September - Tricia McIvor; Bronze Medal - Pat Davidson; Eclectic: 1 Aeleen Campbell; 2 Pat Davidson; 3 Margaret Cassidy.

Winter League 2015/2016 - 1 Aeleen Campbell; 2 Pat Davidson. Mixed Doubles - Mary Robson and David MacSweeney.



SHINTY

Marine Harvest Media Award winners 2016

Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

New sponsors for Balliemore Cup

LIBERTY British Aluminium has been confirmed as the new title sponsors of the Balliemore Cup.

Camanachd Association president Keith Loades was joined by Bryan King, Director of Lochaber Operations at Liberty British Aluminium and players and officials from local clubs to make the 2018 Balliemore Cup first round draw at the foot of Ben Nevis on Monday January 29.

Liberty British Aluminium was confirmed as sponsors of shinty's intermediate competition for three years, increasing its investment and profile in shinty.

The agreement also sees Liberty British Aluminium move into its second year as members of the shinty business club.

Camanachd Association president Keith Loades said: 'This is great news for shinty and represents great support for the sport.'

'The commitment shown by Liberty British Aluminium adds real value to the continued promotion and development of shinty. Shinty is an important part of Scotland's sporting and cultural heritage and remains a key part of community life in many areas across the country. The Camanachd Association recognises shinty as Scotland's most iconic team sport and the whole shinty community will be delighted that such a successful company has shown such faith in our great game.'

'Liberty British Aluminium has made it clear its contribution is intended to give something back to the communities in which it operates. Consequently, it has been flexible and supportive of what is best for shinty.'

Camanachd Association chief executive officer Derek Keir added: 'The Camanachd Association is delighted to welcome Liberty British Aluminium as title sponsors for the Balliemore Cup. Liberty has been great to work with and we are delighted to sign a three-year deal with such an established Lochaber business.'

'We look forward to working with Liberty British Aluminium which shares our commitment and passion for developing opportunities in shinty.'

Brian King, managing director of Lochaber operations for Liberty British Aluminium said: 'At this exciting time, when we are expanding at Fort William and consolidating our position as a major Highlands employer, we're very pleased to reinforce our relationship with the sport of shinty, which is an integral part of community life in this part of Scotland. We look forward to developing this partnership over the next three years for the benefit of the whole community.'

Stewart Harris, chief executive of sportscotland, added: 'It's fantastic to see the beginning of a partnership between Liberty British Aluminium and the Camanachd Association to support the sport of shinty. This type of sponsorship is invaluable in Scottish sport.'

'Liberty British Aluminium has shown a real commitment to the Camanachd Association and the prestigious Balliemore Cup.'

'It will help the competition continue to thrive and allow the Camanachd Association to develop a strategic and sustainable approach to growing the game, from grassroots through to the national team.'

'I am sure this new agreement will see the sport continue to go from strength to strength.'

The Liberty British Aluminium Balliemore Cup first round draw was made by Tom Uppington, power and hydro director, and Rosie Flannigan, business services co-ordinator.

Liberty British Aluminium Balliemore Cup – first round, Saturday April 28:

Strathglass v Glasgow Mid Argyll
Kilmallie v Tayforth
Oban Celtic v Aberdour
Taynuilt v Inverness
Ballachulish v Col Glen
Aberdeen University v Beaulie
Glengarry v Bute
Fort William v Inveraray

The tie of the round is the meeting between holders Fort William and Inveraray at An Aird whilst Oban Celtic have home advantage against Aberdour.

Kilmallie should be too strong for Tayforth and there will be an interesting tie at Craighard where Glengarry host Bute.

2018 shinty fixture list

A sure sign the new shinty season is just around the corner is the imminent release of the new fixture list.

Camanachd Association operations and events manager Astie Cameron has confirmed the 2018 fixture list is due for publication on Thursday February 1.

Pre-season friendlies

Wet and wintry weather wiped out the early pre-season friendly matches last Saturday.

Fort William P Kinlochshiel P

Heavy rain left An Aird water-logged so the pre-season friendly between Fort William and Kinlochshiel was postponed.

Oban Celtic P Kilmory P

The meeting between Oban Celtic and Kilmory at Mossfield was called off when the visitors pulled out of the match.

Oban Celtic then arranged a match with Marine Harvest Premiership champions Kinlochshiel, but that also fell through.

Oban Celtic then set up a game against Fort William, but heavy overnight rain led to this 1pm throw-up being called off on Saturday morning.

Strathglass P Glengarry P

Marine Harvest National Division side Strathglass were to host Glengarry, newly promoted to Marine Harvest North Division 1, at Cannich.

However, snow on the pitch meant the field was unplayable. The teams tried to switch venue to the astro pitch at Drumadrochit, but it was unavailable.

Skye Camanachd Ladies regain Johnstone Rosebowl

Skye Camanachd Ladies regained the Johnstone Rosebowl at the Invergarry Indoor Tournament at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, on Saturday January 27.

Skye won this competition in 2014, 2015 and 2016 before losing out 7-6 after extra-time to Badenoch & Strathspey in last year's final.

After the group matches, Skye A finished ahead of holders Badenoch & Strathspey on goal difference with both teams going through to the semi-finals.

Skye B, captained by Emma Gordon, also topped their group and reached the last four along with Glengarry A.

Skye A defeated Glengarry A in the semi-finals with Badenoch & Strathspey edging out Skye B.

This set up a repeat of the 2017 final and a Rhianna Kirk double and goals from Jenna Beaton and Lorna MacRae



Left to right: Tom Uppington, Liberty British Aluminium; Derek Keir, chief executive officer Camanachd Association; Daniel Stewart, Kilmallie; Sean Cameron, Fort William; Keith Loades, president, Camanachd Association; James Tangney, Fort William; Innes Blackhall, Kilmallie; Rosie Flannigan, Liberty British Aluminium; Willie MacDonald, Youth Director, Camanachd Association.

Photo: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

sealed a 4-2 win for Skye. Skye captain Lorna MacRae was presented with the Johnstone Rosebowl, whilst Skye's Caitlin Maclean was named player of the tournament.

Skye Camanachd A from: Sarah-Jane Ferguson, Caitlin MacLean, Ilana Paterson, Rhianna Kirk, Jenna Beaton and Lorna MacRae, captain.

The Johnstone Rosebowl was donated to Glengarry Girls Shinty Club in 1998 - a year after the team was formed - by Mrs Ailsa Johnstone of DA Johnstone & Son Contractors, Invergarry, who have been loyal sponsors since.

Edinburgh and Aberdour come out on top

Teams from Caithness to Cornwall took part in the Three Sisters shinty sixes tournament at Levenhall Links, Musselburgh, on Saturday January 27.

Edinburgh University hosted the event and, after an exciting day's shinty, the Edinburgh men's team and Aberdour Ladies were the winners.

The teams retreated to The Three Sisters in Edinburgh afterwards for a post tournament ceilidh.

MacVicar takes charge at Col Glen

Ronnie MacVicar has taken over as Col Glen team manager.

Ronnie replaces Peter Kennedy and Brian McNaughton who led the side to a ninth place finish in Marine South Division 1 last season.

Col Glen have three pre-season matches lined up for February:

The squad travel to Taynuilt Sports Field to play Taynuilt on Saturday February 10.

A week later, they face Bute at Otter Ferry and their final pre-season friendly is against Aberdour at Silversands on Saturday February 24.

Newtonmore name MacKintosh as captain

Andy MacKintosh will captain Newtonmore for the 2018 shinty season.

Scottish international MacKintosh was awarded the Albert Smith Medal as man of the match when Newtonmore won the 2016 Camanachd Cup and is a key part of their defence.

Paul John MacKintosh continues as Newtonmore first team manager. Orsten Gardiner takes over from Cammy

MacDonald in charge of the Newtonmore seconds.

Paul MacRae to captain Kinlochshiel

Marine Harvest Premiership champions Kinlochshiel have confirmed Paul MacRae will be their captain this season.

The experienced full back takes the armband from keeper Scott Kennedy who led Kinlochshiel to their historic first top flight title win in 2017.

Kinlochshiel were to open their pre-season programme last weekend but wet weather foiled their plans.

Kinlochshiel follow up their friendly against Newtonmore at The Eilan this Saturday with games against Inveraray at The Winterton and Kingussie at the Dell before travelling to The Bught Park to play Inverness at the end of February.

Tawse is Lovat skipper

Lewis Tawse will captain 2017 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup finalists Lovat for the 2018 shinty season.

Tawse will lead Lovat in a friendly meeting with Fort William at An Aird on Saturday 10 February 10 whilst Glasgow Mid Argyll visit Balmacara a week later.

Family commitments mean Ryan Ferguson won't start the season in the Lovat senior side, although he may help out with the club's second team. Youngsters Scott MacKenzie and Marc Kelly, who missed large chunks of last season through injury, should be back in the fold.

Caberfeidh start without Symonds

Caberfeidh's Ryan Symonds will miss the pre-season and start of the shinty season as he will be in Australia.

Jodi Gorski's Caberfeidh side will want to make a good start to life in the Marine Harvest Premiership so Symonds' absence is a blow.

Kingussie name assistant manager

Barrie Dallas has been confirmed as the Kingussie first team assistant manager.

Dallas will help newly-appointed boss John Gibson and their pre-season plans start with the inter-club Liz Young sixes at Dalfaber on Saturday.

Kingussie play newly-promoted Marine Harvest

Premiership side Caberfeidh at the Dell on Saturday February 10, before hosting Marine Harvest Premiership champions Kinlochshiel at the Dell a week later.

A trip to Yoker to take on Glasgow Mid Argyll on Saturday February 24 completes Kingussie's pre-season programme.

Ally MacLeod has stepped down as Kingussie second team manager.

The club will have a coalition of coaches looking after the side throughout the season.

Davie Anderson takes charge of the side from pre-season until the end of March. Iain Borthwick in April and Ronald Ross in May are followed by Ally MacLeod in June and July.

Russell Jones will round off the season, leading the squad in August and September.

The Kingussie colts have arranged pre-season matches against the Newtonmore colts at The Eilan on Saturday February 10 and Caberfeidh colts at The Dell a fortnight later.

GMA friendlies

Glasgow Mid Argyll have announced their pre-season programme.

GMA finished bottom of the Marine Harvest Premiership last season and they will be keen to hit the ground running in the National Division.

The Glasgow side will play four pre-season friendly matches. They host Tayforth at Yoker on Saturday February 3, whilst Newtonmore are their visitors a week later.

GMA's only pre-season away match is against Lovat at Balmacara on Saturday February 17, with Kingussie travelling to Yoker on Saturday February 24.

Glenurquhart Player of the Year awards

The 2017 Glenurquhart player of the year awards were announced at the club's annual dinner dance at the Clansman on Saturday January 27.

First team player of the year was former Ross County and Motherwell footballer Michael Fraser on his return to shinty. Fraser was followed by stand-in keeper Garry MacKintosh in second place with James MacPherson third.

Second team player of the year prize was Fergus Robertson.

Finlay Robertson was the club's young player of the year, whilst Hazel Hunter was again named Glenurquhart Ladies player of the year.

This weekend's fixtures

There are a number of pre-season friendly matches arranged for Saturday February 3.

Oban Camanachd are due to take the field for the first time this season. Ian Hay's side play host to Inveraray at Mossfield. Throw-up is at 1pm, although the pitch at Oban High School has been booked as a back-up. If there is a venue switch, the throw-up at the 3G pitch will be at noon.

Oban Celtic's first team squad travel to Taynuilt Sports Field to play Taynuilt with a 2pm throw-up.

Amongst the other warm up games, Marine Harvest Premiership champions Kinlochshiel travel to the Eilan to face 2016 winners Newtonmore.

The Fort William second team has lined up a meeting with Ballachulish at An Aird.

Glenurquhart and Inverness see their first action of the new term when they meet at Blairbeg, whilst Glasgow Mid Argyll have set up a clash with Tayforth at Yoker.

Both Skye and Kingussie have inter-club matches. North Skye and South Skye contest the Ewen Morrison Memorial Cup at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree, whilst Kingussie play the Liz Young Sixes at Dalfaber with a 12.30pm start.

Sin bin decision expected soon

A number of clubs and associations have given feedback on The Camanachd Association's new sin bin proposal.

The change would see a player sin binned for 10 minutes and given three points for a bookable offence rather than the current five points. The Camanachd Association board will consider all views ahead of making a final announcement.

National First Shinty tournaments re-scheduled

The National P5 (and under) and P7 (and under) First Shinty Festivals have been rescheduled for Saturday March 3.

The event, one of youth shinty's biggest days, was initially

confirmed for Saturday February 24 but a double booking meant the shinty tournaments had been moved.

Event organisers gave consideration to Saturday February 17 as an alternative date but this was ruled out as it fell within mid-term school holidays.

The new Saturday March 3 date clashes with the first day of the new senior shinty season so it is not ideal but it was the best compromise available.

The P5 (and under) tournament takes place at Lochaber High School, whilst the P7 (and under) competition will be held at the Nevis Centre.

Lochaber First Shinty qualifiers

On Sunday January 28, almost 100 children battled it out for a place in the final of the First Shinty Festival at the Lochaber area qualifiers.

Held at the Nevis Centre, there were two tournaments, the P4/5's in the morning and the P6/7's in the afternoon.

In the morning, there were teams from Ardnamurchan, Invergarry, Lochaber, Caol, Inverloch and Ballachulish.

There was brilliant play from this young group, with great skill on show. Returning winners Inverloch triumphed again and won their spot in the finals.

In the afternoon session, a record number of nine teams entered.

These were Invergarry, Ardnamurchan, Mallaig, Ballachulish, Caol, Lochaber, Inverloch, Lundavra and BSGLA.

The shinty was faster in this session, with more 'big' hits, but with no less skill on show.

With such big numbers, two pools were created. In the semi-finals Inverloch beat Ardnamurchan and Caol beat BSGLA. The final was a hard fought game between the two Fort William schools, but it was Inverloch who came out on top, completing the double and winning their place in the finals.

West coast shinty mourns

There was a huge turnout at the funeral of former Skye Camanachd Chiefstain, Flora MacLean, Torvaig, who died on Friday January 19.

Flora was a much-loved and hugely respected member of Skye Camanachd.

Her late husband Ewen MacLean played for the island club, whilst eldest son Caley Maclean was captain when Skye Camanachd won the Camanachd Cup in 1990.

Former Kinlochshiel shinty player Colin Campbell, or Collie as he was known, died peacefully on Saturday January 20 after a short illness.

When Kinlochshiel was formed in 1960, from the district teams of Kintail, Lochalsh and Glenshiel, Collie was amongst the first players to play for the new club.

They had immediate success, winning the Strathdearn Cup in 1961, the Sutherland Cup in 1962 and the Strathdearn Cup again in 1966.

