

The Oban Times

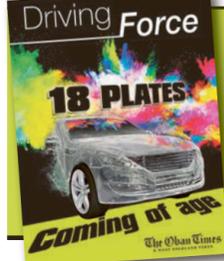
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 8393

Thursday 8 February, 2018

www.obantimes.co.uk

90 pence



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Lives 'at risk' warning over axed lifeline meals service

KATHIE GRIFFITHS
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VULNERABLE lives could be at risk when a lifeline service delivering hot meals and companionship to some of Oban's loneliest people is scrapped, a health boss has warned.

News that the Royal Voluntary Service will be withdrawing its Meals On Wheels service in the town next month has raised serious concerns and triggered calls for an alternative scheme to be put in place quickly to safeguard its users.

Oban and Lorn Health and Care Forum chairman Duncan Martin said: 'Without someone going in three days per week, we are going to have someone beating the door down and finding the person lying on the floor or worse because no one has been in to see them. We really need some alternative services put in place very quickly. There's no way it can be set up locally in eight weeks.'

Meals On Wheels volunteer Jessie MacFarlane, who was also at Tuesday's Forum meeting, said: 'Our clients are not getting to see anyone else if we don't go in. It's a major issue and it's not right. A lot of them are not fit to go out to lunch clubs. They won't go and we are taking that away from them. We have phoned the doctor before for people.'

It emerged at the meeting that although areas across the UK have seen a decrease in demand for the service, there has been a slight increase in Oban.

Speaking at the forum, Argyll and Bute's policy lead for health and social care, Councillor Kieron Green, wanted to know

why it had been *The Oban Times* breaking the news to him first instead of being told 'officially' earlier. 'It seems quite a strange way that we have come to this decision at the end of March and we are just finding out about this now,' he said.

Before the meeting he told *The Oban Times*: 'It's not as widely used as it once was, what with ready meals now targeting that type of demographic but for the people who still use it, it's valuable. It's not just about food, it's about social contact and that's something that buying in ready meals can't provide. Social contact is really important and that's something the council encourages as a way of helping people remain in their own homes as long as possible.'

RVS volunteers take out more than 35 Meals On Wheels in the town every week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

One of the volunteers, who asked not to be named and helps on a rota basis, said: 'Most of our clients are elderly and most can't get out. We are a kind of lifeline. It's not just about the meals, that's just a part of it - it's having a wee five-minute chat. We are a link to the outside world. Often we are the only ones they see in a day. It's not much we do for them but it's better than nothing.'

She added: 'Some of our clients have an inkling and some have heard rumours but others have no idea. They'll be upset to lose it. Volunteers don't want to see it finish but if it has to happen we hope someone else will step in to fill the gap.'

When *The Oban Times* contacted the RVS this week, it said no decision had been made as



Glencairn Golf Club member Helen Pearson and Graham MacQueen, of MacQueen Charitable Trust, take a close look at the new defibrillator mounted on an outside wall of the golf club. Read the amazing story behind the life-saving equipment on page three.

yet about its Meals On Wheels scheme in Oban.

Sam Ward, director of commissioned services for the Royal Voluntary Service, said only a handful of Meals On Wheels services were now in place across Scotland, England and Wales and it was reviewing

them to see if they can keep working safely. 'At this stage, no final decisions have been taken about the future of the service but we continue to place older people's interests at the heart of it. We are continuing to work closely with local authorities as well as relevant agencies and

other third-sector organisations, to ensure the older people we currently deliver meals to are properly safeguarded and protected,' she said.

However, a spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership said: 'We have been advised that the RVS

will be withdrawing from this service and that they are providing information to their clients as to how they can access similar support in the community. We will also be providing guidance and support to RVS clients who use our homecare services as to the other options available.'

Campaigners vow to keep up bank battle

CAMPAIGNERS claiming victory over RBS have pledged to keep piling on pressure so the reprieved Barra and Inveraray branches stay open for good.

The two branches were among 10 of the bank's rural outlets which it had decided to shut but this week it announced a change of heart after listening to customers, communities and politicians.

They and others in Biggar, Beaulie, Comrie, Douglas, Greta, Melrose, Kyle and Tongue will now stay open at least until the end of this year before being reviewed to see if they can stay operational.

Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara said it was 'a victory' and 'great example of people power' adding: 'I'll continue to fight for the banks in Campbeltown and Rothesay.'

'I am delighted to have taken part the campaign led by the people of Inveraray and together we have to make the long-term case for the branch to stay.'

Na h-Eileanan an Iar MSP Alasdair Allan said: 'The U-turn by RBS is an indication of the pressure that has been put on the bank, following its ill-thought-out move.'

'We must continue to work to ensure it stays open.'

MSP for Argyll and Bute Michael Russell said a 'strong and determined community effort' had spared the Inveraray branch but added 'ways must be found to build footfall and transactions'.



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Tarbert lights way as pressure builds to 'bring boys home'

COLIN CAMERON
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TARBERT lit the way home for two men lost with the *Nancy Glen*, just as investigators prepared to examine the wreck.

The sinking of the fishing boat last month and loss of skipper Duncan MacDougall and crewman Przemek Krawczyk, both family men, struck deep into the soul of this fishing village.

In a symbolic act on the evening of Saturday February 7, a solitary candle was lit on Tarbert's fish quay by superintendent Matthew Ramsay of the Fishermen's Mission. The candle will remain lit until Duncan and Przemek are returned to their families and community.

Investigators from the UK government's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), after a short delay, got

over the wreck in Loch Fyne on Monday. The MAIB findings will go a long way to determining whether and how to raise the *Nancy Glen*. There is a steely determination among Tarbert folk and the Clyde Fishermen's Association (CFA) to bring the two lost fishermen home to their families. Speaking on an LBC radio talk show hosted by Alex Salmond, Kenny MacNab, chairman of the CFA, urged rapid government action to recover the two men, saying: 'We want to raise the boat as quickly as possible to bring closure for the families. There should be measures in place by government to deal with this when it happens.'

A fundraising campaign to support the families and, if necessary, fund the recovery of Duncan and Przemek, has raised well in excess of £200,000.

Mr MacNab added: 'There's no way

we're going to leave these guys lying out there. I would say to the politicians to have some compassion and help these families to gain some closure.'

Also taking part in the LBC show was Gosia Krawczyk, wife of Przemek, who said: 'For me, this is about humanity, not politics. I want all politicians to stand together for us and bring Przemek and Duncan home. It's time for the government to change to regulations. Fishermen should be promised that if a situation happens like this they will not be left on the bottom of the sea. The government should stand up and bring my husband home.'

Jurisdiction lies with the UK government, but during First Minister's Questions in Holyrood last week, Nicola Sturgeon promised the Scottish Government would do 'everything possible' to recover the missing men.

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Mull trainees shortlisted for awards

ISLE of Mull trainees Alan Tangny and Claire Simonetta have made the shortlist for Lantra Scotland's Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year Awards.

Alan, 30, is doing a modern apprenticeship in aquaculture through Inverness College UHI, while working for Scottish Sea Farms Ltd.

Alan actively promotes aquaculture at major rural events, including the Mull Highland Games. He said: 'I'm really proud I've been shortlisted, but if I was to receive this award, it would show that anything is possible. Not just for school-leavers or people starting out, but for those with lives, commitments and bills to pay, or people who are stuck in a rut and need a change.'

Claire, 26, recently completed a BSc (Hons) 1st class in agriculture at SRUC and is now working as a farmer and agricultural consultant.

While at college she won the RHASS silver medal, a prize for being the best agriculture honours degree student at SRUC across all campuses.

Claire said: 'I wasn't expecting to be nominated, so to be shortlisted is a lovely surprise.' The finalists for the 2018 learner of the year awards were chosen by an independent judging panel.

The awards night takes place on Thursday March 1.



Alan Tangny.



Claire Simonetta. Photographer: Matt Cartney. Crown Copyright.

Islay remembers SS Tuscania

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THE ISLAY community organised a commemorative service on Monday 100 years on from the sinking of *SS Tuscania* just off the Mull of Oa.

The British ship was torpedoed by a German U-boat while transporting more than 2,000 American troops to Europe. Around 210 US servicemen and British crew members lost their lives.

On February 5, a commemorative service was held at the island's American Monument on the Mull of Oa, followed by a ceremony at the graveside of Roy Muncester in Kilnaughton Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery, where many of the dead from the *SS Tuscania* were temporarily buried.

There was a Gaelic bible reading, piping by Isobel Ferguson, and singing by pupils of the Port Ellen Primary School Gaelic Choir. A reception was held at No 1 Charlotte Street, where survivors of the sinking were billeted.

As well as the valiant rescue efforts of the local community when the *SS Tuscania* and *HMS Otranto* (which sank in October 1918 off Islay's coast) went down and the efforts to give the dead proper burials, Monday's events



Islay community members gather at the Mull of Oa to remember those who lost their lives 100 years ago when the *SS Tuscania* sank off between Islay and Rathlin Island.

remembered the Heaths that served during WWI and more than 200 who lost their lives throughout the war.