Skye Camanachd exhibition

An exhibition at the Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre celebrates 125 Years of Skye Camanachd. The exhibition is open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays until the end of March.



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Logan Galbraith lands a turning kick on Adam Bratton.

MARTIAL ARTS WITH IAIN RODGER

Kyokushinkai Karate CLASSES are in full swing, with new members joining after the festive holidays. Potential beginners are welcome to come along to a class to watch or take part in a

session with no charge to see if it is something they would like to do.

Kyokushinkai Karate isn't for everyone but those that take part and stay the course will become stronger mentally and physically.

Anyone interested in learning Kyokushinkai Karate should contact Iain Rodger on 07584 166542 or iain@ikku.co.uk



Kaitlynn MacLeod with a high turning kick.

Kickboxing Saturday January 29 saw Logan Galbraith grading for Junior Black Belt; Sara MacIntyre, Robbie Bratton and Angus Files sitting for 1st Dan Black Belt and Kaitlynn MacLeod going for 2nd Dan Black Belt.

The test takes part over three hours of gruelling non-stop training, ending with continuous one minute full contact fights.

Logan had 20 fights, Sara, Robbie and Angus 30 fights each and Kaitlynn 40 fights. At the end of each of their



Sara MacIntyre, Kaitlynn MacLeod, Logan Galbraith, Robbie Bratton and Angus Files with their grading certificates.

tests, they were battered, bruised, shattered and fit to fall but everyone was delighted to be told they had passed and gained their new grades.

Training continues as usual: Wednesdays - juniors 4.30pm and seniors 6pm; Fridays juniors 4.30pm and seniors 6pm and a Sunday junior session

at 11am. Anyone thinking of learning this sport should contact Wullie Rodger on shanwill@gmail.com or 07588 513618.

Shukokai Karate Classes are back to normal this week, with all the clubs taking on beginners.

Anyone looking for details should contact Kenny Gray on kenni.gray@btinternet.com

BJJ Anyone looking for more information about BJJ and MMA classes should contact club coach Iain (Coogie) Potter on coogiepots@gmail.com

Green Machine suffer a heavy defeat in wintry East Kilbride

East Kilbride	62
Oban Lorne	5
BT West Division One	

A HEALTHY Oban Lorne squad boasting 21 players travelled to the central belt on Saturday to take on East Kilbride RFC for the second time this season.

The teams met at Glencruitten in October with East Kilbride battling out a narrow 10-8 win in a very physical game.

Oban were hoping for some much-needed points going into

the game with their lowly league position causing concern for the club, particularly with the bottom two teams Irvine and Helensburgh due to meet.

Fortunately, Helensburgh failed to raise a side for Saturday's league fixture meaning neither team picked up any points.

Coach Corrie Louw handed a start to Jamie Bate at outside centre, allowing captain Craig Wright to move onto the wing. Apart from that it was a fairly settled starting XV that took

to the field. With a strong wind and wintry conditions against them, Oban did well to hold the home side out for the first 10 minutes of the game. Eventually East Kilbride opened the scoring though with a try from a lineout drive close to the line to take a 5-0 lead.

Oban could not maintain possession and struggled at the set piece with the scrum, in particular, being dominant for East Kilbride's powerful pack.

The try count opened up for the hosts as they played the

Rugby

conditions well and raced into a convincing 38-0 halftime lead - a huge disappointment for the Oban side who were hopeful of their chances going into the match.

Half time seemed to be a welcome break for Oban Lorne who came out firing in the second half and dominated the first 10 minutes.

After a series of penalties was awarded, Oban found themselves camped inside the East Kilbride half. A quickly taken penalty was crossed kicked by stand off Iwan Rhys Roberts and touched down by Hooker Radostin Maksimov who continued his impressive scoring record.

This, however, was as good as things got for the men in green as the hosts ran in a further four second half tries to run out 62-5 winners.

East Kilbride have been on a great run of form recently and find themselves with an outside chance of promotion, along with Carrick, Garnock and Allan Glens.

Oban Lorne remain tenth in the league after Saturday's game and have another away journey this Saturday as they visit third-placed Garnock. Garnock recorded a 25-19 win at Glencruitten in the first game of the season. Kick-off 3pm.

The next home fixture for Oban Lorne is a crucial encounter against ninth-placed Cambuslang on Saturday February 10, kick off 3pm.

Oban Lorne's Glencruitten clubhouse will be open for this Saturday's opening Nat West 6 Nations fixture between Wales and Scotland. Kick off is at 2.15pm with everyone welcome to come along.



Oban Lorne Ladies before a recent game.

Another win for Lorne Ladies

Lismore	0
Oban Lorne Ladies	25
BT Women's National League 2	

IN ONE of their toughest fought games of the season, Oban Ladies were jolted back to reality in their opening fixture of 2018, taking on Lismore women's team away from home.

Oban travelled with a strong squad, including one substitute. Playing conditions were not ideal, but both teams put in an impressive performance of strength in a very physical match.

Lismore's perseverance and good defensive discipline in the opening half forced multiple green errors.

Despite this, Oban were the first team to come away with points following an impressive break up the wing by centre Erika Skofca, touched down by supporting centre Kirsty Sinclair.

However, multiple warnings from the referee to the whole team eventually resulted in a yellow card for Oban flanker Ailsa MacLachlan, as a result of high tackles. The latter end of the first half played out with big tackles from both sides.

An impressive carry by both props, Ellie MacNiven and Georgia Mitchell, as well as

another good drive by Skofca brought the Ladies back within 5m of their try line, but an unfortunate turn over at this point left the half time score at 0-5.

Due to injury, Oban requested to start the second half with uncontested scrums.

Following a scrum to Lismore, pressure from Oban forced a knock on, earning them one in return. Captain Laura MacCormick stormed over the line to score try number two off the back of this bringing the score to 0-10.

Although everyone was working hard, and the first game back after the long Christmas break is always a challenge, a quick pep talk before the next kick off kept Oban looking positively towards the remainder of the second half.

Frustratingly, handling errors came from both sides in the next few plays of the game.

Once again good drives were made by MacNiven and MacCormick, but once more the ball was lost in contact before any further points were secured.

Another high tackle from Oban afforded Lismore a penalty, but luckily the score remained at 0-10.

The next points came for second row Beth Menzies, now

Women's rugby

living in Edinburgh but still playing for her home team.

Oban maintained good defensive discipline and executed big tackles to keep a determined Lismore side at bay before securing the next try, this time for fly half Lucy Stewart.

The final try of the game was touched down by Oban scrum half Audrey Barr following a turned over line-out, to bring the closing result to a well-deserved 0-25 win to the visitors.

Oban have maintained an impressive record throughout the season, with their total number of points sitting at 571, to only one try conceded in all of their nine matches. They currently stand 19 points clear at the top of the league table to nearest rivals Grangemouth and Royal Dick Vet College.

Their next match is at home on Sunday February 4 at 2pm against Helensburgh, whom they last defeated 0-105, so supporters are encouraged to come along. Training is currently on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6-7pm at the Isle of Eriska Hotel.

Up-to-date information is available via the Oban Ladies Rugby Club Facebook page.



Oban Saints Under 13s celebrate after their 6-4 extra time win over Lasswade in the Scottish Cup. The boys now play Grassroots Development Coaching in the quarter finals on Saturday.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3450

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

J McNaughton
Inverlochlarig
Lochearnhead

F McCormick
Catalina Avenue
Oban

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1. If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

Easy to enter
Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules
No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.
The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. If no correct entry is received, two "near miss" prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company. In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



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Brave second-half fightback sees Saints roll on in Scottish Cup

East Kilbride RR 2
Oban Saints 4
Scottish Amateur Cup - 5th round

LAST Saturday at a wind swept Keir Hardie Sports Centre, Holytown, Oban Saints fought back from a two-goal deficit against East Kilbride Rolls Royce to book their place in the sixth round of the Scottish Amateur Cup.

A brace from Scott Maitland either side of the half-time whistle brought Saints back into a match that looked to be running away from them before Myles McAuley and Craig MacEwan completed the turnaround.

After a silence of remembrance for the late Charles 'Rex' Gallacher, Scottish Amateur Football Association president, Saints kicked off attacking the village end in extremely windy conditions which would make life difficult for both teams.

A good interception in midfield by Keith Millar started Saints first meaningful attack in the third minute from which Matthew Kelly won the first corner kick of the match on the right. Daniel MacCuish's left-footed in-swinger was punched clear at his front post by Rolly keeper Conor Flanagan, who made a solid connection to clear the danger.

A good run by Daniel MacCuish to get on the end of a Donald Campbell pass earned the youngster another opportunity to test the Rolly defence from the corner flag in the 13th minute. A better delivery this time was fractionally too high for the head of Craig MacEwan, allowing Conor Flanagan to make another decisive punched clearance.

Matthew Kelly made good ground on the right again to reach another Donald Campbell pass after 16 minutes. Kelly's cross on the run was agonisingly beyond the outstretched boot of Daniel MacCuish as Saints continued to dominate the early exchanges.

Saints' failure to capitalise on their early superiority was cruelly punished in the 20th minute when the hosts opened the scoring from their first foray into Saints territory.

There appeared to be no danger as the Saints defence mopped up a throw-in from the right but Willie Gemmell clearly had less time than he thought to

measure a pass from the edge of the 18-yard box. As he looked for the runners ahead, Gemmell was caught in possession by Marc Brown with the loose ball breaking perfectly for Rolly centre forward Andrew Cunningham who drilled a shot low into the bottom corner beyond the left hand of Graham Douglas in the Saints goal.

The opening goal proved a major setback for Saints, whose passes suddenly stopped finding their intended target, allowing the Rolly to take over as the dominant force. A Willie Gemmell free-kick from the left gave Saints the chance to put the ball into the danger area unfortunately the curling delivery bounced just beyond the back post run of Matthew Kelly.

Rolly left back Scott Woods picked up the first yellow card of the match for a late 24th minute challenge on Daniel MacCuish on the edge of the centre circle.



Daniel MacCuish.

The woodwork came to Saints' rescue in the 26th minute when, after a good Calum Steel run up the left wing, the ball was worked across to Steven Christie who crashed a right-foot shot off the Saints crossbar. The rebound fell to John McMonagle who cushioned a close range effort into the grateful arms of Graham Douglas.

The Saints goal continued to lead a charmed life with Daniel MacCuish making a crucial block on the penalty spot to deflect an Andrew Cunningham shot wide for a corner kick just on the half-hour mark.

Saints' fortunes were dealt another blow when Keith Millar's troublesome hamstrings



Scott Maitland rounds Rolls Royce keeper Conor Flanagan to level the scores. Match report and photos: Derek Black

forced him to leave the action in the 35th minute. With very few options on the bench, the gaffer took to the field, going into the middle of the back three with Willie Gemmell moving forward into midfield.

The gaffer had little time to adjust to the pace of the game and was left flat-footed in the 38th minute by Andrew Cunningham, who ran off him to power a header from a Marc Brown corner into the roof of the net and double the advantage for the hosts.

The Rolly had raised more than a few eyebrows by eliminating reigning Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division Champions St Joseph's FP in the fourth round and now looked set to add Saints to their list of conquests.

The second goal, however, proved to be just the wake-up call that Saints were desperately in need of and within three minutes of the half-time break Scott Maitland pulled one back. Linking up with Craig MacEwan and Donald Campbell, Maitland cut in from the left and placed a curling right-foot finish across Conor Flanagan and into the bottom corner of the net.

With the lifeline just before the half-time interval came another change of momentum in the match, with Saints now very much back on the front foot. Just two second half minutes had elapsed when Mathew Kelly ran at the heart of the Rolly defence and threaded a pass through to Scott Maitland, who timed his run well to beat the Rolly offside trap. With the home side

appealing in vain for an offside decision, Maitland had the freedom of the 18-yard box to take the ball around Conor Flanagan and tuck it left-footed into the bottom corner.

Saints completed the turnaround to round off a devastating 10-minute spell either side of the half-time whistle. Another swashbuckling attack was rounded off by Myles McAuley who got on the end of a Daniel MacCuish pass and curled a delightful finish past the despairing left hand of Conor Flanagan to give Saints the lead for the first time in the tie.

The Rolly made their first change in the 55th minute, replacing Calum Steel with Connor Briody. The move almost paid instant dividends with Briody sending Andrew Cunningham into the box where Alex Craik made a vital interception to take the ball off the toe of the Rolly striker at the expense of a corner kick on the left which Craig Campbell headed clear.

At the other end, the Rolly defence also coped well with a wind-assisted corner kick partially clearing Willie Gemmell's 60th-minute effort before Conor Flanagan came through a pile of bodies to get good distance with yet another decisive punched clearance from Gemmell's second attempt.

Frustration began to set in for the home side with Greg Kinnaid, Andrew Cunningham and skipper Paul Hughes all picking up bookings from referee Andrew McLean inside a nine-minute spell.



Myles McAuley is congratulated by Craig MacEwan after netting Saints third goal.

A poor clearance in an otherwise solid performance from Saints' number one Graham Douglas resulted in a goalmouth scramble in the 75th minute which almost cost Saints the lead. Sugar redeemed himself somewhat with an excellent save pushing an Andrew Cunningham shot onto the crossbar sparking a stramash which saw Alex Craik head the rebound off the goal line only for Steven MacLeod to head his attempted clearance against the crossbar once again before Andrew Cunningham passed up a fantastic opportunity to seal his hat-trick by heading over from six yards range.

Saints took full advantage of this let-off to extend their advantage just two minutes later. After a tidy passing move involving Myles McAuley, Matthew Kelly, Daniel MacCuish and Donald Campbell, a perfectly weighted pass from the skipper picked out Craig MacEwan's run into the box. Conor Flanagan dived bravely at MacEwan's feet but the Saints' top scorer clipped the ball over the prostrate keeper and into the net for Saints' fourth goal.

A similarly patient build-up 10 minutes later should have seen Saints stretch their lead still fur-

Football

ther but Matthew Kelly opted for power over placement and blazed an excellent opportunity high and wide of target.

The hosts kept plugging away but the Saints' defence remained firm until one final scare with two minutes of the regulation 90 remaining. After two failed attempts to clear a bouncing ball inside the 18-yard box the ball fell to Andrew Cunningham who sliced his shot wide of the junction of post and bar.

After five added minutes, the referee brought an exciting encounter to a close confirming Saints' place in the sixth round and another difficult away trip this time to West Kilbride to face Kilbride Thistle of the Ayrshire Amateur Football Association Premier League.

That tie will be played this coming Saturday at Kilwinning with a 1pm kick-off.

Meanwhile Saints lost out in the second round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy at Oban High School 3G on Tuesday night losing 5-4 on penalties after the game had finished 1-1 to a very good Lochgilphead Red Star team. Full report and photographs in next week's paper.

Scottish Islands Peaks Race Sailing and running

ENTRIES are now open for the 2018 Scottish Islands Peaks Race.

Starting at noon on Friday May 18, this is an epic sailing and fell running race that has been in operation since 1983.

The race starts in Oban with a short hill run, then a sail to Salen on Mull, run over Ben More, sail to Craighouse on Jura, run the Paps, sail to Arran, run Goat Fell, then sail to Troon.

The race takes three to four days and caters for multihulls, racers and cruisers. The sailing course of 160 nautical miles includes the strong tides and overfalls of the Corryvreckan and the Mull of Kintyre, while the runners cover 60 miles and 11,500ft of climbing.

A long weekend with a difference, and a race you will never forget.

Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup 5th round - East Kilbride Rolls Royce 2, Oban Saints 4; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils 2, Ferguslie Star 2; Rosehill Star 4, Dunoon 0; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star 6, Duntocher 2.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup, 6th round - Kilbride Thistle v Oban Saints; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils v Rutherglen; Premier Division Two - Castlemilk v Lochgilphead Red Star; Tarbert v Easthall Star.

Saints' youth team results and fixtures

LAST weekend's results: Scottish Cup - Lasswade 4, Under 13s 6 (after extra time). Scoring for Saints were Kyle Cooper 5 and Innes Jackson. Under 14s no game. Westercorn Star v Under 15s, postponed. Regional Cup - Under 16s 4, North Kelvin 0 (after extra time). On target for Saints were Jordan Norman (3) and Lennon Campbell. Regional Cup - Under 17s 1, Syngenta 4. Saints goalscorer was Cammy Hill.

This weekend's fixtures: Scottish Cup, quarter final - Grassroots Development Coaching v Under 13s; League - Renton Craigandro v Under 14s; League - League - Cambusland v Under 15s; Regional Cup - Mill United v Under 16s; League - Drumchapel United v Under 17s

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Craig MacEwan rounds off the scoring by netting Saints' fourth goal.

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WEATHER

Thursday Sunny
Winds strong North North Westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 6°C.

Friday Cloudy with light rain later
Winds moderate South Westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.

Weekend Outlook
Light rain on Saturday
Sunny on Sunday
Winds moderate South South Westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

FRIDAY

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday February 1, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date		am		pm			
Thur	06.04	4.2	12.42	0.6	18.34	4.1	** ** *
Fri	00.44	0.4	06.45	4.2	13.26	0.6	19.13 4.0
Sat	01.28	0.3	07.26	4.2	14.09	0.7	19.52 3.9
Sun	02.11	0.5	08.05	4.0	14.51	0.9	20.29 3.7
Mon	02.53	0.7	08.43	3.8	15.32	1.1	21.07 3.5
Tues	03.36	0.9	09.21	3.5	16.15	1.4	21.47 3.2
Wed	04.21	1.2	10.03	3.2	17.03	1.7	22.35 3.0

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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Row flares over Lochaber planning blueprint process

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

ALMOST two years to the day since a possible community buy-out of estate land as part of the £330 million sale of the smelter at Fort William was first reported, concerns have been raised over an alleged lack of transparency in the decision-making process for the planning blueprint for Lochaber.

It comes in the same week that Highland councillors finally approved plans for the £120 million expansion of the smelter by owners GFG Alliance to build an alloy car wheels factory near Fort William, creating hundreds of new jobs. GFG subsidiary company Liberty British Aluminium will manufacture the wheels.

But at the recent meeting of the council's Lochaber Area Committee, there was unhappiness over an unexpected three-month delay by council officials to the publication of the West Highland Development Plan, in part due to the smelter expansion project.

The reasons cited included further work being undertaken to develop what council officials termed a 'Fort William 2040 vision' that 'captures the up to date aspirations of all the partners' involved in delivering the smelter expansion.

But this week, Lochaber leader Councillor Andrew Baxter said that while the prospects of hundreds of new jobs being created and the safeguarding of the existing smelter workforce was very welcome, it should not come at the expense of real local scrutiny and involvement in the decision-making process.

'The majority of Lochaber

councillors have effectively been sidelined from this process, as decisions are made behind closed doors by civil servants and council officials,' claimed Mr Baxter.

'The delay in the publication of the planning blueprint for Lochaber is a perfect example. Lochaber councillors should have debated and agreed the plan this month, but this was scrapped because of an agreement reached out of sight [of councillors] to allow Liberty to make representations. It's a disgrace.

'We're facing the prospect of the biggest economic development for a generation, with a huge potential impact on our local infrastructure - roads, housing, schools and health services - so decisions need to be made openly and transparently.'

And last week, at a meeting of the South Lochaber Association of Community Councils, there was widespread frustration at what was felt to be a lack of genuine public consultation.

The 2016 deal involving the smelter takeover included the transfer of hydro power plants at Fort William and Kinlochleven and more than 100,000 acres of land, including the foothills of Ben Nevis. It is what will happen to this land that is the source of concern for many.

Nether Lochaber Community Council's Iain Jenner, who attended the recent gathering of community councils, said: 'Liberty's approach to public engagement seems to be that the company decides what it wants to do and then holds public meetings to tell people about it.'

'That's a completely different perception of what community involvement is to what we think

'O what a glorious sight...' at Lochaber Burns Club



The Alexandria Hotel in Fort William was the venue for Friday night's Burns supper, hosted by the Lochaber Burns Club. John Hutchison, left, who addressed the haggis, is pictured with Robert Cairns, right, committee members, top table guests and performers.

Picture: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

it should be. What is appalling in my view is that here is a government that stressed community empowerment and land reform yet this doesn't look like land reform to us.

'I'm afraid all this government talk of land reform and community empowerment smacks

more of "greenwash" than anything else.'

However, a spokesman for Liberty stressed the company had made all its representations for inclusion in the development plan well within the allotted time-frame set by Highland Council.

And Duncan Mackison, chief

executive of Jahama Highland Estates, the division of GFG Alliance that manages the estate lands, said: 'On the topic of community land ownership, there is genuine intent to deliver on this and we are progressing talks with several parties, including the community trust.'

And in an email to members on Monday, East Lochaber and Laggan Community Trust chairman John Hutchison said: 'The Scottish Government still wants to see a sustainable land transaction in relation to significant portions of the estate and GFG Alliance has undertaken to support this.'

Legend McNeish wins Fort honour

THIS month's major mountain festival in Fort William will see Scottish sports legend and broadcaster Cameron McNeish receive the prestigious Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture in 2018.

Nominated by the public and his peers as a mountain hero who celebrates achievement, accomplishment and the spirit of adventure, Mr McNeish joins the Fort William Mountain Festival Hall of Fame in the prestigious award's 11th anniversary year.

Mr McNeish, who joins previous esteemed winners such as Dr Adam Watson, Jimmy Marshall, Myrtle Simpson and Ian Sykes, told us: 'I'm thrilled that there is now a national recognition of the direct link between our hills and wild places and the social history, folklore, traditional music and culture of Scotland.'

'And I'm delighted to be joining a very special group of people who have, in many different ways, contributed so much to all these aspects of our national heritage. I'm genuinely humbled.'

For 25 years, Mr McNeish has been involved in making numerous television programmes for the BBC, ranging from mountaineering and rock climbing films to his own highly personal accounts of long backpacking trips through the Highlands and Islands, routes that include the Sutherland Trail, the Skye Trail and the Scottish National Trail.

Fort William Mountain Festival 2018 runs from February 21 to 25. For full details, go to page 16.



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Reasons revealed for grant refusal

THE SCOTTISH Land Fund (SLF) has said the reason it rejected an application for funding for a cinema project in Fort William was because it had concerns about the sustainability of the project.

Quizzed by the *Lochaber Times* over reasons for last week's refusal of the bid for monies from the Lochaber Cinema Group (LCG), a spokesperson for the SLF said: 'We understand how disappointing this news will be for Lochaber Cinema Group.'

'The Scottish Land Fund committee was concerned about the sustainability of the project outlined in the plans they submitted and so were unable to award funding.'

'We have contacted the group and discussed the reasons for this decision with them.'

However, in feedback on the Lochaber group's application, the fund's committee indicated they would welcome a new application from LCG at a later date, provided it seeks specialist advice and support regarding the running of a cinema and in turn works to strengthen its business plan.

SLF is administered by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the Big Lottery, with applications assessed by a committee of independent members from around the country.

LCG had wanted the SLF cash to help purchase two units at Airds Cross (formerly Wynnes Butcher and Oceans takeaway), with an estimated total project cost in the region of £600,000.

The detailed plans from LCG had already been granted planning permission by Highland Council, but were dependent on funding from the SLF to help purchase the units for £180,000.

Despite the disappointment over their application's refusal, campaigners have vowed to carry on. LCG's Marie MacPherson told the *Lochaber Times* that a vote at the group's AGM the next day had been to carry on and already there was a new venue possibility in the pipeline.

Ms MacPherson said: 'LCG is undoubtedly disappointed by this decision,' adding: 'At our AGM we decided as a group to carry on with our purpose.'

'That is getting a cinema established in the town and getting our own fundraising in place as we feel that grants are not going to be supportive of our purposes as ultimately boards that decide grant applications are not from the area applied from and we would rather oversee our own outcomes and decisions.'

'We also voted on increasing our board from three to six and welcome three new members.'

'We would encourage Lochaber to use this facility. As a group we are looking for more members to join and more fundraising locally.'

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There was a warm welcome for residents of the Abbeyfield Ballachulish Society home when they visited Kinlochleven Primary for a Burns lunch. JP F05 Kinlochleven

Young and old celebrate the Bard at Kinlochleven Primary

A HIGHLY enjoyable afternoon was spent at Kinlochleven Primary School last week when youngsters invited residents from the nearby Abbeyfield Ballachulish Society nursing home to join them for a traditional Burns lunch event.

Abbeyfield Ballachulish Society officer manager Dominic Duffy said the youngsters made the Friday event truly memorable.

'There were people from our lunch club and day care, as well as residents of the home, all at the school and the children put on a fantastic show for us,' Mr Duffy told the *Lochaber Times* this week.

'As well as an amazing lunch, there were poems recited and singing and everyone really had a great time.

'It's really good for the society to be involved with the community with things

like this - whether that be our clients visiting the school, as in this instance, or kids coming to us for something.

'It was great to see everyone having such a nice time at the Burns lunch. There's always something infectious about youngsters and their enthusiasm for life that rubs off on you, which is fantastic.'

And as well as the traditional Burns fare of haggis, neeps and tatties - with

a wee dram for the older lunch-goers - some of the Syrian families in Kinlochleven also brought along some mouth-watering extra treats and traditional Syrian dishes to try.

There was a warm welcome for residents of the Abbeyfield Ballachulish Society home when they visited Kinlochleven Primary School to join in with a special Burns luncheon last week.



Primary teacher Peter Carrick addresses the haggis.



Syrian families brought traditional food for the guests to try.



Parish priest Father Roddy pipes in the haggis.

Fort care home cheers Burns

A FORT WILLIAM care home celebrated all things Scottish during an afternoon of Burns activities.

HC-One's Moss Park invited residents, their families and members of the community in to enjoy an afternoon of entertainment, which included musician Larry Burns and his granddaughter singing Scottish favourites, accompanied by guitar and accordion.

Visitors enjoyed an assortment of homemade Scottish delicacies, including treats such as Dundee cake, Tunnock's teacakes, Irn-Bru and whisky, while the local priest, Father

Roddy, piped in the haggis to everyone's delight.

Charlie Moore, a resident and chorister with a huge passion for Burns, sang *My Love is like a Red Red Rose* and performed some of Burns's poetry.

Eileen Kerr, HC-One care home manager at Moss Park, said: 'It was marvellous to see so many people having a great time and celebrating our famous bard. We're already looking forward to our next national celebration.'

A total of £40 was also raised for the residents' fund, which will be spent on activities and day trips in the local community.



Moss Park residents enjoy the celebrations.

Inverlochly youngsters mark poet's birth with 'Scots Factor' special day



The pupils from P4, P5, P6 and P7 with the judges.

PUPILS of Inverlochly Primary School celebrated the Bard in their own special way, not by performing the traditional poems and songs, but instead in a 'Scots Factor' contest using more modern works written in the 'guid Scots tongue'.

As in the television show, the children took part in various heats with their own classmates, until three competitors remained to perform before judges in the grand final, which was held in the school hall last Friday.

P1 delivered the words and actions of *Robin, Robin Reid-breist* by J K Annand, while P2 performed *Skippin Sang* and P3 *Circus*, all by the same author.

The judges, Kelsey Ward of the Highland Bookshop, local

author Barry Hutchison and Lochaber Life editor Iain Ferguson, discussed each performance and decided on a winner while the whole of P1 entertained the audience with *Three Craws Sat Upon a Wa'* and P2 with the old favourite, *Ye Canny Shove Yer Granny Aff a Bus*.

Winner in P1 was Sywester Chrustek, with runners-up Ava Cameron and Tyler Smisson-Smith. P2 winner was Phoebe Judge, with Cailin Darnbrough and Scott Morgan as runners-up. Erin Kennedy was the winner in P3, with runners-up Theo Back and Caleb Collinge.

After a brief interval, the older pupils from classes P4, P5, P6 and P7 took the stage, P4 leading with *Miss McCurdle* by Gregor Steele about a favour-

ite, slightly eccentric teacher. Winner was Ellie Paterson, with runners-up, Lexie Innes-Ozen and Madison MacLean.

P5 offered up James Clark and Ben MacGregor with *The Sair Finger* by Walter Wingate, where, after various descriptions and actions on 'hoo sair a wee skelf' in the finger can be, Ben was announced the winner.

Pizenous Pet Shop, also by Gregor Steele, was the P6 choice, with Logan Spence as winner, Archie Ferguson and Katie McIntyre as runners-up.

A poem with a message about not leaving litter *Too Messy for Nessy* was the final rendering of the contest with Daniel Parfitt on the top of the pile with Asha MacNeil and Shannon MacNeil runners-up.



Pupils from Inverlochly P1, P2 and P3 certainly enjoyed the event.

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View from the Chamber

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sure that the powers-that-be regionally and nationally hear about local business views on key issues.

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To find out more about membership, call Lisa on 01397 705 765 or visit www.lochaberchamber.co.uk.

Salmon farms inquiry begins

SANDY NEIL
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THE Scottish Parliament launched an inquiry into the environmental impact of Atlantic salmon farming in Scotland last week.

The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (ECCLR) Committee, which scrutinises the Scottish Government's policies and expenditure, took evidence from the Dunbeg-based Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) on Tuesday. Earlier this month SAMS published its review of the scientific evidence.

'The lochs, voes and sheltered coastal waters of the Scottish

West Coast and Western and Northern Isles provide ideal conditions for growing salmon in floating cages,' the report began.