Islay is hosting a year-long programme of events marking the island's contribution to

World War One and the loss of two British troop ships carrying American soldiers to fight alongside the Allies.

The sinking of *SS Tuscania* and *HMS Otranto* saw around 700 US servicemen and British crew

members lose their lives.

Meanwhile, a fundraising appeal has been launched on the Isle of Lewis as the centenary of another maritime disaster approaches.

On January 1 1919 *HMV Iolaire*

struck rocks near Stornoway Harbour, on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, sinking and claiming 205 lives.

A JustGiving crowdfunding page was launched ahead of the centenary in 2019, which is seek-

ing to raise £20,000 to improve access to the memorial on the island.

Most of the passengers of *HMV Iolaire* were soldiers returning home after the end of the Great War. Despite the Admiralty Yacht sinking so close to shore, conditions meant that most (71 per cent) of her passengers died.

Organiser Colin Morrison, from Western Isles Council, wrote on his JustGiving page: 'The Iolaire Working Group is made up of representatives from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, local historical societies and community councils.'

He continued: '[We are] hoping to raise funds to assist with the much-needed path works to the Iolaire memorial at Holm, Stornoway, in addition to raising funds for the centenary commemoration events of the tragedy, which took place on New Year's Eve 1919.'

In addition to this appeal, it was announced earlier this month that businessman Stewart Graham proposed building a £5m visitor centre to remember the disaster. Donors left messages of support on the JustGiving page. One wrote: 'In memory of my great uncle Donald Macleod, 38 North Shawbost.'

Another said: 'Fingers crossed that people will realise how poignant and important raising funds for this is. Good luck to you all.'

Ulva isle buyout group gets green light from Holyrood

THE ISLE of Ulva's community buyout took one step closer this month after being given the go-ahead by the Scottish Government.

Earlier this month the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Roseanna Cunningham 'triggered' the North West Mull Community Woodland Company's (NWMWC) Right to Buy the island of Ulva and associated holdings at Ulva Ferry on Mull.

The Ulva buyout group now

has until early June to put together a funding package and purchase the property at the price which was set by the independent valuer in December.

John Addy, a director of NWMWC, said: 'We are obviously delighted at this news which sets Ulva on a path of social and economic rejuvenation including repopulation. We have drawn up an ambitious, but carefully phased business plan based on a detailed feasibility study carried out by respected independent

consultants. The first priority once we have purchased the island will be to renovate the existing housing stock as quickly as possible and provide existing and future residents with security of tenure so that they can plan with confidence for their futures and those of their families.'

Colin Morrison, chairman of NWMWC, added: 'We wish to acknowledge the very wide support we have received from the community and from a range of organisations and individuals

who share our wish to see Ulva thrive again, this time with the people living on Ulva and Mull in the driving seat.'

'A host of community organisations, businesses and individuals are supporting us including Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT), Ulva School Community Association, Mull Fishermen's Association, South West Mull and Iona Development, local fishermen and tourism businesses etc.'

'Also in favour are national

organisations including Community Land Scotland, Rural Housing Scotland, The Woodland Trust Scotland, Community Woodlands Association Scotland and the Development Trusts Association Scotland. The buyout is also supported by our elected representatives at Westminster and Holyrood.'

Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute, said: 'I am confident that the economic potential of the island is great and that it can best be taken forward by lo-

cal people with local priorities in mind. That is the whole ethos of community purchase and I want to see that succeed on Ulva.'

NWMWC is applying to the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) for support. However, it can only fund a percentage of the overall amount so there is a significant sum to find from other sources.

A detailed 'stage two' application to SLF will now be submitted, and discussions are ongoing with potential sponsors and partner organisations.

Mull and Iona Community Trust plans new nursery

PLANS are afoot to build a community nursery near Salen on Mull.

Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT) is applying to buy land in Glen Aros for a 'purpose-built childcare facility with an outdoor ethos'.

MICT's website explains: 'We

have been exploring the possibility of building and running a purpose-built nursery on the island for a couple of years now due to the growing need for flexible wrap-around childcare on Mull. By 2020, the Scottish Government is planning to expand the number of free early

learning and childcare hours to 1,140 from 600. This increase will put a strain on the provision currently offered by Argyll and Bute Council and creates a demand for a new facility on the island.'

'We have identified the Salen area as an ideal location for a

nursery on Mull because of its central location and good transport links.'

'We would like to build an indoor/outdoor nursery, that is a nursery with a solid structure and infrastructure but with an outdoor/forest school ethos, where children spend a large

amount of time outdoors exploring the neighbouring woodlands.'

So far MICT has successfully applied to the Scottish Land Fund for a 'stage one' grant to assess the suitability of a plot of Forestry Commission Scotland land at Glen Aros to

build a nursery. It has also held a community consultation to hear islanders' views on the services they need. MICT now hopes to apply to the Scottish Land Fund for 'stage two' funding to purchase the land through the Forestry Commission Scotland Community Asset Transfer.

Outer Hebrides islands' ferry services to be studied

A STUDY into the future of ferry services for the Outer Hebrides will take place this year.

The outcome of the study will decide which areas need to be improved the most. New vessels, upgrading harbours, adjusting timetables and re-deploying existing ferries to other routes are listed to be examined.

Humza Yousaf MSP, minister for transport and the islands, said: 'This study will look at potential options for the future of the network serving the Outer Hebrides.'

'Our consultants will speak with local stakeholders and the public to hear their views and help identify and assess options for the

long-term provision of ferry services. I would encourage people to take part in this process.'

'Our ferry services play a crucial role for the communities of the Clyde and the Hebrides and we want to progressively renew the fleet operating on these routes and ensure the provision of suitable services to meet the needs of island communities and businesses, in line with available funding.'

On hearing that the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP) identifies the Outer Hebrides as a priority area, one social media user commented on an Argyll-based group: 'They may have decided it's a priority area, but it is hard to look at a

section of the CalMac routes in isolation as anything they do will impact the other islands that don't form part of this review. I love the Western Isles, and the *MV Hebrides* and probably some of the smaller inter-island vessels are pretty old now, but they are nowhere near as cut off as at least seven other inhabited islands. If money has to be invested, ensuring continuity of lifeline services must be the priority.'

In the updated VRDP it was noted: 'A number of loch class vessels are approaching age expiry and a programme of like-for-like replacements will feature in our future investments, subject to affordability.'

Hugh Smith's letter from Islay

Churches unite

THE UNION of three of the island churches was endorsed by an Argyll Presbytery-led act of worship in Kilmeny Parish Church on January 20.

The churches involved in the union are Kilmeny, on the outskirts of Ballygrant; St Kieran's, midway between Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich; and Portnahaven, at the end of the Rhinns peninsula.

Although united, each will retain its own identity and its current pattern of Sunday worship.

All now come under the umbrella of the north-west parish and will continue to operate under the ministry of the Rev Valerie Watson.

The Kilmeny service was conducted by Ms Marilyn Shedden, former Argyll Presbytery moderator, and among those in attendance was Presbytery elder Maureen MacKinnon, former local minister Rev Anne McIvor and Rev Angus Morrison, present incumbent Rev Valerie Watson, and the Argyll Presbytery clerk Dr Chris Brett.

Also present were worshippers from the united churches along with representatives from the other congregations on the island.

The three united churches each have their own individuality and their own faithful membership.

St Kieran's was built in 1897 to cater for the spiritual needs of those in the burgeoning coastal villages and as a result of the population decline in the more remote Kilchoman parish and which saw the closure of the hilltop church at Kilchoman in 1977.

Portnahaven church is one of the parliamentary places of worship built throughout the Highlands and Islands to a design by Thomas Telford.

It opened for worship in the mid-1820s and is considered to be one of the best surviving Telford churches still in use as a place of regular worship. The church



Guests at the church union service were, left to right, Maureen MacKinnon, Rev Angus Morrison, Marilyn Shedden, Rev Valerie Watson, Rev Anne McIvor and Dr Chris Brett.

at Kilmeny is also based on a Telford design which was adapted in 1828 by Walter Frederick Campbell, laird and owner of Islay at that time.

Before linking with the Rhinns churches in a period of parish readjustment, the Kilmeny church had also been linked in separate arrangements with both Kildalton and Oa and Kilarrow parishes.

Today, these latter parishes are now linked with Jura and the charge remains vacant as attempts to call a minister, following the departure of the Rev Dr Rob Barlow in 2013, have proved unsuccessful.

Book launch

LOCAL author and TV director Les Wilson launched his latest book *The Drowned and the Saved* at a reception attended by more than 50 in a hospitable Bowmore Distillery last week.

The book is a telling account of life in Islay during the early part of the 20th century and the effect the First World War had on the island community.