'The aquaculture industry creates jobs. Nevertheless, its growth during recent decades has encountered economic, societal and environmental challenges, which are likely to increase as the industry expands from 163,000 tonnes in 2016 to about 200,000 tonnes in 2020, with the intention to produce up to 300,000 tonnes in 2030.'

The scientists identified many challenges ahead, including the potential for lice from salmon farms to infect wild salmon and damage their populations. They said: 'More farmed salmon

implies more sea lice (and thus more costs for farmers and more impact on wild salmon), unless mitigation improves. Sea lice populations also appear to be developing resistance to many existing treatment[s].

'There is some evidence that some disease is transmitted between farmed and wild fish by direct infection [or] by escapees.'

'Increased numbers and sizes of farms could lead to increased risk of infection of wild fish unless improvements in farm biosecurity and disease prevention outpace the expansion of production.'

Salmon farm organic waste accumulating on the seabed can also significantly degrade communities of seabed (benthic)

animals, the report said. There are also concerns that salmon escaping from farms could interbreed with wild salmon populations, harming the wild fish.

The report said: 'An average of 146,000 cultivated adult salmon are reported to enter the sea from salmon farms each year in Scotland. The number is likely to be under-reported. The number of survivors is estimated to be significant in relation to numbers of wild salmon in Scotland (about a third of a million).'

'Increase in numbers of farmed salmon is likely to result in more escapees, unless farming practices are change[d].'

Another issue is the deterrence of predators by netting, or acous-

tic methods, or by shooting of seals, might harm populations of protected marine mammals and seabirds. Birds and mammals, especially seals, may take, injure or frighten farmed fish, or damage nets leading to escapes.

'Seals can be shot under Scottish government licence. Based on reported numbers of seals shot, current mortality levels represent a small proportion of Scottish seal populations.'

'Although current downward trends in seal shootings (both in numbers of licences awarded and seals reported shot) are encouraging, these may stabilise or reverse in case of significant future expansion of the industry including into more remote,

exposed and/or offshore areas.

'Acoustic deterrent devices (ADDs), which produce a loud underwater noise, are widely used as non-lethal seal deterrents. There is, however, little evidence concerning the efficacy of ADD. Their use adds to underwater noise pollution, which is known to cause behavioural changes in acoustically sensitive marine mammals. A simple prediction is that effects on predators will increase as salmon production increases. There is an urgent need to further develop and promote alternative non-lethal depredation prevention methods that do not also have such a widespread impact on the surrounding environment as ADDs.'

Garage rents stay below inflation

LAST week the *Lochaber Times* reported concerns from Fort William residents, outraged over the possibility their rents to the council for garages or for the ground on which their own garage buildings stood, could be set to rocket by hundreds of pounds each year.

But last Thursday (January 25), Highland Council said it had listened to its customers and agreed a below-inflation rise in garage and garage sites rents.

The results of a Highland Council consultation on housing, garage and garage sites rents directed the decision-making of councillors at the People Committee.

Members agreed to a below inflation increase of three per cent for garage and garage sites rents. This would result in an average rent increase of 28p to £9.63 per week for a garage and 5p to £1.62 per week for a garage site.

A consultation on proposed rent increases was carried out late 2017 and into early 2018 among tenants and owners renting garages or garage sites from the council. The consultation proposed increases in garages/sites to a more commercial level to allow increased investment in repairs.

The majority (91.8 per cent) of respondents did not want to see rent increases at the level of commercial rents proposed.

Andrew Baxter, Independent councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, who chairs the local authority's People Committee, said the council wanted to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to setting garage rent levels as the condition of garage sites varies across Highland and there is differing demand between different areas.

'I am pleased the People Committee endorsed my suggestion that local councillors are better placed to develop priorities within their own area,' he said.

'Councillors have agreed we should look at devolving this responsibility to local committees as part of the council's continued localism agenda.'

Nether Lochaber hosts land session

NETHER Lochaber Community Council will host Ronald MacIntyre and Robert Dunn, from Strontian Community Trust, on Tuesday February 6 at 7pm.

The meeting, which will be held in Nether Lochaber village hall, will discuss the challenges and rewards of a potential community buy-out of lands at Inchree.

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Dedicated Fort coach wins top national award

FORT William judo coach Rebecca Maclean was celebrating this week after being named Young Coach of the Year at the sportsScotland Year of Young People Awards on Friday night.

The 26-year-old, who travels up to 650 miles per week from Fort William to coach in the Judo Girls Rock programme in Springburn, Whiteinch and the east end of Glasgow, received the accolade for her tremendous dedication to her coaching work.

She was delighted to receive the award and says her love for the sport makes everything worthwhile.

She said: 'It was such a surprise to be nominated so it's amazing to have won.'

'I absolutely love what I do at Judo Girls Rock, which is why I keep doing it. I've grown such a bond with the girls and the project.'

'To see the difference in the girls while I've been working with them is so satisfying, that is the key to it. To see other girls enjoying judo like I did when I was younger is brilliant. I've gained so much experience out of the programme, as well.'

SportsScotland, the national agency for sport, teamed up with Scottish Sports Futures (SSF) to kick off 2018 in style with the sportsScotland Year of Young People 2018 Awards at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow.

The inspirational event showcased how sport can be used for positive social change and celebrated the incredible dedication of the young people who give selflessly to sport in their local communities.

Ten awards were handed out to honour the contribution of the young people who engage in sport through SSF and those who have supported them throughout the year.

The event was planned, delivered and hosted by young people, providing a perfect start to the Year of Young People in 2018, a year-long pro-



Rebecca Maclean travels 650 miles a week to coach in the Judo Girls Rock programme. Photograph: Margaret Ann McKenna

gramme of events, activities and ideas which will give young people in Scotland the opportunity to show the world what they are made of and to celebrate the amazing young personalities, talents and achievers across the country.

SSF is a charity which has changed lives through sport. Over the past 17 years its work has supported communities where people are vulnerable or at risk, with local and national programmes providing tailored pathways to positive destinations, enabling young people to fulfil their potential and widening opportunities for all.

Mel Young, who chairs sportsScotland, said: 'We were delighted to team up with Scottish Sports Futures to celebrate the fantastic work

being done through their initiatives up and down the country.'

'Congratulations to all the winners and nominees. There were some truly inspirational stories shared on the night. Through the hard work and dedication, these young people have shown how sport can be used for positive social change within their communities.'

'SportsScotland is committed to delivering sporting opportunities within communities to help young participants and athletes develop and learn. We continue to develop young leaders in sport through our young people's sport panel and Young Ambassadors programmes.'

Minister for Public Health and Sport Aileen

Campbell added: 'I was delighted to attend the sportsScotland Year of Young People 2018 Awards, and what a fantastic evening it was. Congratulations to those who won an award and to those who were nominated. The calibre of this year's nominees was exceptional. It's great to see such dedication, commitment and camaraderie from young people across Scotland.'

Pam Hunter, CEO of SSF, said: 'We were delighted to be able to showcase our dedicated young people and their work on what was a spectacular event. It is a great honour for us to be lead-sponsored by sportsScotland and we look forward to working in partnership with them in future.'

Jahama Highland Estates boss responds to criticism

THE boss of the subsidiary division set up by GFG Alliance to manage the more than 100,000 acres that came with the purchase of the Lochaber smelter at Fort William says the company remains excited and optimistic about the potential of the estate to bring value to local communities.

Highland Council's South Planning Applications Com-

mittee this week approved GFG Alliance's planning application to expand the smelter operations to incorporate a new manufacturing facility for alloy car wheels.

Responding to claims the company had been dragging its feet over engaging with local communities on plans for the estate lands, Duncan Mackison, chief executive of Jahama

Highland Estates, said: 'There is a broad spectrum of projects being delivered and many others in the pipeline. As we promised, we are involving local communities in these projects.'

'Naturally, we are happy to discuss this with anyone who has concerns. On the topic of community land ownership, there is genuine intent to deliver on this and we are progressing

talks with several parties, including the community trust.'

'These things take time but we believe are heading in the right direction.'

Mr Mackison went on to mention a few examples of projects being taken forward in association with local communities.

For a full list of the projects mentioned, go to www.lochaber-times.co.uk



An artist's impression of the new alloy wheels plant.

Ice Factor Group named best in Scotland

KINLOCHLEVEN'S Ice Factor Group has been named best Digital Business in prestigious Scottish awards.

The company, owner of the Ice Factor in Kinlochleven and Snow Factor Braehead, just west of Glasgow city centre, picked up the Digital Business of the Year in the Scottish section of the Federation of Small Business's Celebrating Small Business Awards 2018.

Both the Ice Factor Kinlochleven and Snow Factor Braehead are thriving thanks to greatly improved digital marketing.

Founded by Ice Factor Group owner Jamie Smith in 2003, the group began life by opening the Ice Factor - the National Ice Climbing Centre in Kinlochleven.

In 2011, that was followed by Mr Smith acquiring and successfully turning around the performance of the Glasgow-based snow sports facility now known as Snow Factor Braehead.

One of six snow-sport resorts in Scotland and popular with skiers, snowboarders and ice-climbers alike, it continues to be the country's



From left, Louise Stewart, FSB head of communications; Brian Currie, Digital Boost Scotland; and Kathleen Dickson and Lynn Aitchison, Ice Factor Group marketing team.

only indoor real snow facility.

The centre is listed as one of the top 10 climbing centres in the world, is five-star accredited by VisitScotland, and consistently ranks in the top five visitor attractions on Trip Advisor.

Building upon this success, in 2011 the company acquired the £32 million snow sports

centre in Braehead. At the time the facility was significantly underperforming.

The Ice Factor team radically restructured the company and significantly realigned the marketing with a digital first strategy.

The group is also scheduled to operate a new snowdome being constructed as part of

a significant regeneration project in Middlesbrough, which is scheduled to open in 2019/2020.

Mr Smith said all awards have value, but the Federation of Small Business Scotland has particular gravitas.

'With nearly 20,000 members of the FSB in Scotland, making the shortlist was a

considerable achievement. To subsequently win against such competition was amazing and it is testimony to the wonderful work done by our marketing team based at Snow Factor Braehead,' he commented.

Amanda Frazer, FSB Highlands and Islands area leader, added: 'Rewarding success is always a pleasure and yesterday's Scottish FSB Awards final - the first that we have held - was a truly great day out.'

'The room was really buzzing as the representatives of some of Scotland's finest SMEs exchanged news, views and business cards.'

'I was particularly delighted to see one of our own - the Ice Factor Group - scoop the Digital Award.'

'This win is a testament to all the hard work that Jamie Smith and his team have invested in the business, and not only is it good for the group's reputation and promotion, locally and nationally, but it also demonstrates the quality that the Highlands provides.'

'Let's hope that the Ice Factor Group reaches even loftier heights at the FSB Awards UK final in May.'

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MSP Allan meets BiFab workers at Arnish yard



Alasdair Allan.

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

NA H-EILEANAN AN IAR MSP Alasdair Allan says it is impossible to think of the future of Lewis without the Arnish Construction Yard.

Operated by troubled Fife-based engineering firm, BiFab, the Lewis yard has seen its operations wound down in recent weeks as work from the Beatrice offshore wind farm contract dried up.

It is reported the firm will run out of work for its remaining 1,000 members of staff at the end of March and it is now

bidding for several contracts it hopes will keep its workers in employment.

BiFab, which employs 1,000, was saved from administration late last year after the offer of a £15 million loan from the Scottish Government, but is now faced with legal action by one of its business partners, German firm EEW.

Last week, Dr Allan met with representatives of the Arnish workforce.

'This is a difficult time for the workforce at Arnish. When BiFab was threatened with administration towards the end of last year, a huge factor in keep-

ing it going was the dignity and resilience of yard employees,' he said.

'The Scottish Government has been vigorously assisting with efforts to seek out new contracts for BiFab after intervening to save the company from administration.

'Arnish plays a huge role in the economy of Lewis and I don't think it's possible to imagine the future of the island without it.

'As local MSP, I continue to take up a number of issues concerning Arnish, and I always emphasise the unique attributes and quality of production in the

yard. I will raise again with both the company and the Scottish Government the need for information which the workforce has at this time.

'I hope that BiFab will also work closely with Skills Development Scotland and the comhairle to allow apprentices and the training of young people.

'The renewables sector in Scotland continues to expand and there will be plenty of opportunities for manufacturing in this area.

'Our collective focus has to be on putting Arnish in the best possible position to capitalise on this work.'



CNN said attractions such as the fairy pools are overcrowded.

Skye MSP invites CNN to visit island

SKYE MSP Kate Forbes has personally invited US-based television giant CNN to visit the island after the broadcaster controversially listed Skye on a 12-strong global list of destinations to avoid because of claims of overcrowding.

Last week Ms Forbes rubbished the report by the CNN Travel programme, and insisted that Skye is very much open for business.

And now the MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch has sent a personal invitation to CNN's travel editor Brekke Fletcher to visit the island in person.

'Skye is home to people who live and work there all year round. The tourism industry, with all its pros and cons, employs a lot of people either directly or indirectly,' said Ms Forbes.

'In turn, that supports local schools, local shops and local services. Therefore to turn visitors away undermines the very industry which supports so much of the local economy.'

She added that she understood how the rapid growth in visitors to Skye meant there was pressure on key sites but added that this was down to the stunning scenery, delicious food and drink, and warm welcome that awaits visitors.

'Seeing it believing and that is why I've invited the CNN Travel team to see Skye and the West Highlands for themselves.

'It is unrivalled, and is also

creating hundreds of jobs,' said Ms Forbes. 'Visitors are welcome although they need to respect the natural environment and the people who live here year round.'

The American media company said the island's infrastructure 'creaked under the pressure' from visitors last year.

CNN claimed: 'In 2017, the infrastructure of Scotland's largest island creaked under the pressure as thousands of tourists in coaches and cars plied its narrow lanes, making a beeline for the remote fairy pools at Glenbrittle, the iconic sunset spot at Elgol and the rocky Old Man of Storr, with traffic snarl-ups an inevitable result.'

'Eventually the residents of beautiful Skye said enough was enough after complaints of noise, overcrowding and even visitors urinating in public. Police advised visitors to stay away unless they had already booked places to stay.'

CNN advised people to visit outwith the summer season 'when tourist numbers drop and sites can be explored without having to battle crowds'. Instead, the company said to explore the Small Isles of Rum, Muck and Eigg 'or go south and get lost on Jura.'

Also making the list were Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Venice, Santorini, Bhutan, the Taj Mahal, Mount Everest (Nepal-side), Machu Picchu, Galápagos Islands, Cinque Terre and Antarctica.

CalMac to ditch the use of plastic straws

CALMAC has said it will stop offering plastic straws aboard its ferries.

The company has announced it has signed up to the #NaeStrawAtAw campaign, aimed at reducing marine pollution and which was set up by pupils at a Glasgow primary school.

The campaign has already seen Ullapool recognised as the first village in the UK to ditch plastic straws in bars, restaurants and cafes.

And Skye MSP Kate Forbes has welcomed the news of the ferry operator's decision.

Ms Forbes, who is leading the Final Straw initiative, said she hoped that the development would encourage other transport operators such as the ScotRail Alliance to take similar action.

Ms Forbes wrote to CalMac earlier this month asking the firm to reconsider its stance, and last week Glasgow's Sunnyside

Primary School shared progress on its #NaeStrawAtAw project in a presentation to CalMac's community board in Oban.

'This is tremendous news and I'm absolutely delighted that CalMac has agreed to ditch plastic straws,' said Ms Forbes.

'CalMac staff, of all people, will no doubt see the impact of single-use plastics on our coastline and wildlife as they serve communities right along the West Coast.

'It is a tribute to CalMac's vision and leadership that it was willing to consider the importance of this campaign to ban plastic straws and then back it.

'It is leading the way and I hope that other transport organisations, such as ScotRail, follow CalMac's lead.

'I launched this campaign to ditch plastic straws in January because I firmly believe that Scotland should be leading the way.'



Ruairidh Mackinnon receiving his award from David Alston.

Ruairidh's proves he's top quality

THE latest Highland Quality Approach (HQA) award has gone to someone who goes above and beyond in his role to enhance the care given to patients and improve their quality of life.

Ruairidh Mackinnon is the handyperson co-ordinator for Skye, Lochalsh and South Wester Ross.

Based at Portree Hospital, he was nominated by the North Skye and Raasay community nurses, who said they believe they 'would not

be able to provide the nursing care to patients with long-term conditions and palliative care without Ruairidh's support and services.'

Ruairidh has been praised for his 'positive and diligent attitude' and commended for going 'above and beyond delivering beds and equipment at very short notice' which is 'often late after he finishes work and at weekends'.

The nursing team credit Ruairidh in helping them 'give patients a better quality of life'

and helping them 'enhance the care we can give'.

Ruairidh was surprised with his award earlier this month by David Alston, chairman of NHS Highland.

Nominations for the Highland Quality Approach awards are welcome from staff, patients, carers and the public.

The award reflects on an individual or team who has demonstrated actions and behaviour which epitomise everything about the Highland Quality Approach.



Kate Forbes has welcomed CalMac's decision on plastic straws.

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Comhairle secures £200,000 for heritage

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar has been successful in securing a cash injection of around £200,000 to help shape future heritage development in the Outer Hebrides, one of the first awards to be made through the National Lottery's new Great Place scheme.

The scheme has been devised and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in consultation with organisations involved in regeneration to ensure it responds to the specific needs of Scottish places, from city-wide initiatives to smaller, rural schemes.

The comhairle's heritage service will use the funding to place heritage at the heart of joined-up thinking to create a better place for people to live and visit.

The project, which will see an investment of just under £200,000, will help develop and implement a Great Place Strategy for the whole island chain, placing heritage at the heart of joined-up thinking to create a better place for people to live and visit.

The comhairle and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) collaborated to propose the work which will generate new links between heritage, arts



An Lanntair supported the application for funding.

and tourism to build economic growth and contribute to solving the challenging problems of population decline, access to work and access to recreation.

Community heritage organisations, landowning trusts, arts organisations (including An Lanntair and Taigh Chearsabhagh), and tourism sector group Outer Hebrides Tourism recognised the need to work together to tackle economic challenges and gave their support to the application.

The Great Place Strategy will propose actions both in the short-term and over a 10-year period which can deliver change for communities across

the Outer Hebrides, with development and consultation work starting this summer.

Councillor Donald Crichton, chairman of Sustainable Development at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said he was delighted lottery funding had been secured.

'The funding will help develop projects and collaborations centred on the islands' unique culture and heritage to address issues such as poverty, employment, health and education,' he said.

Commenting on the announcement, Lucy Casot, head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: 'You can't

imagine the Outer Hebrides without its lovely scenery, spectacular beaches, traditional Gaelic communities and ancient historical sites.

'Heritage and culture gives the place a unique identity and makes it special for the people that live there. It's the roots if you like.'

'This scheme will show how building on those roots can have a hugely positive impact on the local economy in terms of health, employment and education, as well as well as instilling community cohesion and pride.'

And Rachel Mackenzie, HIE area manager, commented: 'We are delighted to hear of the award and look forward to working in partnership with the comhairle to develop a Great Place Strategy that realises the economic potential of our unique heritage assets.'

'We also acknowledge the input from community organisations in taking the proposal forward and intend for this productive relationship to continue as the strategy develops.' A recent report highlighted that tourism-related to heritage in the islands has the potential to be worth £8 million and support 160 jobs.

Publication of Islands Bill report is welcomed

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar has welcomed the publication of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee's Stage 1 Report on the Islands (Scotland) Bill.

Leader Roddie Mackay said: 'This is a very welcome step

forward in progressing the Islands Bill.

'The comhairle has been campaigning long and hard for many of the measures recommended by the committee including "island proofing" - by which new legislation will have

to be considered for its effect on island communities.

'It is also to be welcomed that the committee has recommended that in the event that an island community is disadvantaged by legislation then there should be a means

to revisit that legislation. Protection of the parliamentary constituency of Na h-Eileanan an Iar is also long overdue and affords the Western Isles the same protection as the Shetland and Orkney constituencies.'

Work begins on new Fort transport study initiative

MARK ENTWISTLE
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WORK has started on a study to identify how best to improve transport movement in and around Fort William, after Highland Council recognised investment was urgently needed due to pressure on the existing transport network caused by increasing summer visitor numbers and employment-led growth.

Consultants AECOM have now been appointed to conduct a study to identify opportunities for strategic multi-modal transport improvements which will support local and nationally significant economic developments within the area.

The scope of work includes road, railway, marine and active travel infrastructure. The study will be project managed and overseen by a steering group which includes representatives of Highland Council, HITRANS, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Transport Scotland. HITRANS, HIE and the council have agreed to jointly fund the study.

The intention is for AECOM to deliver the draft pre-appraisal report by early summer. Allan Henderson, Independent councillor for Caol and Mallaig, and chairman of HITRANS and the council's Environment Development and Infrastructure Committee, said a key element of the appraisal would be consultation with stakeholders in the Lochaber area.

'Fort William is a dynamic and diverse area. It is a truly multi-modal area, served directly by road and rail, with onward connections to ferry ports on the West Coast,' he said.

'It is also served by long-distance cycling and walking routes. It not only functions as a place to live and work, but has strategic economic importance as a leisure and tourism hub, promoted as the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

'The area continues to grow in terms of land use develop-

ment, and visitor numbers, generating additional trips using the existing transport infrastructure.

'The best people to tell us the problems are the key transport providers and users of the local transport network and I'm sure they will have some pretty good ideas on how to fix them. I'm sure the consultants will be busy speaking with the stakeholders to identify the opportunities that will influence the development of solutions.'

Lochaber MSP Kate Forbes welcomed the study and praised local councillors like Mr Henderson.

'Allan Henderson and other local councillors such as Ben Thompson have been working

incredibly hard to drive plans forward,' she said.

'Since I was elected just under two years ago, local residents have consistently highlighted the A82 as one of the top priorities for the West Highlands and I fully agree.

'This work to identify long-term improvements is separate to the work over the winter to ensure the A82 through Fort William is as ready as possible for the coming season.'

She added: 'Of course, short-term works will not be the magic bullet – ultimately we need alternatives to the current A82 and it is great that the study will consider other forms of transport like trains and active travel.'

A82 branded a 'disgrace'

THE A82 Partnership has slammed the trunk road as a 'national disgrace' for the condition of the surface of the route in and around Fort William.

In a statement on Friday January 26, the Partnership responded as part of a consultation process to the decision by trunk roads maintenance operator BEAR Scotland to move up its timetable to start £200,000 of resurfacing work on the A82 between the Nevis Bank roundabout and Torlundy to the end of this month.

Describing parts of the A82's surface as a 'national disgrace' in its comments to BEAR Scotland, the Partnership went on to inform the roads body that, while it welcomed the proposed resurfacing works, BEAR Scotland was still failing to address all of the many areas of the road that are requiring urgent repairs.

'The planned works are urgently required and consideration must be given to advancing the proposed dates,' said a Partnership spokesperson.



BEAR Scotland says it is moving remedial works forward to tackle the A82 road around. JP F02 Rough road into Fort William...2

'The work must be completed to a standard which will not result in further short-term patching or medium-term resurfacing.

'The planned closure of the Nevis Bridge must be given wide publicity and close liaison with the emergency ser-

vices must be ensured (roadside notices at least two weeks in advance).

'Consideration must be given to opening up the an Aird/Inverloch bridge during the night of the Nevis Bridge closure (this has been made operational on previous occasions).

'Transport Scotland must extensively promote the procedure for making damage claims and highlight the criteria for a claim to be accepted.'

The A82 Partnership has now asked BEAR Scotland to respond to all the above points.

Shelving teaching staff cuts 'the right decision'

IT APPEARS that the threat of up to 300 jobs being axed across the region's schools has been shelved after reports that Highland Council's ruling administration is to propose protecting school posts from any budget cuts.

The local authority has been looking at a range of suggestions on how to plug a £26 million black hole in its finances, including cutting back on teacher numbers.

But the council's budget leader, Alasdair Mackinnon, has now said that suggested cuts to 300 school jobs in schools were 'off the table'.

A finalised set of proposed savings to other services is due to be considered by the full council on February 15.

And, on Friday, Lochaber senior councillor and new Highland education services chairman, Andrew Baxter, confirmed

the good news for schools and parents.

Mr Baxter, Independent councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, who also chairs the council's Lochaber Area Committee, had pledged last week to the *Lochaber Times* that he was determined any proposals to axe teaching staff jobs would be halted.

Commenting on Mr Mackinnon's statement, Mr Baxter said: 'No doubt some will say this is U-turn or massive backtrack. Some will claim the political kudos that it was a result of their influence from the sidelines or in the newspapers. That's fine, I can live with that. But fundamentally it's the right decision.'

There had been uproar last week when the suggestion of cuts to numbers of teachers, additional support needs staff and pupil support assistants emerged due to a leaked document.

Councillor says house rent rise is 'very small'

LOCHABER'S senior councillor says a very small rise in rents will help to ensure a continued housing service to tenants while meeting Highland Council's legal requirements.

Andrew Baxter, Independent councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, was commenting after the local authority agreed Highland housing tenants will pay a small 0.5 per cent increase in council house rents for the coming financial year 2018/19, which equates to an average weekly rise of 36p.

Members of Highland Council's People Committee – which Councillor Baxter chairs – approved the 0.5 per cent rent increase which would result in an increase in the average weekly council house rent from £72.88 to £73.24.

The 0.5 per cent increase will also apply to travellers' site pitches.

'The council has a legal requirement to balance its housing revenue account income and expenditure at the end of each financial year,' added Councillor Baxter.

'In order to achieve this, members have accepted the proposal for a modest increase to housing rent and service charges for the coming year 2018/19.

'The council continues to identify annual efficiency savings aimed at reducing management and maintenance costs without compromising best value for tenants. This very small rise in rents will help to ensure a continued housing service to tenants while meeting the council's legal requirements.'

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Teachers and parents urged to join consultation

LOCHABER senior councillor Andrew Baxter, in his new role as chairman of Highland Council's People Committee, has slammed proposed changes to the governance of schools as just adding to the bureaucratic burdens already weighing on head teachers, saying they will do nothing to improve the education of local children.

In letters to teachers and parents across the region, co-written with the deputy leader of Highland Council, Councillor Alasdair Christie, Mr Baxter, Independent councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, has urged them to get involved in the Scottish Government's consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill.

To teachers, the two men outline Highland Council's concerns to the sweeping changes proposed to the way schools are

managed and governed. 'This matter is of the greatest importance to Highland's children. As parents, and as the deputy leader of the council and chair of the People Committee, we have written to all head teachers about this,' they stated.

'We are now writing this open letter to all teachers, to encourage you to make comment on the government's plans.'

The Scottish Government published *Education Governance: Next Steps* in June last year.

The two councillors continued: 'That document proposed radical changes to the responsibilities and legal duties of head teachers, parents, local councils and national bodies such as Education Scotland. The government has now published proposals to implement many of these changes through new legislation.

'Highland Council shares the ambition of the Scottish Government to raise attainment for all, and to close the gap between those children who are least and most advantaged.

'We do not believe that the Next Steps proposals will achieve this. The proposals do nothing to de-clutter the current arrangements for Scottish education. They introduce new layers of scrutiny and management, and confuse responsibility and accountability for the management of schools.

'Highland Council is committed to working with head teachers to provide better opportunities to drive school improvement and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy as part of the management of schools programme.

'We welcome regional collaboration, but we do not believe that

new formal structures and new legislation are necessary.

'The government's proposals remove responsibility for the improvement of education from Highland Council, and impose new responsibilities and duties at a regional and school level.'

The two men also told teachers they believe the proposals will create new tensions between different parts of education services system and fragment relationships between schools and other services for children.

Saying new laws to make schools better were not needed and many of the government's intentions could be achieved without new legal duties on head teachers, Councillors Baxter and Christie concluded by urging teachers to discuss with other teachers and trade unions and professional associations

WHAT'S ON

February 1 (today) – Lochaber Local History Society talk will be Mick Tighe on the history of skiing in Scotland and Lochaber under the title 'Off piste? No piste – Ski-ing in Scotland before Tows'. All welcome at the Ben Nevis Hotel today (Thursday) at 8pm.

February 4 – Nether Lochaber Community Association holds its next event on Sunday, February 4. Meet at Onich Village Hall at 10am. All welcome.

February 5 – The next meeting of Fort William Scottish Women's Institute is at 7.15pm on Monday, February 5 in the Montrose Centre, Inverloch. The speaker will Sheena Fraser who will take her audience on 'A Trip to Nepal'.

February 6 – Staff and volunteers from Caol-based Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC) for sight and hearing support will visit Mallaig Medical Centre on Tuesday February 6, from 1.30pm to 3pm. LSC representatives will offer advice and assistance to anyone living with a sight or hearing loss. The team will also provide NHS hearing aid batteries and retubing if required. No appointment necessary.

February 6 – Fort William Accor-

dion and Fiddle Club is holding a musical evening on Tuesday February 6, at 7.30pm, at the Railway Club, Inverloch. Guest artists will be the Steven Carcary Trio. All welcome. Admission £5. Tea and raffle extra.

February 6 – Lochaber Transport Forum will hold an open meeting in the Duncansburgh Church Hall in Fort William on Tuesday February 6, at 11am. Anyone with an interest in local transport is welcome to attend.