And it was fitting that the launch coincided with start of the island's WWI centenary commemorations which are being marked with a series of high pro-

file events throughout the year. Much research has gone into Les's book and he paints graphic pictures of an island coping with its own loss of life on the European battlefields and the impact created by the loss of the troopships *Tuscania* and *Otranto* off the island's coasts during the closing months of the hostilities.

The courage and determination shown by the islanders as they tried to rescue the survivors from the two doomed vessels are praiseworthy, as is the dignity and respect they showed to the many American dead, and British crew members, washed up on treacherous and rocky shorelines.

The fact that these young men, some of whom had never been on a ship before, were on their way to assist the Allies in their fight against the axis of evil, added poignancy to their loss and touched the hearts of all involved in the rescue missions.

While some of the events described are quite harrowing, these are tempered with acts of outstanding bravery and endurance.

The foreword to the book has been penned by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, whose grandfather, Malcolm MacNeill, was the island's police sergeant at the time of the tragedies. His efforts in the rescue operations, assisted by three constables, was no easy task as there was no telephone service on the island at that time and limited motorised transport.

His efforts to identify the dead and his contact with the families of the deceased servicemen showed resolve and understanding and he was deservedly honoured by the monarch for his devoted service.

The Drowned and the Saved, a well-researched account of loss and tragedy, is published by Birlinn Press and is available at £9.99 from a number of retail outlets, including the Celtic House at Bowmore.

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Firth of Lorn illegal dredging claim

TWO ARGYLL divers spotted what they think are illegal scallop dredging markings in the protected Firth of Lorn.

Davy Stinson from Taynuilt and Steve Barlow from Kilmore noticed damage to the seabed when they dived in the Marine Protected Area last week.

David Stinson told *The Oban Times*: 'It might only be a few boats but, this winter, we have seen damage. The stuff we saw last week was from within 48 hours. We didn't have a camera so we went back out a few days later with an underwater camera and documented the damage. When I first started, there was no dredging.'

Speaking about the damage, the clam-diver added: 'It's heart-breaking after having seen this recovery.'

John McAlister, a scallop dredger for more than 40 years, said: 'We are not allowed to fish in the Firth of Lorn. We have not been, although other vessels have. All our boats have a system, so we can prove where our vessels fish.'

However, Mr McAlister said two smaller boats that don't have a tracking system are operating in darkness.

He added: 'The boats that are doing it have no fully qualified fishermen on board. They are not commercial fishermen. The commercial dredgers have done nothing wrong. It's the rogue boats that are doing wrong.'

Nick Underdown, from the environmental charity Open Seas, went out with Davy and Steve to look at the markings.

Nick said: 'We are really concerned about the illegal dredging in the Marine Protected Area. We are concerned this is damaging the reputation of our seafood industry. We are not anti-dredging. There are areas where it would have less of an impact. If you leave the seabed alone, it will recover.'

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: 'We have received recent reports of suspected illegal dredging in the area. Marine Scotland Compliance are actively investigating the activities of a number of suspect vessels.'

Oban charity's donation to golf club a life-saver

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AN OBAN grandfather-of-five who 'dropped dead' at work has welcomed the arrival of the town's latest life-saving kit.

Donnie MacPhee 'died' for seven minutes on a job for MacQueen Bros Removals and Storage while helping carry a couch upstairs at a customer's house in London - but the 64-year-old's life was saved by CPR and the quick arrival of a defibrillator which was located just two streets away when it happened.

At the same time as Mr MacPhee cheated death, his boss Graham MacQueen, who runs a charitable trust, got a letter from Glencruitten Golf Club member Helen Pearson asking for funding for a defibrillator. He agreed and the new defibrillator, which cost £1,856.80, is now in place on a wall outside the clubhouse.

Club member Mrs Pearson, who appealed for help after witnessing two people collapsing at the course, had written to a number of local charities but MacQueen Charitable Trust was the first to say yes.

Mr MacQueen said: 'Donnie's

experience brought the need for another defibrillator in the town into sharp focus. If it hadn't been for a defibrillator Donnie would not be back with us.'

When Mr MacPhee woke in hospital he was told he had suffered a cardiac arrest, not a heart attack, and that only three per cent of people whose hearts stop ever make it back. Mr MacPhee, who was back at work just six weeks after it happened three years ago and has not had a day off sick since, said: 'I was fine before the job but almost at the top of the stairs carrying a couch I felt dizzy then blacked out. The rest is what people told me when I woke up. Doctors kept me in a coma for three days but I saw bright lights. I was dead for seven minutes they told me. If it hadn't been for the customer doing CPR and a first responder just being two streets away with a defibrillator I would not be here today. It fired me up. I was a dead man but I'm a lucky man. I saw the bright lights but I came back.'

He added: 'I'm living proof defibrillators save lives. You can't put a price on that. Another defibrillator in Oban means more people will get the



Donnie MacPhee beside the new defibrillator at Glencruitten Golf Club.

second-chance I got if the worst happens to them. Life would have gone on the same without me being here. People would go about their business, going to work, walking the dog as usual but for me every new day is a

bonus. Seeing God's creations is a blessing.'

In 2010 MacQueen Bros Charitable Trust, supporting local causes for more than 20 years, paid for back-up batteries for Avich and Kilchrenan Commu-

nity Council's defibrillator and now the trust is planning to buy a special heated-box so Oban Lorne Rugby Club can move its life-saving machine from inside the club to outdoors for easier public access.

Views sought on care plan change

PUBLIC views are wanted on changes to an important health and social care integration plan before a new Carers Act is introduced in April.

The new act means Argyll and Bute's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) will need to provide additional support to unpaid and family carers.

Because of the Act, changes have to be made to a plan which sets out how the HSCP works. See the plan with required changes highlighted at bit.do/abintegrationscheme

Views should be emailed to nhs.abhscp@nhs.net by March 2 or write to Stephen Whiston, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance, at Argyll and Bute HSCP, Aros, Lochgilphead, PA31 8LB.

Recruitment drive targets student teachers in Northern Ireland

EFFORTS to get new student teachers into Argyll and Bute classrooms have reached Northern Ireland.

Oban High School head teacher Peter Bain was at a careers fair near Belfast last week in search of new recruits.

He visited Stranmillis College, part of Queen's University, with Susan Tyre, who is Argyll and Bute Council's Schools Services Support Manager, promoting the area as an excellent place to live, work and learn.

Ms Tyre said: 'As well as having leaflets, display banners, photographs and a list of vacant teaching posts with us, we also had a video clip playing which showed a variety of locations

throughout the area. Everyone commented on how beautiful Argyll and Bute is and we came away with lots of contact details for people who are interested in a teaching career in Scotland - it was a very worthwhile trip.'

The council's policy lead for education Councillor Yvonne McNeilly added: 'It's really encouraging to hear that the trip was such a success.'

'Teacher recruitment is a national problem and we are working hard as a local authority to do everything we can to tackle this.'

'Our aim is to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up and our vision is that to-

gether we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.'

'We will continue to do everything possible to encourage people to take up teaching posts in this wonderful part of the country.'

An information pack will now be sent to Stranmillis for distribution to all fourth year students about teaching opportunities in the area.

Oban High School already uses its Facebook page, Twitter and its own YouTube channel making in-house videos to sell itself to potential teachers.

In a recent blog on the school's website Mr Bain said he found it 'frustrating' that staffing issues interrupted some pupils' learn-

ing but added: 'I am very lucky to have so many good staff... I just wish I had more.'

This week there were seven teaching jobs being advertised in Argyll and Bute on Myjob-scotland.

They included a vacancy for a technology teacher for Oban High School and other teaching posts available at St Columba's Primary School in the town, Lochgoilhead Primary School, Dalmailly Primary School, North Bute Primary School, Kilmoran Primary School and St Muns Primary School in Dunoon.

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute council said not all teaching jobs vacancies were featured on the site.

Jobs could go at Oban DIY store

THE FUTURE of Oban's Homebase store could be in jeopardy putting jobs at risk.

Its Australian owner has put the whole DIY chain under review after a disappointing UK-wide performance, expecting to lose £97m in the first half of 2018.

As a result of poor trading, a number of its 250 stores could be shut to improve profits.

A spokesperson for owner Wesfarmers said it was too soon to comment on the future of Oban's Homebase.

'It's too early to say and it's not appropriate to speculate at this point. Our team will always be the first to know of any updates,' he said.

Results of the Homebase review are expected in June.

Wesfarmers paid £340m for the home improvement chain in early 2016 and has been rebranding the stores under the Bunnings name.

Earlier this week Wesfarmers managing director Rob Scott said: 'The Homebase acquisition has been below our expectations which is obviously disappointing. In light of this, a review has commenced to identify the actions required to improve shareholder returns.'

CalMac appoints interim boss

CALMAC has announced that Robbie Drummond will take over as interim managing director.

The board of David MacBrayne Limited appointed Mr Drummond, who began his new role on Monday.

David McGibbon, chairman of David MacBrayne Limited, CalMac's parent company, said: 'The board is delighted that Robbie Drummond has accepted this appointment as interim managing director of CalMac Ferries Limited.'