February 25 – There will be an opera concert at St Mary's, Arisaig. Several artists (singers, along with a violinist, a cellist, a harpist and an organist) from Scottish Opera will be performing the Faure Requiem to commemorate all of those who died in the First World War, choosing this date to remember particularly Mary McKinnon, who died on the hospital ship the Glenart Castle, on February 26 in 1918. The concert, which starts at 4pm, is free and all are welcome. There will be a collection at the end, so that people who wish can make a contribution toward St Mary's and the community council to support the Christmas lunch for the elderly of the village.



Passers-by talk to the Army Reserves in Fort William.

7 SCOTS show off military hardware

SOLDIERS from 7 SCOTS – the 7th battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, the local Army Reserves for the Highlands and Islands – were in a wet Fort William last week as part of a recruitment drive.

The battalion – also known as the 51st Highland – consists of a number of infantry com-

panies located throughout the Highlands. C Company has detachments based in Inverness, Wick and Stornoway.

During the visit to Fort William last week, soldiers talked to passers-by and showed off military equipment, including a Foxhound force protection vehicle, as well as a selection of weaponry.

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Lochaber

HIGHLAND Council is to seek the views of local communities on a proposal to establish a Gaelic medium catchment area for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, located in Caol.

The change is being proposed in line with statutory guidance on Gaelic medium education.

Members of the council's people committee have agreed to undertake a public consultation on the proposal.

The consultation will take place under procedures set down in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

The views of parents, the local community and others will be sought over a period extending from January 29 to March 16.

A public meeting will be held in Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar on February 27.

Caol

THOUSANDS of people across Scotland saw the acclaimed documentary film *Resilience* last year and this month Lochaber residents will get the chance to see it in Fort William thanks to the Stramash Social Enterprise.

The film explores the insights science is gaining concerning the long-term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE).

The event, on Saturday at Kilmallie Free Church in Caol on February 10, consists of two parts. First, people will get the chance to view *Resilience*, which makes clear the hidden struggles that many children face.

The second part will comprise a discussion led by two of the people working hard to bring about change in Scotland – research scientist Suzanne Zeedyk and education expert David Cameron – also known as the 'Real David Cameron' among educationalists.

This will focus not only on raising awareness of ACES, but on identifying solutions and anyone working with or caring for children and young people will find useful insights at this event.

The event on February 10 starts at 10.30am and runs until 1.30pm and tickets priced £15 at Eventbrite www.tinyurl.com/yba3upl3

Kinlochleven

WE HAD a great response to our competition to win tickets to the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show this month.

And the winner is Peter McIntyre, from Leven View, Kinlochleven.

Peter wins two tickets to the show, which is once again sponsored by one of Scotland's leading motorhome dealers, BC Motorhomes, and which will take over the entire SEC in Glasgow from February 8 to 11.

Congratulations!

Invermoriston

MOTORISTS using the A887 at Invermoriston will soon benefit from an improved road surface thanks to resurfacing works programmed to start early next month.

The £230,000 investment by Transport Scotland will see improvements to a section of the A887 almost 2km long, creating a smoother and safer journey for motorists.

Works is due to start Monday February 5 for 10 days and is scheduled to take place between 7am and 7pm each day, with no works currently planned over the weekend.

The A887 will remain open throughout the improvements, however a 10mph convoy system of traffic management will be in place to allow the works to be carried out safely for the protection of the road workers as well as motorists. The convoy system will be removed outside of working hours however a temporary speed restriction of 30mph will remain as traffic will be running on a temporary surface.

Eddie Ross, BEAR Scotland's North West representative, said: 'Our teams will look to complete these essential works as quickly and safely as possible, however we would encourage motorists to plan their journeys ahead by checking the Traffic Scotland website for up to date information.'

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Rotarian musicians Sheana Fraser and Richard Baxter provided a fiddle and guitar accompaniment to the Alexandra Hotel's Angela Nolan as she carried the haggis aloft on a silver salver. The trio are pictured here with President-elect Iain Johnston. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Lochaber Rotary celebrates Burns

AT ITS weekly business lunch meeting last week, 32 members and guests of Lochaber Rotary Club celebrated the life and songs of Robert Burns, with a fine meal in Fort William of game terrine and traditional haggis with neeps.

In the absence of a piper, Rotarian musicians Sheana Fraser and Richard Baxter provided a fiddle and guitar accompaniment to the Alexandra Hotel's Angela Nolan as she carried the haggis aloft on a silver salver.

Past-president John

Hutchison pictured right, then ably and energetically addressed the 'beast' with a stirring rendition of Rabbie's 'fair fa' your honest, sonsie face, Great Chief-tain o' the Puddin'-race!

After lunch, members continued their tribute to Rabbie when John led them in singing Aye Fond Kiss and in a lively performance of Green Grow the Rashes.

President-elect Iain Johnston thanked John, Sheana and Richard for an excellent and memorable session of lunchtime entertainment.



Hotel scoops regional prizes

GLENFINNAN House Hotel was among the regional winners for the Highlands, Islands and North East in the Scottish Hotel Awards 2018, which were announced recently in Inverness.

The famous Glenfinnan Hotel picked up the Highlands regional awards for Best Bar Dining Hotel and Romantic Hotel, while Fiona Currie, deputy manager, who has worked at Glenfinnan House Hotel for 20 years, picked up a well deserved 'people of

excellence' award as the Highlands region best deputy manager.

The team at the hotel and the local community will now be keeping fingers crossed when the regional winners go forward to the national hotel awards in April.

The hotel now goes forward to the national awards.



Western Isles

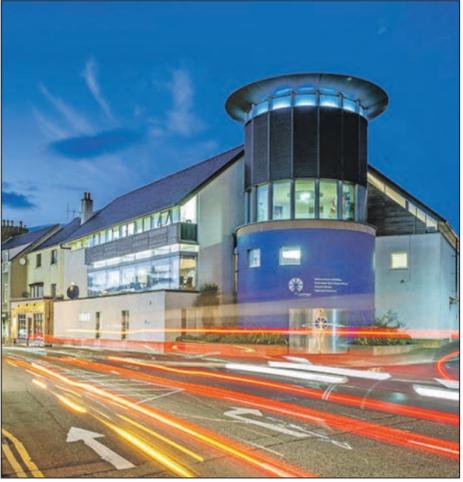
CREATIVE Scotland announced that An Lanntair, the major arts centre and creative hub for the Isles of Lewis and Harris, will receive £1.21 million in funding from its Regular Funding Programme for 2018-2021.

The award recognises the significance and diversity of An Lanntair's performing arts, cinema, exhibitions and music programme.

An Lanntair chief executive Elly Fletcher said: 'The team and I are delighted that Creative Scotland has recognised the importance of An Lanntair as a centre and hub for the arts, locally and nationally, and has made this crucial investment in our future.'

'This award belongs to each and every staff and board member who has worked so hard to achieve this recognition, every audience member who has engaged with and supported our programme, and all the incredible, talented artists out there who continuously create, produce and challenge us all through their work.'

Audiences can expect to see An Lanntair continue to grow its many world-class festivals and events. With new funding, the organisation will embed its role as a go-to support space for new and emerging artists and creative busi-



An Lanntair has secured a major funding boost from Creative Scotland.

nesses, offering structured programmes of mentoring and opportunities for creative practitioners to develop their practice, share and network among each other, and create opportunities for showcasing the work of Hebridean artists far and wide.

An Lanntair will focus significant efforts on developing its role as a lead organisation for the Gaelic arts in the islands, supporting the growth of both contemporary and traditional Gaelic performing and visual arts and artists.

David Green, An Lanntair's chairman, said: 'The award of regular funding for the next three years is fantastic news for An Lanntair, especially when funding for the arts in Scotland is under such pressure.'

'Creative Scotland has shown faith in us, based on our achievements to date and the commitments we made in our application and business plan. Our brilliant team of staff will justify that faith, and An Lanntair will grow and flourish as never before.'

RETRO Roamer

More Roamerisms from 30 years ago

Two local ladies go to one another's house on alternate Thursdays for coffee and a chat. So I suppose it had to happen... Last Thursday, they passed each other while driving on the Blar. One was waving and the other was gesticulating through the windscreen. Aye, one of them had forgotten she was the home hostess for the day.

Hitchhiker standing on the Blar, across from Lochaber High, bearing a small blackboard on which was chalked 'LOCHAILORT PLEASE'. Very enterprising, I thought. Obviously, when he got to Lochailort he'd rub out that destination, and write in Mallaig or Glenuig, or wherever. Then it struck me again that, complete with blackboard, he was seeking the prospective Lochailort lift from outside the High School. Surely he couldn't have been a member of staff?

Mallaig nearly lost one of its sheep, or, in this instance, a wee lamb to the other side of the Channel. A French couple were intercepted at Glasgow Airport at the weekend with the lamb in a holdall! They told the airport police they had found it on the A830 near Mallaig. It had a broken leg and they planned to take it home – to Lourdes. It has not been established whether this was for a miracle cure, or because the couple live in Lourdes. However, the lamb was driven away to nearby Erskine Farm where it was quickly adopted and named Eunice in memory of a ewe which had died the previous year while lambing.

Then there was Ca-lamb-ity Malky from Lochaber High School. Malky was yomping round Camaghael when he came to grief. He was running at such speed that he failed to notice two wee lambs in his path. Malky took evasive action a few seconds too late. The result was that he landed in the jaggy bushes, suffering lots of scratches and considerable injured pride. Malky is still lamb-enting the fact that he had been brought back down to earth by the Wonder of Woollies.

The accolade of Smile of the Week must go to the Rotary Club of Lochaber. Two Japanese visitors arrived at last Wednesday's lunchtime meeting in the Grand Hotel. Both Rotarians. In the course of the limited conversation it emerged that both are dentists in Tokyo. At that point the Rotary President took the opportunity of saying, 'Well, then, you must go and see the Japanese plaque in 'The Parade'. No humour intended.

Ian Hope set off from Corpach for Aviemore. Arrived, and on unpacking, he found he was minus what we used to call a sandshoe. Consternation. Part of the reason for the Aviemore trip was to go out running. Phoned home. 'Have I left a trainer behind, Mum?' Ian had. So, off to Laggan, as a halfway house, went Lucy Hope, with one trainer on the floor in front of the passenger seat. Meanwhile, Ian, too, was en route for Laggan, determined to get his weekend off on a proper footing.

Kilmallie Shinty Club was 'Buying Killarney'. Right enough, to begin with the players and officials were laying off the porter and whisky in favour of tea, coffee, milk, squash, water. Complete with their own piper, they panned Eire Og in the Pan Celtic Festival's shinty-hurling match. And all 19 Kilmallie ambassadors had a divil of a fine time sure enough. Not only did they say Goodbye to Killarney, with many happy memories, they also left a commemorative plaque, courtesy of Lochaber District Council.

Hughie hit the nature trail from the Moorings on Saturday and reached dizzy heights by ladder when he reapatriated an owlet to a tree. The young one (not Hughie) had fallen out of a tree. So Hughie, as befits the station officer of Fort William Fire Brigade, was 25 feet up a ladder, successfully rehousing the youngster, to 'owls' of acclaim from his bird-watching colleagues.

Nairn McArthur received a special prize from the Glasgow Herald in that paper's Scottish Placenames competition. Nairn's rendering was 'Onich Soit Qui Mallaig Pense'. Roughly speaking, that's 'You might think you're in Mallaig, but you're only in Onich!' Not bad from a man called Nairn. Or 'Nern' as they say in Inverness.

The frivolity at Presto's during the Telethon Appeal was at full pitch. Not only were most of the staff wearing sticky-out ears, but colourful costumes were the order of the day. There were flower girls, serving wenches, gypsies and even one-staff member dressed four square as an Oxo cube. All of them went about their normal supermarket stint with great glee. Then a visiting cailleach approached. She tapped one of the local lasses on the shoulder and said, 'Excuse me, where do you keep the peppers?' Local lass looks at cailleach a bit old-fashioned. 'I'm sorry,' said she, 'You'll have to ask one of the staff'. Cailleach gives back, 'Oh, I thought you worked here and are dressed up for the occasion'. Give Margaret Clark, in full traffic warden regalia, her due, she laughed louder than anybody else.

A couple of Fort football tales to finish: Henrijk, Stewart and John Sandison worked valiantly on Saturday to ensure a turnaround of Claggan Park – if not of Fort William FC's fortunes on the day. Because the centre of the usual playing surface was waterlogged, the only solution was to move the goalposts – literally. This the trio did, relining the pitch, so that the Fort v Broch match could go on across-field instead of along-field. Just a pity the result didn't match their efforts.

Neeny Ross's ears were ringing at that game. Over the tannoy at half-time came the announcement that Fort William FC and fans would like to wish Neeny a 'Happy Fifty Birthdayyeth!' And, as if that wasn't enough, the next loudspeaker message indicated that the winning ticket in the match draw was No 326. Who had it? None other than Neeny Ross! 'Ah, but', intervened John Murphy, 'I bought the ticket for Neeny. So I hope he'll be going halves with the prize!' In other words, a half bottle apiece.



Ferry for Treslaig.

FW

Viewpoint



Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

There has been widespread and justifiable delight at the news that GFG Alliance wants to expand its Fort William smelter to construct a new factory that will produce alloy car wheels.

As we have reported extensively in recent months, the new plant, to be run by the subsidiary company Liberty British Aluminium, is expected to generate hundreds of jobs and provide a very welcome boost to the economy of the Lochaber area.

However, it is disappointing to have to report this week that concerns have been raised by councillors

and members of the community over the amount of local scrutiny and involvement in the decision-making process over the Lochaber planning blueprint, specifically with regard to an alleged lack of transparency.

As Councillor Andrew Baxter said, we're facing the prospect of the biggest economic development for a generation so decisions need to be made openly and transparently.

We would urge all involved to co-operate better to ensure the greatest level of public engagement over this process.



Days gone by – 1937

Iain Thornber sent us this atmospheric picture, which, he said, shows 'a deer forest in September: Black Mount, Rannoch Moor. Photograph by Seton Gordon 1937'.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

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THIS piece, while not a direct reply, was aroused by the correspondence which appeared in the letters to the editor a few weeks ago in which the writer made comment on the Highland Clearances.

The wrongs of the past should not be the cause of bitterness or aggression in the present or the future but neither should they be forgotten and they should certainly not be denied.

The period of the Highland Clearances, while complex, was a cruel chapter in our history and it was preceded and followed by a sustained attack on the Gael that has lasted well into living memory. There is no doubt that some who emigrated before, during and after the period referred to, did so willingly and with the hope of a better life.