'We have a contract to deliver the lifeline ferry services under the CHFS2 contract until 2024 and, while we face challenging times, Robbie's experience as group finance director and, more recently, as interim director of service delivery will, I believe, stand him in good stead in the period ahead and even more so as we look towards the future.'

POLICE FILES

with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

Dangerous driving

A 41-YEAR-OLD man has been charged with dangerous driving after he was seen reversing on a roundabout and driving on the wrong side of the road in Argyll Square, Oban. Police stopped the car at 11pm on Monday January 29 and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Driver traced

AT 1.10AM on Tuesday January 30, on the A85 near Loch Awe, a car collided with a metal fence, causing damage. The driver drove off with the vehicle in a dangerous condition, failing to report the incident.

The car was later traced and stopped by police and the 24-year-old man who was driving was found to have no licence or insurance. He was also in possession of a knife.

The man was arrested and charged with the offences and held for court. A report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Drug search

A MAN was found with cannabis when police searched a flat in Shore Street, Oban, at 10.20pm on Friday February 2. The 24-year-old was issued with a recorded police warning.

Teenager had drugs

A TEENAGER was stopped and searched and found with cannabis and ecstasy at 3.30pm on Saturday February 3, in Arddonnell Terrace, Oban.

The 17-year-old man also obstructed the search. He was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Abusive behaviour

AT 10.45PM on Saturday February 3, in Corran Brae, Oban, a man aged 20 behaved in an abusive and disorderly manner and assaulted another man and a woman. Police attended and the man was arrested and charged. A report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Assault charge

AT 3.20AM on Sunday February 4, following a report of a man assaulting a woman in a flat on Corran Esplanade, Oban, a 29-year-old was arrested and charged. He was held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

□ If anyone has information in relation to the above, or to any incident, they should contact their local police office on telephone number 101, or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Firm secures £1m fish pen contract

A BARCALDINE marine company has secured a £1m contract to supply a salmon producer with fish pens and other state-of-the-art equipment. Fusion Marine has already started work on the contract from salmon producer Scottish Sea Farms.

Sea Farms, one of the country's leading producers of responsibly-farmed salmon, has included 21 fish pens in its order for two of its most exposed farming locations in Shetland.

Once at the sites in Teisti Geo and Dury, the durable pens will be put to the test to keep salmon stocks safe despite being battered by the weather.

Director at Fusion Marine Iain Forbes said the contract would bring benefits to the wider community around Oban.

'Hauliers, B&Bs, ferry travel, generators, welfare units and sundries - each and every pen we install for Scottish Sea Farms generates business both for the area local to us and the remote communities in which we work. Often, this is for months at a time during winter when revenue from tourism is traditionally lower,' he said.

It is estimated salmon farming contributes £558m to the national economy.

Food safety visits missed because of staff shortage

FOOD safety inspectors in Argyll and Bute missed more than 500 hygiene intervention visits which included a number of high-risk premises, a government agency report has revealed.

The report by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) has raised serious concerns about Argyll and Bute Council's food standards control procedures and has called for 'urgent mitigating action'.

The findings came as part of a capacity and capability audit carried out over two days last August.

According to the FSS report, a total of 556 food premises in the area were overdue a visit by the council's food law enforcement services and 140 premises were still waiting to be rated.

FSS auditors, who joined officers on

two unannounced inspections at high risk catering premises, also found the council's enforcement officers had lost the 'ability to ask non-scripted questions' at vital times by sticking rigidly to a set format of questions in a 20-page aide-memoir during checks which were meant to safeguard consumers.

There was 'insufficient assurance' given by food hygiene checks, found the report.

It was also found the authority had not completed internal monitoring of significance for some time.

The auditors noted: 'Controls are not acceptable and have notable weaknesses' and they continued: 'There are significant weaknesses in the current risk, governance and/or control procedures to the extent that the delivery of objectives is at risk.'

'Exposure to the weaknesses identified is sizeable and requires urgent mitigating action.'

The local authority has blamed failure to deliver its food service on a lack of 'adequate resources' including not having enough staff.

The report said: 'The authority explained that it has experienced significant difficulties over the last three years recruiting suitably qualified staff and has operated with a large number of vacancies over this past period. As a result, resources were deployed to service priorities and as a consequence specific activities were not undertaken.'

And it added: 'It had instead adopted a risk-based approach focusing resources to areas of highest risk.'

A council spokesperson said it recognised the findings made in the

report and had 'moved on' from the FSS visit.

'We had already put in place a food control improvement plan to develop the services we are delivering. We are pleased the actions recommended by FSS are already included in this plan,' said the spokesman, who added: 'We are on target to achieve the improvements highlighted in the audit plan agreed with the FSS and these include recruitment to vacant posts. We have established a dedicated food safety approved inspection team and we are accelerating completion of the plan.'

'In brief, we have continued to protect food safety and public health by using our resources on a priority basis and welcome the FSS's contribution to the work we are doing to develop our services.'

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Tue. 6 Mar. 2018, 1000 - 1600hrs, Lochgilphead

To book call 01546 604030 or
email bg@argyll-bute.gov.uk

OT
Leaders say 'bye to Guides

IT'S A new era for Girl Guiding in Oban with the Guide Hall receiving a face-lift and the organisation saying farewell to two stalwarts.

After receiving a £4,000 donation from Tesco, the Oban Guide Hall is being refurbished, with games being added to the exterior of the building.

However, the organisation needs new leaders as two leading lights, with a combined 60 years' service, have left.

Alison MacKenzie and Shiralene Cave have both left Girl Guiding after each spending 30 years with the organisation.

Alison was involved with Guides, specialising in camping, while Shiralene was a Rainbow leader.

Girl Guiding covers a wide range of ages, with Rainbows catering for 5-7-year-olds, Brownies from 7-10 years and Guides 10-14 years.

Stella MacIver, who has been a leader in Oban for 20 years, said: 'I would like to thank Alison and Shiralene for their years of service to the organisation.'

The organisation is currently looking for around six leaders covering Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

'We have got quite a big intake now. We have 22 girls, but we need more leaders,' said Stella.

Stella added: 'It's very difficult to recruit new leaders, however, I think with the college here now, there's more chance of people staying in the town.'

Tesco customers were invited to vote for one out of three organisations to receive funding, with cash going to first, second and third.

'At the front of the hall we have games, such as chess,' Stella added.

Anyone interested in becoming a leader can visit www.girlguiding.org.uk



Alison MacKenzie, retiring Guide leader.

Emergency access being hindered by work vans

DAVID MCPHEE
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk

AN OBAN pensioner is up in arms about work vans parking outside his home and 'hindering emergency services'.

Angus MacPhee, who originally hails from Colonsay, now lives in Lynn Gardens.

He said the problem started when work began on the new Oban High School.

'When the ambulance came in the other day after a woman had a severe stroke, what a job it had reversing out,' the 69-year-old said.

'They are not stopping them, but they are hindering them. It's got to stop. It's up to the site manager to get them out of there.'

Mr MacPhee lives in an area where he says the average age is around 75 and is concerned for some of his neighbours.

He said: '[A neighbour] can just about make it from his house to his car.'

'He likes to go out in the morning to get his paper, but now he is scared to leave before 10am because he is frightened he will lose his space.'

'The minute a resident goes out, within a minute someone goes in. There were only three cars there before the work started. This morning the bin lorry had a hell of a job to get in.'

Mr MacPhee, who has limited mobility, uses a taxi to get around.

'I came back with my shopping today,' he said. 'And it had to park in the middle of the road.'

The former Colonsay man is frustrated, because there are alternative car parks in town.

'They say they don't like using the big one because someone might break in and it's "two miles away",' he said.

'They just don't want to walk. They have no tools, because I watch.'

'So not only do they want to park in our spaces, they want us to watch their cars for them.'

'We wouldn't mind if it was the odd one.'

'They keep saying it's a public highway, so they can park there, but it's morally and ethically wrong.'

'They are hindering health services getting into us. It's not right and it's not fair.'

'Especially when they have alternative parking.'



Parking spaces are at a premium in Lynn Gardens, Oban. 17_106_LynnGardens03_Vansblocking

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Although we have no control over where our contractors park, we will pass on these comments and ask that

they take them into consideration.'

The £36 million high school is set to be completed by the end of the Easter Holidays, which

start at the end of March. Four additional days holiday have been allocated for Oban High School's pupils, while staff move into the new building.

Meeting spotlight

PLANS to set up a community trust for Seil will be discussed at an open meeting tonight, Thursday February 8.

Local groups, clubs and societies have been contacted and encouraged to have representatives at the meeting which starts at 7.30pm in Seil Hall.

The idea came from a Seil and Easdale Community Council Forward Planning initiative with a number of improvement, regeneration and sustainable projects already identified. 'There could be many more but sourcing funds have to be considered,' added a post on Seil Island Online.

Vote to boost island causes

COMMUNITY groups in Oban and the west Highlands are to share a £20 million funding boost from the Co-op.

The RNLI Islay fundraising branch, Mull Musical Minds and Tobermory Lighthouse Path are each in line to receive several thousand pounds depending on how many votes they get from Co-op customers in the run up to November.

To choose which cause to support log on to the Co-op's membership website at www.coop.co.uk/membership

Oban wildlife calendar raises more than £12,000 for Macmillan Day Care Unit



Robert Cruickshanks and Iain Alexander hand over more than £12,000 to the Macmillan Day Care Unit. 17_T06_MacMillan Day Care Oban01

A CHARITY wildlife calendar created to 'give something back' has raised more than £12,000 for the Macmillan Day Care Unit in Oban's hospital.

The 'Ootmahooswindae' calendar was created by Robert Cruickshanks and Janice Alexander.

Robert is a keen amateur photographer and regularly photographs wildlife at his home in Glencruitten.

'It was my photographs, but it was all Janice,' said Robert. 'She came up with the idea. It's all about her. It's all designed and focused on Janice giving something back for the excellent care and attention she received over the years.'

Unfortunately, after a long battle with cancer, Janice, of Oban, died in November last year.

Ootmahooswindae was praised by top wildlife cameraman Gordon Buchanan.

A total of 500 were made, with each one selling for £10 and a donation, raising a total of £12,155.

Donna MacKenzie, who works at the Macmillan Day Care Unit, said: 'A donation like this is fantastic. This will help make things as nice as possible. With other donations we have bought a vein finder - a lot of places don't have that.'

'Patients and family really appreciate not having to travel to Glasgow for treatment and they like the friendliness here. We provide a quality service.'

'We are like a family in here. We have wifi for patients now. We are hoping to get some tablets, so if someone doesn't have their own, they can use ours. We really appreciate the support from the local community.'

Janice's husband Iain Alexander said: 'This is a great ward. It's fantastic for local people and not having to travel to Glasgow is massive. Janice said the people in here were part of her family. Thanks to everyone who has bought, sponsored and sold the calendar. Without them it would not have happened.'

Lord Duncan gets a taste of Oban

UK GOVERNMENT minister for Scotland Lord Duncan of Springbank has visited Oban to get a taste of Argyll and Bute.

The minister, who met with fishing and council leaders on Friday, also had a 'wee dram' on a personal tour of Oban Distillery Visitor Centre, named winner of the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions' Best Visitor Experience award 2017.

Lord Duncan said he was visiting the area as the 'eyes and ears' of the UK government to hear about priorities and concerns so he could take them back to London.

His one-day itinerary included discussions with the Northern Lighthouse Board about maritime safety and the Scallop Association about Brexit.

Lord Duncan, who previously had worked with the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: 'Fishermen are canny. They want to explore every possible avenue.'

Economic development and funding opportunities were also on the agenda when he met Argyll and Bute Council chiefs to talk about government help.

'Scotland has two governments, one in Edinburgh and one in London.'

'Both must do their jobs. We have to listen to them and they have to hold us to account,' said Lord Duncan, who is a member



Lord Duncan raises a toast to Argyll and Bute with an Oban malt.

of the House of Lords. 'My role is to be the eyes and ears of the UK government. This is very much a collaboration so we can make progress together.'

Plenty going on - even with spring still some way off

FEBRUARY is my least favourite month, writes Oban town ambassador Kay McDonald.

Spring still seems too far away, despite the snowdrops, and although it's getting lighter, it seems to drag.

Thankfully, the next few weekends provide plenty to look forward to and that should make the last dregs of winter pass quickly.

Tonight we have Ballet West in the Corran Halls with Giselle Ou Les Willis, on Friday a Bodyshop at Home evening in New Hope from 7pm and on Saturday a coffee morning for Oban Bach Choir and Orchestra in Glencruitten Church Hall at 10.30am.

I love coffee mornings for the wonderful home baking and the chance to meet folk for a blether.

Sunday offers something that wee bit different with the Highland Cattle Society's 127th spring show and sale, with the show on Sunday and the sale on Monday.

It sounds fantastic, having the chance to get a closer look at the very best of this beautiful breed.

Sunday also offers something from Oban Music Society with the Solem Quarter in St John's Cathedral at 3pm - a chance to hear great music in a wonderful setting.

Next weekend has just as much to look forward to and two chances to get your dancing shoes on.

On Saturday February 17, there will be a Valentine tea dance in aid of the Carers Centre in Glencruitten Church Hall with entertainment by the Re-Searchers and the Boogies as well as a fabulous afternoon tea and, in the evening, a chance to dance off all the cake with the Red Hot Chili Pipers in the Corran Halls.

Having something to look forward to, even little things, makes the rainy days and dark nights pass more quickly. Roll on spring and warm, sunny days - hopefully.

Last week's photograph was of the building housing Stevenson Kennedy and OES in Stevenson Street.

This week's photograph should be really easy if you pay attention to your surroundings when you're out and about.

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Three hour clean-up bags 200kg waste haul

DUMPED tyres, waste metal and plastic were among a 200kg haul of waste cleaned up from the banks of Loch Etive in just three hours.

Alan Drummond and Environmental Specialist Jason Dobson, who work at the Dawnfresh Loch Etive trout farming site, carried out Operation Seawater.

Company workers try and run beach clear ups every month to combat the amount of rubbish left around the loch.

Mr Drummond said: 'It's a real shame when you see what has been dumped around the loch. Most of us who work at the Loch Etive sites live locally and care about keeping the area clean.'

'We try to get out and do a clear-up as often as we can but you can still be amazed how quickly it builds up and what you'll find. Just a few months ago we pulled a washing machine from Taynuilt Pier.'

Dawnfresh Production Manager Greig MacPhail said: 'The dumping of rubbish is a real issue around Loch Etive particularly during summer months, so it is both bitter sweet that the guys were able to get out and clear so much. I've been at Dawnfresh for two years and the guys have been doing beach clear ups long before I started. We're lucky enough to have some truly beautiful views while at work and we all want to preserve them.'



Staff from fish farming-company Dawnfresh collect rubbish from the banks of Loch Etive.

MPs to probe Highland online delivery charges

SANDY NEIL
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MPS ARE to investigate online delivery charges in the Highlands and Islands, where 'at least a million people in Scotland are subject to higher fees, longer delivery times or even refusal of service'.

A report found people living in the Hebrides can face a 500 per cent mark-up on standard online delivery charges compared to the rest of the UK and can wait up to 35 extra days for delivery, which make it harder for local businesses to compete.

The Scottish Affairs Committee is holding the one-off session into delivery charges for online purchases on February 27, featuring major online retailers, delivery companies and organisations that have looked

into delivery charges, including Ofcom and Citizens Advice Scotland.

A government spokesperson said: 'The issue is most severe in island communities and the Highlands where charges can be as high as £18.60 per delivery and delivery times three days later than other parts of the UK. Many online businesses use private delivery firms who are not subject to the same service obligations as Royal Mail.'

The session will examine how prevalent high delivery charges are in Scotland and which areas are most affected.

It will investigate what information is available to consumers about charges and if additional costs reflect the real economic cost of delivering goods. Finally, it will look at what options exist for reducing or eliminating

charges. Announcing the session, chairman of the Scottish Affairs Committee Pete Wishart MP said: 'High charges and lengthy delivery times are yet another thing that makes it just that little bit harder for people and businesses outside the major population centres in Scotland.'

'If you are paying £15 more to get something delivered and having to wait three more days to receive it then it makes a real difference to whether your business is competitive or not. We have launched this inquiry to understand how there can be such a disparity in service between different areas of the UK. Do extra charges reflect the true cost of delivery? Have companies looked at solutions to alleviate or remove them? We want to hear about the impact that charges have on

the people of Scotland. If this is something that affects you please tell us about it at our online forum.'

Earlier a Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) report found that at least one million Scots face surcharges, late delivery or are refused delivery altogether when they try to buy goods online.

Consumers in Scotland's island communities face a postcode penalty of nearly £19 extra (£18.60) to deliver goods they buy online - that's a 500 per cent mark up on the standard delivery price.

Consumers in the Highlands are charged an extra £15 per delivery on average.

Of the 534 retailers CAS investigated, 335 of them (63 per cent) charged extra for delivery to certain parts of the UK. Seventy-two per cent of those

surcharges applied to consumers in Scotland.

Fifty-five per cent of retailers which restricted the areas of the UK to which they would deliver refused to deliver goods to any Scottish islands.

Thirty-four per cent of retailers CAS investigated said that delivery would take longer for consumers in some parts of the UK.

Thirty-nine per cent of these retailers took an extra three or more days to deliver to consumers in certain parts of Scotland, with some customers waiting as long as 35 extra days for delivery.

Sixty-nine per cent of retailers CAS investigated did not offer delivery by Royal Mail, despite the Royal Mail's universal service obligation meaning that delivery by this method costs the same across the UK.