However, there is similarly no doubt that tens of thousands were forced, against their will, to leave their homes and their homeland in brutal fashion.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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GED A THA MÒRAN geamhraidh fhathast romhainn, saoiidh mi gum bheil mi a' faicinn beagan de shnuadh earraich is mi a' sgrìobhadh seo air madainn shocair, shoilleir, agus nach sinn a th' a' cur fàilte air a leithid! Cha b' iongnadh ged a bhiodh sunnd dhaoine beagan isosal ri linn na droch aimsire a th' air a bhith a' leantainn fad sheachdainean a-nise, agus nuair a chuirear sin an lùib naidheachdan duilich mu bhàs charaidean is eòlach, 's e toiseach car dubhach a th' air a bhith air a' bhliadh' ùr. Nach math ma-thà togail fhaotainn a leasachadh aimsire, agus le solas an latha gu folaiseach a' sineadh tha fhios gum bu chòir dhuinn ùrachadh dòchais agus spioraid fhairachadh.

Ach cha ghabh fìorachd seachnadh, agus dhan mhòr-chuid de shluagh na dùthcha tha naidheachdan gainnid agus an tuilleadh ghearraidhean air ionmhais poblach na fhìor adhbhar iomagain. Chan eil lasachadh air an fhàsadh air seirbheisean poblach,

The following is a translation from Gaelic of the eyewitness account of Catherine MacPhee, Iochdar, South Uist, of the South Uist Clearances of 1848, taken from Carmina Gadelica, Volume 3 by Alexander Carmichael.

'Many a thing I have seen in my own day and generation.

'I have seen the townships swept, and the holdings being made of them. The people being driven out of the countryside to the streets of Glasgow and to the wilds of Canada, such as them that did not die of hunger and plague and smallpox while going across the ocean.

'I have seen the women putting the children in the carts which were being sent from Benbecula and the Iochdar to Loch Boisdale, while their husbands lay bound in the pen and were weeping beside them, without power to give them a helping hand, though the women themselves were crying aloud and their little children wailing like to break their hearts.

'I have seen the big strong men, the champions of the countryside, the stalwarts of the world, being bound

on Loch Boisdale quay and cast into the ships as would be done to a batch of horses or cattle in the boat. The bailiffs and the constable and the policemen gathered behind them in pursuit of them.

'The God of life and He only knows all the loathsome work of men on that day.'

As well as eyewitness accounts that were recorded at the time such as the one above, there are many hundreds of songs that exist to this day, written at that time, describing the extent of the mass clearings and the ruthless manner in which they were implemented. Some will be featured in next week's article.

There were very few corners of the Highlands and Islands that were not affected and the scars of this sad episode can be clearly felt to this day.

The Highland Clearances were a stark reflection of the worst traits of humanity and, given their significant role in driving the Gael to the edge of existence, they should be remembered as the very dark period of human history they were.

Ailean Caimbeul

dleastanasan dhan t-sluagh a choileanadh. Chan e glaoth ùr sam bith a th' ann cluinntinn dhaoine ag èibheach gur còir stad a chur air taicean ealain agus an t-airgead a chur an sàs a' càradh thuill air na rathaidean, ach 's e dealbh gu math dorcha a th' againn mura tèid aig tè de na dùthchannan as beartaiche air an t-saoghal air a cuid sluaigh a fhrithealadh ann an dòigh nas buannachdaile. Càite neo cuin a thig crìoch air an t-suidheachadh?

Chan eil farmad idir agam ris na buill thaghte air comhairlean agus buidhnean poblach a dh'fheumas co-dhùnaidhean doirbh, agus cràiteach, a dhèanamh a' roinn sporain ghann!

ANY lingering new year euphoria must be seriously dented by the reality of continuing swingeing cuts in public sector budgets.

The majority of taxpayers do not believe that 'further efficiency savings' are possible, and as they face more diminution in services it is perfectly understandable that they should be asking when and where this will end.

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
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A82 road is in a terrible condition

Sir, Having read Rob MacCallum's letter ('Argyll roads have never been so bad', *The Oban Times*, January 18), I would suggest he avoids travelling between Fort William and Spean Bridge.

I can almost guarantee it will frighten him more than any of the latest hi-tech rides you find at a theme park.

Just how Transport Scotland and its agent BEAR Scotland can just carry on replacing road surfaces without investigating the failures on some of the not-so-old surfacing work seems a total waste of money.

Is it narrow carriageway widths or lack of foundations that is one or more reasons for the diabolical state of our only major connection between Fort William and Inverness? And is it really all about the harsh winter weather?

In the mountain areas of France, a much bigger country than Scotland, it has the kind of severe winters that we have, but their road surfaces are far superior when compared with the A82.

If the specifications are right and the workmanship is acceptable, then will the government make the urgent decision and start spending our money wisely instead of seeing year after year resurfacing over poor infrastructure.

Thankfully, we now have CityLink's luxury coaches, which help to cushion the A82's imperfections, as we use to think we were riding on Blackpool's old wooden roller coaster.

Alan Robinson,
Spean Bridge.

Disputing impact of salmon farms

Sir, Given that Salmon & Trout Conservation (S&TC) commissioned its report from the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA), it is not surprising that it confirms its claims that sea lice from salmon farms are killing wild salmon and sea trout. After all, that is exactly what it paid for.

Social media

The news that Fort William Football Club directors are to step down at the end of the 2017/18 season sparked discussion on social media

Jamie Bradbury: 'good luck to all up there. sad news. only lived up fort 3 yr but some gud selfless men involved in youth set up so feel for them. my laddie played 1st competitive football there b4 alloa n now stirling albion. not an easy job in a remote area but men like Scott Duncan danny conlon n calum maclean have all worked their socks off n wud like to thank and wish them good luck.'

Kevin Ferguson: 'Hopefully it's a case of one door closing another opening. Fantastic youth set up with probably over 100 local kids playing throughout the age groups with lots of volunteers

View From Westminster

IAN BLACKFORD
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THIS week we launch a new monthly column from Ian Blackford MP, keeping you up to date on the work he is undertaking on your behalf.

At this moment in time Westminster politics is largely dominated by the Brexit talks, which are leading to great uncertainty across the country. The future of Theresa May as Prime Minister also now appears uncertain as forces in her own party gather to challenge her leadership over Brexit.

Of more concern to myself and my fellow SNP MPs is the disastrous effect Brexit will have on the Scottish economy and jobs.

A particularly disturbing aspect of the European Withdrawal Bill currently making progress through Parliament in Clause 11, which sees all powers currently exercised at EU level returned to Westminster, even those currently devolved to the Scotland and Wales.

This goes against devolution settlements and we voted against allowing this to happen, but the 13 Tory MPs from Scottish constituencies voted with the UK Government in allowing Westminster this power, against the

NINA conveniently failed to include anything that might contradict S&TC claims about the impact of salmon farming.

According to S&TC, the River Awe last year recorded the lowest number of fish since 1964. However, the rivers Tweed and Tay also recorded some of the worst fishing for decades. These rivers are located far from the nearest salmon farm.

Your article (*The Oban Times*, January 18) states that 'the review of more than 100 scientific papers found that up to 50,000 wild salmon die as a result of the parasites in Norway'. This is something I would dispute but will make an assumption here that NINA is correct.

I also note that Dr Dianne Baum of the Lochaber Fisheries Trust (as well as Andrew Graham-Stewart (of the S&TC) say that the sea lice in Scotland are the same as those in Norway. Therefore, applying the same conversion of deaths per tonne of production as in Norway (one dead fish for every 24 tonnes of production) and applying it to Scottish rivers, then the number of deaths of wild migrating salmon (smolts) expected would be 7,500 fish per year.

This equates to about the same number of eggs produced by one wild hen salmon. More relevantly, while the expected total mortality of smolts in Scotland due to salmon farming would be 7,500 smolts, the number of adult breeding salmon and sea trout killed in 2016 by anglers for sport was 9,096.

It seems that Mr Graham-Stewart and his fellow anglers are doing more damage to wild fish stocks than any salmon farm.

A long-term study of the impacts of salmon farming in Ireland found that the mortality of wild salmon smolts due to sea lice was just one per cent. By comparison, 95 per cent of wild salmon smolts currently die before they are able to return to their home rivers, even when their home rivers are located hundreds of miles from the nearest salmon farm. S&TC conveniently ignores this huge mortality, preferring to deflect the blame onto local salmon farms.

Dr Martin Jaffa,
Callander McDowell, Manchester.

Beautiful Oban is blighted by litter

Sir, I notice from talking to people and from posts on Facebook that an increasing number of residents are becoming exasperated by the amount of litter which pollutes our pavements and public places.

The street sweepers do a great job in keeping George Street and nearby areas as clean as possible, but you only have to leave the sea front and within 50 feet the rubbish is a serious problem.

I went on to the viewing platform at McCaig's Tower the day after the Hogmanay fireworks display and leaned over the railings, along with a number of other people who were enjoying the view. Looking down, the view was less attractive; bottles, cans, carry-out boxes and coffee cups littered the ground.

So what is the purpose, you may ask, of yet another letter on the subject of litter? We know that many caring people pick up litter in all of these areas and in other places, and have done for years. What makes it such a soul-destroying occupation is the knowledge that by tomorrow, the next day or next week it will be just as bad.

How come I'm writing under the banner of Keep Oban Beautiful when our professed intention is to stay positive at all times? The answer to that question is simple – we can do something about it!

Picking up the litter is a quick fix but not the long-term solution; the only way to stop it is to educate, to persuade and to reward, to find a way of generating pride in Oban. We discuss this on the Keep Oban Beautiful Facebook page.

Let's get everyone involved, from young children upwards, through primary schools, high school and beyond. Let's erect signs or banners to remind everyone of what we'd like to do, and let's publicly thank those who do their best to make the town a cleaner place, as befits a beautiful West Coast fishing and ferry port and a major tourist destination.

Is it possible to imagine that Oban might one day be declared a litter-free town?

Maurice Wilkins,
Keep Oban Beautiful.



giving up their time to progress these young ones. People from outside are quick to slag it off with the occasional 1st team score but nobody realises the finances of most of the teams in the Highlands League.

...What a pathetic opening comment too. Players from all over the Highlands have played for the Fort. Must be quite a widespread 'Clique'

Hannah Gillespie Michael: 'The club will be taken over by someone I'm sure. It's a highland league club at the end of the day and a great opportunity for someone who has a bit of time and money'

Andy Maclean: 'Here's hoping G, as a kid growing up, you always trained to play for the 1st team and helped you make friends for life, it's

a tough commitment but worth it'

The design of a new country house on the shores of Loch Awe sparked plenty of comments.

Kenny Harris: 'I think it'll look great, they can't all be like fairy tale castles or something off a shortbread tin forward thinking and innovative just what's needed....'

Justin Forsythe: 'That's never a county house, a city house for a city maybe?? Its not very fitting in to the shores of awesome!!'

Nick Mcintyre: 'Looks like designed on Minecraft computer game.'

Lorne Fraser: 'It's like a modern take on the Hydropathic ruins....'

Sheila Dee: 'Like a broch? More like a Lego set. A child of 5 could have done better!'

best interests of Scotland. Looking at other Brexit options, I invited all opposition leaders to join me in a discussion about maintaining a position in the Single Market and Customs Union. Sir Vince Cable of the Lib Dems, Liz Saville-Roberts, Westminster leader of Plaid Cymru, and Caroline Lucas of the Greens attended and made positive contributions, with only Jeremy Corbyn declining the offer. These discussions have now moved on with an invite to union leaders to join us.

As leader of the SNP Westminster Group, I ask questions of the Prime Minister each week and use this opportunity to fight the corner for Scotland, making sure she is reminded of issues concerning all of you and that we will not give up.

The high cost of deliveries to the Highlands, the surcharge on electricity distribution, the EU grant to Scottish farming which is still held in the UK Treasury, Brexit, and on many recent occasions, Royal Bank branch closures in this constituency and across the country.

RBS is still 73 per cent owned by the UK public and therefore we should have a say in their decision making. Mrs May and her ministers hide behind the excuse closures that this is a commercial

decision over which they have no control. However, when George Osborne was chancellor, he intervened to remove their CEO. If the Government do this they can help ensure our rural communities do not lose banking services.

I have also written to present CEO Ross McEwan, inviting him to visit the constituency to see for himself the far-reaching effects of closures on local communities.

The role of an MP is to serve you, the constituents and deal with any issues you may have. I am available through regular surgeries, phone calls, letters, emails and social media. Every enquiry is dealt with and a solution sought as quickly as possible.

Recently, the roll out of Universal Credit has been causing problems for many individuals and families. This is just not acceptable and my staff have been finding answers for them.

Another great concern, especially in the Fort William area at this moment, is the state of the roads. I have written to the CEO of BEAR Scotland asking that temporary repairs be undertaken immediately, before major resurfacing work planned for better weather.

I also look forward to meeting you at my regular surgeries in the coming months.

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith.

A daytime telephone number

is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed.

Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk

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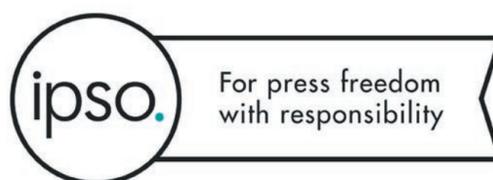
If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please

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We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timeous, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with

our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.



Keeping our communities healthy



Over the coming year The Oban Times will be running a series of fortnightly articles championing the work carried out by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles locality.

Each article will feature a specific service provided by the HSCP and will focus on the staff who provide that service and the role they play in making a positive difference for the people living in Oban and surrounding areas.

THE HSCP itself only came into being in 2016 when, as part of Scottish Government policy, health and social care services were integrated across Scotland. In Argyll and Bute, this meant that all health services provided by NHS Highland and social work services provided by Argyll and Bute Council were integrated to form the HSCP. This new partnership has an integrated budget of more than £260 million.

In the Oban area, the HSCP provides a whole range of health and social care services and the one that many of our readers will be most familiar with is Lorn and Isles hospital. Lorn and Isles hospital is a rural general hospital, one of three in NHS



Lorn and Isles hospital is one of three in NHS Highland and provides acute services to Oban and the surrounding area, as well as medical and surgical services.

Highland, opened in 1995. It provides acute services to Oban and the surrounding area, as well as medical and surgical services to a population of approximately 43,000 people, a number which increases significantly during the tourist season.

It hosts visiting specialists from Glasgow and serves as a hub for specialist treatment and diagnostic services for Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership. There are

three wards, HDU facilities and a full rehabilitation facility as well as 24/7 Accident and Emergency service, backed up by continuous medical, surgical and anaesthetic consultant cover, and 24-hour theatre availability. The out-of-hours GP service operates from the hospital and is integrated with A&E.

Diagnostics include endoscopy, X-ray, ultrasound and CT, echocardiography and cardiac diagnostics, pulmonary function

testing, and on-site 24-hour haematology and biochemistry laboratories.

Chemotherapy is given in a new Macmillan unit, and there are dedicated physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, podiatry and community paediatric units. The Oban Dental Centre is on the hospital site.