SAMS urges MSPs for more salmon farm research

SCIENTISTS have called for greater research into the effects of salmon farming in Scotland, as an inquiry at Holyrood begins.

Researchers from the Scottish Association for Marine Science based at Dunstaffnage, Dunbeg published a review last month on the Environmental Impacts Of Salmon Farming in Scotland.

The report authors gave evidence to the Environment, Climate Change, and Land Reform (ECCLR) committee on Tuesday last week in the Scottish Parliament.

They argued an expansion in salmon farming would require a greater need for research, when compared with aquaculture leaders like Norway, and a consideration of how the growing demand for fish feed would be met.

Committee convenor Graeme Dey MSP asked how long it would take to build up a 'body of robust science' to fill these knowledge gaps.

Professor Nick Owens, director of SAMS, said: 'We would need to double or treble the current effort going on in Scotland. You are looking at a decade of really intensive work and we will need to up our game by an order of magnitude.'

Committee member Alex Rowley MSP said: 'Throughout this evidence session, it seems to me that there is a lack of data and research in so many areas and Norway seems to be so much further ahead than us in terms of investment and research. Would that be a fair conclusion to draw?'

'In my opinion, absolutely,' Dr Adam Hughes responded. 'The level of investment in research in Norway is much higher, as is the level of technical knowledge.'

Public meeting on Gaelic plans

PEOPLE are being invited to have their say about Argyll and Bute Council's plan to promote Gaelic.

Councillor Robin Currie, policy lead for Gaelic with Argyll and Bute Council, will be at a public meeting in Furan Gaelic Centre, Oban tomorrow, Friday February 9, between 11am and noon to hear views on the council's Draft Gaelic Plan 2018-22.

Copies of the draft plan are available from the Gaelic Centre and anyone unable to get to the meeting can send their views to gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk. The deadline for comments is Monday February 19.

Food from Argyll goes down a treat at Westminster

TWELVE food and drink companies from Argyll and the islands were given the chance to show off their products to some of London's most important food and drink buyers.

The Food from Argyll event was organised by MP Brendan O'Hara and co-hosted by Eleanor, Duchess of Argyll and was held at Westminster Hall.

Taking part were Loch Fyne Oysters, The Scottish Salmon Company, Bute Brewery, Mull of Kintyre Cheese, the Puffer from Easdale, Argyll Hill Lamb, Fyne Ales, Lochawe Smokehouse, The Slate Island Seaweed Company, Ritchie's of Bute, Gigha Halibut and Lussa Gin from Jura. The businesses had the opportunity to meet several high-end buyers, chefs and restaurant representatives from London.

Mr O'Hara said: 'I honestly believe Argyll and Bute produces some of the finest food and drink in the world and I wanted to showcase this in Westminster. It would be absolutely wonderful if, as a result of this event, our producers returned to Argyll and Bute with some orders on their books or some new business leads.'

'I am very grateful to my co-host, Eleanor, Duchess of Argyll and Food from Argyll, who have given fantastic support for this event and to everyone who attended and made this such a success.'

The Duchess of Argyll added: 'We knew that an offering of some of the best food from Argyll would be a draw, but the response to one of Scotland's most famous food destinations was amazing.'

Claire Fletcher from Lussa Gin, who travelled from Jura to Westminster, was equally delighted. She said: 'We've had a great afternoon here at Westminster and have made some really useful contacts as well as setting foot inside one of the most iconic buildings in the UK. And people must have enjoyed their Lussa gin as we ran out of tonic.'

Jennifer Nicol, from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, said: 'This event has provided a great opportunity to demonstrate a sample of the quality produce available from the Argyll region, and the fantastic experience and enthusiasm of the producers involved.'

Virginia Sumison, co-ordinator at Food from Argyll, added: 'We are delighted by the turnout at the House of Commons and it has been very useful in making new contacts and meeting up with old friends and new.'



Brendan O'Hara MP with Zak Miller of Mull of Kintyre Cheese at the Food from Argyll event in Westminster Hall.

Workshop aimed at new drivers

EMERGENCY services in Oban are teaming up to provide a 'hard-hitting' workshop that aims to prevent road fatalities.

The new driver early intervention scheme is targeted at learners, employers and those who have recently passed their test. The event will take place in Oban Fire Station on Saturday March 3.

Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will deliver the presentation.



The Rotary Club of Oban hands over a cheque to Lorn clay target club.

Rotary club targets youth activities with donation

LORN Clay Target Club has received £200 from the Rotary Club of Oban.

The long-established clay target club in Moss Road, North Connel, which has members moving on to compete at national and international level, received the donation as part of the Rotary Club's support for local youth initiatives.

Oban Rotary president Tommy MacQuade recently handed over the cheque to club president Hector MacFadyen.

The Rotary Club is also giving £250 towards sending five cadets from Oban Detachment D Company Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Cadet Force on a battlefield trip to France and Belgium.

Each cadet will be tasked with researching a fallen Argyll's name from their local memorial and will follow the path of their chosen soldier to their final resting place in either France, Belgium or the Menin Gate.



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£2.9m deal struck to help save council services

ARGYLL and Bute Council will receive an extra £2.9m in the next financial year following a budget deal struck between the Green Party and ruling SNP Scottish Government.

The deal, worth £27.2m across the Highlands and Islands, 'ensures that many proposed cuts to front-line services can now be scaled back and removed entirely', the Green Party said.

Highlands and Islands MSP John Finnie said the 'monumental' deal 'will ensure Argyll and Bute Council's proposed cuts can now be significantly reduced'.

'The budget agreement will see those earning lower than average incomes pay less income tax, it will ensure the vast majority of public sector staff - including nurses and teachers - receive a pay rise linked to inflation and provide more investment in communities.'

Leader of Argyll and Bute Council Aileen Morton said: 'When the local government settlement was first announced in December, Argyll and Bute looked set to be

one of the lowest funded councils in Scotland. Our funding was cut by four per cent, compared to the Scottish average of 1.8 per cent. We obviously welcome the announcement of additional funding but will have to take time to consider what this announcement means for our budget decisions.'

'With budget challenges expected to continue for councils in the years to come, setting a responsible budget in February will be about making decisions that best support our communities and our area in the longer term, as well as now.'

Earlier in November, Argyll and Bute Council estimated its budget gap to be between £0.9 million and £8.5 million in 2018-19, and over the next three years, between £11.1 million and £33.9 million.

Council departments identified savings options to help bridge the funding shortfall, which went to a public consultation.

Frontline services face sweeping cutbacks and job losses, with the most drastic hitting roads, school janitors and public conveniences.



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OT

Killin

KILLIN SWI held its February meeting on Thursday February 1.

The meeting was held in the afternoon, instead of the evening, and there was a good turnout, which the president was delighted with.

The speaker was Cath McGregor from the Aberfeldy Herb Society who gave a lovely insight into herb growing and the many uses herbs can play in everyday life and cooking.

She also showed a selection of handy gadgets which can make life chopping and grinding herbs much easier before inviting everyone to join in and make their own herb salt and seasoning.

The meeting was much enjoyed by an enthusiastic audience and Cath was given a hearty vote of thanks by Desiree van Doorn.

Competition winners: A Herb Scone: 1 Margaret Galloway; 2 Ellen Stewart; 3 Cathie Reid. Favourite Salt and Pepper: 1 Jenny Huntley; 2 Mairi Hunter; 3 Margaret Galloway.

The March meeting will return to an evening event in the Lesser McLaren Hall at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Emma-Louise Livingstone from the Dog's Trust and it is hoped there will be a good turnout once again.

Kirn

A NEW primary school costing £9 million officially opened in Kirn, Dunoon, on January 31.

The school, which is being hailed as a flagship project by Argyll and Bute Council, was delivered in partnership with hub North Scotland Ltd and the Scottish Futures Trust through the Scottish Government's Schools for the Future programme.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for education Councillor Yvonne McNeilly said at the launch: 'We are committed to ensuring our children have the best possible start in life and are ready to succeed.'

'As we gather here today, it is clear this school is going a long way to contributing towards that.'

A high quality, two-storey building now replaces the annexes of the old school, providing bright new classrooms, an atrium and library area, sports hall, main office and reception, general purpose room and separate dining hall.

Outside, the new school has large play areas, including a multi-use games area with a synthetic surface, an improved pupil and bus drop-off area and increased parking.

The school took 16 months to complete, during which time staff and pupils were decanted to Dunoon Grammar School.

Helensburgh

WORK to create a new park-and-ride car park in Helensburgh got under way on Monday.

The car park will be built on the former gasometer site in Grant Street and will have 53 spaces.

Funded by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), spaces in the car park will be paid for using pay and display tickets, with the cost of parking able to be used as a discount against the purchase of a rail ticket at Helensburgh Central Station.

For safety reasons, the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre staff car park will be closed until Monday February 26.

Following this, a reduced number of spaces will be available for the remainder of the works.

The car park is due to be completed by the start of the summer.

Oban

A NEW project, entitled Tapestry of Life, will take place at The Rockfield Centre on Sunday February 11.

The project has been inspired by an original tapestry initiated in 1985 by Kerrera woman Joyce Glen.

Tapestry of Life will be headed by Joyce's daughter, Rowan Glen, who has returned to live on Kerrera, as a way of recording contemporary life in Oban.

Rowan will bring the original 1980s' tapestry to the launch.



MP Brendan O'Hara with SCC's Andrew Aitken and Craig Anderson.

MP visits new salmon plant in Cairndow

THE SCOTTISH Salmon Company (SSC) was pleased to welcome Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara to its newly-developed Cairndow processing and filleting plant near the mouth of Loch Fyne.

Mr O'Hara joined Craig Anderson, chief executive of SSC, to tour the salmon processing centre.

SSC produces more than 25,000 tonnes of Scottish salmon annually, which is exported to 26 countries

worldwide, half of which is produced in Argyll and Bute. Mr O'Hara said: 'I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the Scottish Salmon Company's state-of-the-art salmon processing facility at Cairndow and meeting the team.'



North Connel cyclist Chris Hoon, who rode 1,000 miles in three months, is hoping to raise £1,000 for Alzheimer's Research.

North Connel

A NORTH Connel cyclist who rode 1,000 miles in three months is hoping to raise £1,000 for Alzheimer's Research, writes Aidan Donaghy.

Chris Hoon, who works for West Coast Motors, started the epic challenge Cycling Down Dementia in November and hoped the amount raised would equal the miles cycled.

Chris said: 'This winter has seen very challenging conditions and soon after getting into it, I had to battle against strong winds, heavy rain, sleet, hail and snow. With the dark days closing in, most of my miles were done at night time and on icy roads.'

'However, the charity I am doing this for, Alzheimer's Research, is one very close to my heart as my father suffered from dementia and my father-in-law was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. He came to live with us for a year once he was unable to live on his own, so I was determined to continue.'

He completed his 1,000th mile on Friday and by Monday his total had reached £746.

Anyone who wishes to donate can do so via the Cycling Down Dementia website.

Loch Lomond

TRANSPORT Scotland has awarded a £3.4 million contract for ground investigations as part of the work to upgrade the A82 route along the side of Loch Lomond between Tarbet and Inverarnan.

Transport Scotland has announced the intention to give Soil Engineering Geoservices Limited the contract, subject to completion of the mandatory standstill period.

The work is scheduled to start in March and is expected to take 18 weeks.

Transport Minister Humza Yousaf said: 'We remain committed to upgrading the A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan. These ground investigations due to get underway next month will provide the detailed information needed to help inform the development and assessment of the scheme's design.'

'We need to ensure any future upgrade fits within the area's outstanding landscape and environment and maintains the renowned beauty of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.'

'The work we are doing along this vital route that connects the Highlands and islands with the central belt will lead to improved road safety and journey time reliability and meet the needs of businesses, communities and visitors.'

Highlands

NUMEROUS historic sites in the Highlands are allowing Young Scot cardholders entry for £1 to celebrate the Year of Young People 2018.

The offer is available at Glenfinnan monument, Glencoe visitor centre, Inverewe and Hugh Miller's birthplace cottage and museum in the Highlands, as well as more than 100 other sites throughout Scotland.

The offer has been created after young people claimed some historic sites were too expensive, preventing them from engaging in historic sites.

Mena Kirmani, Heritage Blueprint member, said: 'This is an incredible opportunity for young Scots in the Highlands to explore Scotland's history and celebrate the Year of Young People 2018.'

Historic Environment Scotland chief executive Alex Paterson commented: 'I'd encourage Scotland's young people to take advantage of this historic offer and explore the country's rich and diverse history first hand - from the magnificent Neolithic monuments in Orkney to the beautiful border abbeys.'

Louise MacDonald from Young Scot said: 'Young people have told us they are keen to explore Scotland's historic treasures and heritage sites and it is wonderful to see the sector engaging with young people in this way.'

All young people aged 11-26 who live in Scotland can get a Young Scot card free. For more information on how to get a Young Scot card visit www.young.scot/card

Arrochar



Iain Millar and Dominic Spencer.

'JAZZ in the Village' will be coming to Arrochar's Three Villages Community Hall this month.

Iain Millar and Dominic Spencer will be in the hall on February Saturday 17.

Iain and Dominic have worked together for a number of years playing melodic improvisations on jazz standards and original compositions.

The duo is based in Edinburgh but have embarked on many rural tours, often bringing jazz to remote communities for the first time, performing in intimate settings.

The beautiful Scottish scenery they have seen on their travels has inspired the writing of many pieces of music by Ian. 'Jazz in the Village' will take them even further up and down the country playing in villages all over Britain. Tickets are available from the Three Villages Hall, telephone: 01301 702669.

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At Random

Scandal of firms refusing to deliver

THE LATEST issue to get my blood boiling is the point-blank refusal of some retailers - including Currys and the Co-op - to deliver household items to the West Highlands.

As we report elsewhere this week, one family from Oban tried to order a cooker but were dismayed to discover these firms refused to deliver.

It is an absolute scandal. We have long lived with the fact we, in areas such as Argyll, the isles and Lochaber have been penalised with high charges for deliveries but for these companies now to simply refuse to accommodate us at all is outrageous.

Other retailers take an opposite view and cater well for those of us in remote and rural communities. Their position seems to be that customer service and their own reputation are better served by them absorbing some of the delivery costs themselves.

That should be the thinking for all these big companies. They should be ashamed of themselves for treating us with the utter disdain they have displayed in this instance.

So what can be done about it? Simple: boycott these firms and urge your family and friends to do likewise. There are plenty of alternatives.

Amazing response to Nancy Glen fund

THE LOSS of the fishing boat Nancy Glen was a desperately cruel blow.

The families and friends of the two missing fishermen - skipper Duncan MacDougall and crew member Przemek Krawczyk - are still grieving and, for them, the pain is exacerbated by the fact they have not yet been found.

However, the response of communities across Argyll has been absolutely amazing, with more than £200,000 raised so far.

The generosity of people all over the region - many of them with no links to the fishing industry - has been overwhelming.

It is a great credit to the people of Argyll.

Alison deserves the highest praise

OBAN is renowned for its close-knit communities and a level of generosity of spirit that is rarely equalled elsewhere.

It is, of course, people who are responsible for this sense of belonging which is manifest in a selflessness and willingness to help others.

There are countless individuals who go above and beyond to make life better for others, and among them, as we report this week, is very definitely Alison MacKenzie. Alison has just retired after around 30 years as a leader of the Girl Guides in the town.

Countless young ladies have benefited down all these years from the sterling commitment shown by Alison.

They are all very lucky to have known her.

Enjoy your 'retirement', Alison.

Trio are inspiring leaders for Oban

AS WE report on page nine today, in an excellent piece written by Mike Faulkner, a director of Atlantis Leisure, the sports centre has had just three chairmen in its 25-year history.

As with Alison MacKenzie, I salute these three inspiring guys for their dedicated and selfless service to a crucially important facility that, I am very pleased to say, is going from strength to strength.

As an occasional user of Atlantis, and having been involved in recent times with the Oban Sports Hub, I can testify to the wide range of sports and other activities that are available at the centre for people of all ages.

Atlantis Leisure is at the heart of the Oban community and we have been proud to partner the centre for publicity and other purposes to highlight the excellent work done by the team there.

Hugh McLean, Roy Clunie and Neil Matheson have given - and continue to give - exceptionally of their time for the benefit of others.

Pats on the back all round, gentlemen.

What do you think?

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

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

Alison MacKenzie who has stepped down after 30 years as a leader with Oban Girl Guides.

Recalling the terror of Loch Awe side

LORN MACINTYRE
 editor@obantimes.co.uk

IN APRIL 1911, an ostentatious imported car with a chauffeur at the wheel and two passengers in the back turned into the garage in Combie Street, Oban. The vehicle didn't require mechanical attention.

The Loch Awe side laird, Esdaile Campbell Muir, aged 37, had come to get married to Miss May (Laura Madeleine) Montgomery, aged 18, residing with Mrs Stewart, her aunt, at Soroba House, Oban.

The ceremony, witnessed by Esdaile's chauffeur and another chauffeur, was of the pagan handfasting type, with the couple's hands bound together with a cord. When the knot was untied, the couple were driven off.

The romantic story appealed to the press, with the Oban garage referred to as the 'new Gretna Green'.

“ He put an open hand under her jaw and pushed ”

Ah, but a boy in Oban knew the true story behind the garage betrothal.

Donald Sutherland was the son of John Sutherland, partner in the legal firm of Hosack and Sutherland. The Sutherlands were part of the high society of the town and environs, and the solicitor brought home to the dinner table stories about Esdaile Campbell Muir, known as 'the Terror of Loch Awe side'.

Young Donald was fascinated, and, years later, recorded his memories in a delightful book called *Butt and Ben* (reprinted by Birlinn).