There are a number of specialist consultant-led clinics such as dermatology, oncology, oral, orthopaedics/fracture, ob-

stetrics/gynaecology, ENT, respiratory and ophthalmology.

All of these services are delivered by clinical staff who are assisted by administration and support staff who also have a key role in the hospital.

Lorn and Isles hospital is the most visible sign of the activity carried out by the HSCP but there are also a wide range of health and social care services delivered within the community, including within people's own homes. These are provided by social workers, community nurses and a range of allied health professionals. The HSCP also works closely with other partners and stakeholders, including Argyll and Bute TSI to build stronger resilient neighbourhoods, deliver community-based support services all to support people's health and wellbeing.

Caroline Henderson, who manages the services provided by the hospital, said she is really excited about working with *The Oban Times*, saying that all staff have a key role to play in the delivery of health and social care services and they all help deliver high quality professional care for the local communities they serve.

She added: 'These forthcoming articles are a great way to highlight the good work that staff carry out and the challenges they face in delivering services in a remote and rural setting.'

Police Scotland wellbeing event well supported in Lochgilphead

POLICE in Lochgilphead held a successful wellbeing event for their officers and staff based in Argyll and Bute last week.

The official event was well attended and supported by police officers and staff, with many thanks to all the local service providers, police partners and local businesses which attended to offer their support.

These included David Bracken, artistic woodturning and custom drums; Becky Dale of Kilmartin Museum; Madge and Danny Dobbie of Starlight Therapies providing sample sessions of reiki and kinesiology; NHS senior improvement specialist

Jennifer Dryden; Argyll Pharmacy pharmacist Susan Paterson providing health advice and promoting the many services of the pharmacy; Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service; ArtMap Argyll; MAYDS; Argyll and Bute Youth Services; Heart of Argyll Wildlife; and MS Centre Lochgilphead.

Also from the wider police support network was the Police Credit Union, Axa and Optima and PMAS (Police Mutual) attended to distribute literature and discuss their services.

The healthy soup and homemade bread were well received, as was the home-baking donated by staff and police friends. 'The Jump'

Wii Fit ski competition was extremely popular and the divisional commander, Hazel Hendren, especially enjoyed demonstrating her newly acquired skills.

Police Scotland is committed to the health and wellbeing of its staff and their families, ensuring that they have support on a wide range of issues.

The emergency services perform a role that cannot be compared to any other job and is undeniably an essential service for our local communities.

The wellbeing of Police Scotland officers and staff is fundamental to the delivery of policing in Scotland and staff are Police Scotland's primary asset.



Inspector Julie McLeish and David Bracken at the event.



PC Lauren Bradley on controls and Chief Superintendent Hazel Hendren taking part in the Wii Challenge.

Partnership opens up awards to all staff

LAST year Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) introduced an awards programme for nurses and midwives to recognise excellence in the delivery of care by this group of staff.

And the programme was so successful the HSCP has decided to widen the awards so that they are now open to all staff.

Liz Higgins, lead nurse for Argyll and Bute HSCP, who launched the awards last year, said: 'In 2017, we launched our Nursing Excellence Awards for nurses and midwives working for Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership.'

'We were really pleased by the high standard and number of nominations that were received, and were delighted to present awards to a number of worthy

winners. There was huge enthusiasm for the awards last year and a very positive response from practitioners. Due to this success we have decided to widen the awards so that all HSCP staff have an opportunity to be recognised for the contribution they make.'

'If members of the public would like to nominate a particular HSCP employee whom they feel has gone the extra mile, then the nomination forms and guidance, including a list of the various categories, can be accessed on our website: www.bit.do/ABexcellenceawards

'We have a great team of people working for the HSCP, both in our hospitals and the local community, and they make a real, positive difference across Argyll and Bute.'

'It is therefore only right that

we recognise this through these excellence awards and I look forward to reviewing the nominations once again.'

The categories are:
 ■ Nurse/Midwife of the Year
 ■ Therapist of the Year
 ■ Social Care Worker of the Year

■ Admin Secretarial Worker of the Year
 ■ Support Worker of the Year
 ■ Pat Tyrrell Award for Caring Behaviours

■ Chief Officer's Outstanding Contribution to Health Social Care

■ Outstanding Individual
 ■ Outstanding Team
 ■ Patient/Service User Choice Award

Nominations will close on Friday March 2. The winners will be informed by March 9.

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Jesus said he will come again - Luke 21 v 27

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 Jesus said his coming will be "as a snare" on the people of the earth - Luke 21 v 35

This is because most people are not expecting him
 Jesus is coming to "judge the world in righteousness" - Acts 17 v 31

He promised to return to Jerusalem - Matthew 23 v 37-39
 He spoke of Jerusalem as "the city of the great king" - Matthew 5 v 35

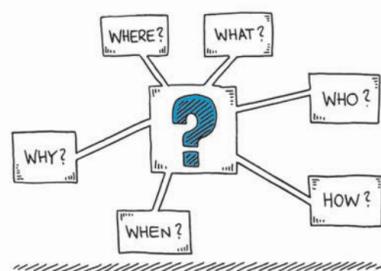
His throne will be established there - Psalm 2 v 6-7
 This will be the centre of world-wide rule - Psalm 2 v 8 and Daniel 7 v 13-14

Jesus' kingdom will bring peace and blessing upon the earth - Psalm 72

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Entire Fort football board of directors to stand down

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

OUTGOING Fort William FC director Stewart Maclean says some of those who end up taking over seats on the club's board are going to have to be prepared to invest cash into the Claggan Park outfit.

Maclean was speaking just hours after the shock news was released on Friday that he and his five fellow directors on the board would be stepping down at the end of this season.

In a statement, the board of directors said that they, together with a small group of dedicated volunteers, had kept the club operating over the past five years despite the many challenges which it had faced both on and off the field.

'After a five-year commitment, I personally do not wish to continue underwriting, with a fellow director, the funding of the club and, more importantly, I do not have the time required to continue attending to the day-to-day business of the club,' explained Mr Maclean.

'I will meet all of my obligations to the club until the end of this season. Fort William Football Club is an asset to Fort William and Lochaber - something that we all recognised when we became involved five years ago, and hopefully a new board will step forward.'

Fellow director Ronnie Maclean added: 'It is time for the

next generation to step up and ensure the future of a West Highland football team in the Scottish Highland League as there are important decisions to be taken over the next few months.

'The outgoing directors have all confirmed that they will give every support to the new board and new committee members. By advising of our decision at this time, we believe that the new board will have time to settle in before the 2018/19 season.'

Another director, Marie McMillan, told us: 'As we step down we wish to take the opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and work of the small band of volunteers, the management team, the dedicated squad of players and the support of the many club sponsors and loyal supporters.'

Mr Maclean concluded: 'A lot of work has been done over the past five years in structuring the club and the new board will benefit from these endeavours.'

Asked if the run of poor form this season, which has seen the club's first XI rooted to the bottom of the Highland League with just a single draw to their credit, had anything to do with the decision of the directors to call it a day, Mr Maclean said his decision to call it a day was not about the footballing side of things.

Mr Maclean told the *Lochaber Times*: 'One of the main reasons, speaking personally, is the lack of volunteers coming through to



Claggan Park, one of the best views of any football ground. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

carry things forward - there's a real frustration that new people are not coming forward. I think the last time someone new volunteered to get involved at committee level was five years ago.'

Asked if some of the new board would have to invest money, Mr Maclean replied: 'Absolutely. Someone will definitely have to be prepared to put money into it.'

And Mr Maclean said the reason for the directors intimating their decision to step down part-way through the season was to give the club plenty of time to

start the process of recruiting replacement directors.

'We didn't want to wait until the end of the season, which would look like we were just throwing in the towel.'

'That would have been the wrong approach and could have impacted moral among the players and others at the club. 'We wanted to give everyone plenty of notice.'

There was a widespread response on social media to the news with most comments in appreciation of the work people have put into the club.

Posting on the *Lochaber Times* Facebook page, Kevin Ferguson said: 'Hopefully it's a case of one door closing another opening. Fantastic youth set up with probably over 100 local kids playing throughout the age groups with lots of volunteers giving up their time to progress these young ones.'

'People from outside are quick to slag it off with the occasional 1st team score but nobody realises the finances of most of the teams in the Highland League. Players from all over the Highlands have played for the Fort.'

Football

And Hannah Gillespie Michael commented: 'The club will be taken over by someone I'm sure. It's a highland league club at the end of the day and a great opportunity for someone who has a bit of time and money.'

Saturday's home game between Fort and sixth-placed Buckie Thistle had to be called off due to a waterlogged pitch at Claggan Park. Next home game is this Saturday when Clachnacuddin are the visitors.

Alleycats purr their way to top ten-pin bowling points

10-pin bowling

AFTER week nine of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats lead the scratch division with 39 points followed by Council on 36 points and The Empire in third place on 35 points.

Alleycats lead the handicap division both on 35 points followed by Council on 33 points and The Empire on 28 points.

Individually the best scratch game of the week came from Alan Struthers (The Empire) with 181, while Brian Johnstone (Alleycats) had a 171.

Jim Bell (British Legion Fort William) had the week's top handicap game of 246 and the top two game handicap series of 451. Pam Weller (Alleycats) had the top two game scratch series with 314.

The best team scores of the week came from The Empire with the top scratch game of 599 and the top two game scratch series of 1179 whilst British Legion Fort William had the top handicap game of 878 and the top two game handicap series of 1,635.

The top scratch average is held by Ben Weller (The Empire) with 161 followed by Pam Weller with 158 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 148.

Injuries hamper Lochaber's away day defeat at the hands of Shawlands

Shawlands	31
Lochaber	6
BT West Division 3	

IT WAS an under strength Lochaber team that made the trip to Glasgow's southside and the Drumbreck ground



of Shawlands on Saturday. It was the visitors who kicked off the game, which was played for much of the afternoon with a wild wind blowing across the pitch.

Shawlands had the first casualty of the game just a few minutes in with their tight head prop going off injured. Lochaber had their own injuries, with a dislocated finger and a cut lip requiring stitches, reducing the visiting team to 12 players at times.

But it was Lochaber who were first to open the scoring with a penalty from Jonathan McCook. Shawlands responded straight from the kick off when they turned over the ball and quickly turned that possession into a try.

Lochaber took the game to within one point with another penalty from McCook. Shawlands scored their second try

Lochaber's Jonathan McCook, scorer of his side's only points with two penalties, in action against Shawlands on Saturday. Photograph: MacQueen Photography.

Rugby

after a missed tackle in front of the posts.

Lochaber ended the first half strong but could not convert their possession into points. The second half started the way the first half had commenced with Lochaber pressuring the Shawlands defence.

But Shawlands defence yet again withstood the attack and the home side added their third try from close range to further extend their lead.

Two late tries followed, one out wide after several missed tackles allowing Shawlands fullback in to score under the posts and the hosts' final try, which came with a chip over the top and, after a foot race, the Shawlands player was able to get their first.

The game ended Shawlands 31-6 Lochaber. Lochaber host Cowal this weekend at Banavie, with a noon kick off. This is the first time the clubs have met in the league.

A win for Lochaber would move them above Cowal in the league who currently sit three points above Lochaber.

Mixed fortunes for Lochaber boxers at Ravenscraig event

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club sent two of their boxers to the Scottish Intermediate Championships in Ravenscraig last weekend and both boxed with distinction.

These championships are for boxers who are beyond novice level but not yet at open/elite level, and they are an invaluable learning tool.

Light heavyweight Nathan McDade faced a strong opponent in his semi-final on Saturday against Inverness's Stephen Munro.

The heavily muscled Munro was an imposing figure, but McDade boxed cleverly to keep his opponent at the end of his jab, utilising good head movement before and after his attacks.

Conservatively While boxing conservatively, McDade showed enough ring nous to control the bout from ring centre behind his dominant lead hand.

Munro tried to press the action but McDade kept the centre of the ring for the duration of the contest and ran out a worthy winner.

His final the next day was against Corey McCulloch of the 1320 club. McCulloch was

another aggressive opponent but had a bit more variety to his work switching cleverly from head to body with fast bent arm shots while McDade elected to head hunt for the majority of the bout.

Quick pace Again McDade's jab was a feature of the contest as he attempted to set everything up off it, while McCulloch continued to set a quick pace with bursts of hooks.

It was apparent that with boxing being a subjective sport the decision would come down to whether the judges preferred the accurate but relative lower punch output of the Lochaber boxer or the high tempo but wilder work of the fighter from Arbroath.

Unfortunately for the local club the verdict went to McCulloch by the closest of margins, with three judges voting for him while only two sided with McDade.

Learning curve However, this was a great learning curve for McDade and he will have benefited greatly from the weekend.

The other Lochaber fighter in action at the event was wel-

Boxing

terweight Dawid Jarzab, who contested his semi-final on the Sunday when he boxed Priestfield's Kevin Duris.

Duris had won his quarter-final by knockout and was known as a big hitter.

Jarzab in truth did not incorporate the cleverest of tactics by electing to spend a lot of time with his back to the ropes which was basically an invite to Duris to attack.

This led to a very exciting contest as Jarzab fired quick combinations while Duris threw his single bombs.

Dominance During the entire contest Jarzab only attempted to force Duris backwards on a couple of occasions and each time showed dominance.

This made it all the stranger that Jarzab didn't pursue these tactics. He still claimed the points victory, but in a manner that was a lot more difficult than it needed to be.

Jarzab's final takes place this Saturday at Bridgeton in Glasgow

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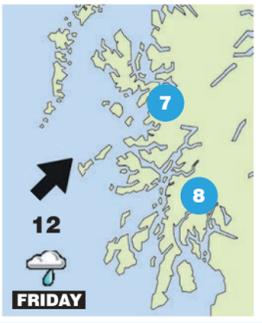
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WEATHER

Thursday	Sunny Winds strong North North Westerly Temperatures 1°C to 6°C.
Friday	Cloudy with light rain later Winds moderate South Westerly Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.
Weekend Outlook	Light rain on Saturday Sunny on Sunday Winds moderate South South Westerly Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.



Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday February 1, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25						
Thur	06.04	4.2	12.42	0.6	18.34	4.1	** **	**	Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Fri	00.44	0.4	06.45	4.2	13.26	0.6	19.13	4.0	Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Sat	01.28	0.3	07.26	4.2	14.09	0.7	19.52	3.9	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Sun	02.11	0.5	08.05	4.0	14.51	0.9	20.29	3.7	Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mon	02.53	0.7	08.43	3.8	15.32	1.1	21.07	3.5	Ferry Crossings/Sea States			
Tues	03.36	0.9	09.21	3.5	16.15	1.4	21.47	3.2	Oban to Barra/South Uist		Moderate	
Wed	04.21	1.2	10.03	3.2	17.03	1.7	22.35	3.0	Oban to Coll/Tiree		Moderate	
									Kennacraig to Islay		Moderate	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)