Donald recalled: 'Mrs Stewart and Miss Montgomery were taking a leisurely trot in their one-horse Victoria when they met Campbell Muir's large



Esdaile Campbell-Muir and his wife May, above. Esdaile Campbell-Muir had inherited the Inistrynich estate on Loch Awe side in 1900.



the match he proposed would be quite unsuitable. For one thing, she and her daughter [niece] were Roman Catholics and he ... she got no further.

'Campbell Muir put an open hand under her jaw, and pushed hard. She fell into a deep bramble-filled ditch as he had intended her to. He then grabbed the not unwilling daughter, threw her into the car and was away like Young Lochinvar but much faster. And in those days the police were not motorised.'

Esdaile and Mary Madeleine

reached the Oban garage for the handfasting wedding, and Mrs Stewart's hot pursuit thereafter was futile.

Was Esdaile's choice of bride due to his belief that May was an heiress with expectations of a large income when she came of age?

Esdaile had inherited the Inistrynich estate on Loch Awe side in 1900 at the age of 27, through the will of his wealthy grandfather, William Muir, proprietor of a whisky bond in Leith, Edinburgh, among other investments.

Esdaile was clever, having studied electrical engineering at Cambridge University, and was a rowing 'blue'. From the day he took over Inistrynich, he made himself objectionable. Visitors were met, not with a handshake, but with stones flung from the library window.

A gifted engineer, Esdaile installed an electrical system in the mansion house, destroying it to force his widowed mother to move out, which she wisely did.

A lover of Esdaile's of whom he had wearied ended up in the snow outside Inistrynich, minus her shoes and stockings, and her purse. The cook saw her and came out to rescue her, warming her frozen feet at the kitchen stove.

Esdaile, pioneering motorist, began to go through his inheritance at an alarming speed, importing a series of large, expensive cars which terrorised horse-drawn traffic on the road between Loch Awe and Oban. On one reckless occasion, he knocked a holidaying mademoiselle and her Peugeot into the shallows of Loch Awe, without stopping to rescue the distressed but unscathed maiden.

When a local farmer dared to argue with him, one of his cows was delivered to him by rail ... a bullet in its head.

Esdaile seemed to think that Loch Awe belonged to him. In May 1906, Scotland's newspapers (including *The Oban Times*) carried details of the sensational 'Loch Awe shooting case' trial being held in

Oban. Four Glasgow anglers, including a city baillie, were fired at by Esdaile, described by a Peterhead newspaper on his court appearance as 'a smart looking young man in a kilt and shooting jacket'.

Sentence: a fine of £5 or 30 days' imprisonment.

His fellow Argyll landowners were horrified by his behaviour.

In February 1909, Campbell Muir's steam launch sank in Loch Awe. He sued an insurance underwriter for the cost of the vessel and denied a charge that he had disconnected two injection pipes to scuttle the launch in order to collect the insurance. He lost the case and, in May 1911, he was declared bankrupt, a month after his garage wedding.

His bride's expected annual income of four figures was not due until she was 21. What was left of his estate was sold, and he and his wife disappeared, only to wash up in Florida, where he was fined \$50,000 for slandering a man. He absconded without paying, but to where?

Donald Sutherland of Oban wrote of the fugitive: 'The last thing I heard was that he had been driving a car for a Chicago citizen called Al Capone. On the whole it did not sound improbable. But we missed him.'

Actually Esdaile went to sea as a ship's engineer. He died in a nursing home in London at the age of 77 in June 1951 with very little money and is buried in an unmarked grave in Streatham Park Cemetery in London.

His memory as a rogue endures on Loch Awe side. It is claimed that, having set fire to Hayfield House for the insurance money, he swam round to Inistrynich to raise the alarm, so as to avoid being seen on the road.

Thanks to Janet White of British Columbia, a Campbell Muir descendant, for assistance and photographs; and also to Emma Fellowes, one of the family who currently live at Inistrynich.

Problems with health care in the Highlands remain as they were

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNER
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WITH family doctors in the Highlands facing a controversial new GP contract which many say will destabilise a situation that is already in crisis, this is perhaps an appropriate moment to look back at the dawning of medical provision in the landward areas.

It started with the Dewar Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John A Dewar (1856-1929), MP for Inverness-shire and chairman of the famous distillers, John Dewar and Sons.

The Dewar Commission was an investigation into the state of healthcare in remote areas. Evidence was taken from doctors, ministers, school teachers and crofters all around the Highlands and Islands. It began in August 1912, and presented the following year to the Houses of Parliament, along with a report from the Highlands and Islands Medical Service Committee.

Among the issues examined were diet, infectious diseases, children's health, living conditions, doctors' conditions and salaries, nurses, midwifery, availability of telephones, transport difficulties and, in particular, the possibility of establishing subscription schemes or clubs whereby all families, other than the destitute, would regularly contribute a small sum to be assured of free care if and when it was needed.

On the basis of this evidence, the government acted quickly, establishing the Highlands and Islands Medical Service Fund which was the forerunner of the National Health Service.

The service began in 1915 but, because of the First World War, did not get going until 1919. The objectives were that every person in the region should be able to secure the services of a fully-qualified doctor, whatever the financial circumstances, and that GPs would be assured



Members of the Dewar Committee visiting a village in the North of Scotland in 1912.

of a definite minimum income and travel expenses.

A nursing service was also developed under the scheme. District nursing associations were organised which meant that qualified nurses were stationed in strategic places. These were financed by local voluntary and family subscriptions and substantial grants from county councils and the Highlands and Islands Medical Service Fund.

Sir Frank Fraser Darling, the author and ecologist from Strontian, noted in his epic *West Highland Survey* (Oxford 1955) that medical practice, as it was understood 40 years ago, was not an attractive professional career for doctors in the West Highlands and Islands working in an area which involved long and difficult journeys to visit patients who were in general unable to pay a reasonable professional fee.

The fact that there were doctors practising in these areas at all was testimony to the high spirit of service and to the reward of gratitude.

Darling concluded that if there was an impression at an earlier time that doctors tended to vegetate in the Highlands and failed to keep up to date, this had long been dispelled through having the opportunity for study leave and to engage with specialists.

It is interesting to read in a recent press release by the Rural GP Association of Scotland (RGPAS) that they share the same concern as Sir John Dewar did in 1912 about the difficulties of delivering healthcare in remote and resource-limited settings of the Highlands and Islands. It is this which is at the root of their present complaint to the Scottish GP Committee and the Scottish Government.

A nationwide poll of GPs drawn up by the Scottish Government and the British Medical Association found more than 71 per cent were in favour of adopting the new deal. The poll, however, was a nonsense as only 20 per cent voted.

Now RGPAS warns that the new funding arrangements, if not halted, may inevitably lead to the extinction of rural practices.

I know of one practice in a deprived area of Edinburgh that will lose £125,000 annually while another, in a more opulent part of the city, will gain £48,000. So much for the present government helping poverty and inequalities.

It would seem that the health service in the areas of Scotland which need it most is in danger of going backwards instead of forwards.

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Viewpoint



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There has been a genuine sense of shock felt across the Oban area at the news the Royal Voluntary Service is to bring an end to its Meals On Wheels service in the town next month.

As a number of people have pointed out in our report on page one, this is not just about providing vulnerable members of our community with a hot meal three days a week.

It is also very much about social interaction and offering a friendly link to the outside world. For many of the Meals On Wheels clients, the individual delivering their

food may be the only person they see that day – and in some cases can be the only person they see all week.

Yes, there is an argument to be made that modern ready meals are often cheap to buy and are easy to prepare. However, that misses the point as mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

There is also a considerable degree of concern that the Health and Social Care Partnership, which will have to pick up the slack, was not informed officially until contacted by *The Oban Times*.

This is a crucial service and it is one worth fighting for.



Days gone by – 1958

An Oban Times reader kindly dropped off this great photograph of the Oban High School football team of 1958. Back row, left to right, are sports master ETF Spence, Sandy Dawson, James Binnie, Andrew (Bunnacks) MacIntyre, Roger MacDonald, Iain (Swallow) MacIntyre and an unknown man. Front row: Henrick Madej, Alistair McCalman, Tommy Campbell, Jackie Baines, Hugh (Toots) MacLean and Willie Jackson.

MacPhail

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John Maclean (1827-1895) from Balemartin, Tiree, was a fine writer of political verse and his song *Oran Manitoba*, from which the following verses are taken, is one of many of his works relating to the Highland Clearances and the resulting campaigns to give crofters security of tenure on the land they rented.

Tiree suffered less than many areas of the Highlands and in this song the bard makes reference to the further-reaching political situation of the time and to the wider and enduring weaknesses of mankind that lead to injustices like the Highland Clearances.

Gur muladach mise 's mi seo gun duin' idir
A thogas, no thuigeas, no sheinneas leam dän.

Le dùrachd mo chridhe, soraidh slàn leis na gillean

A sheòl thar an linne gu Manitoba.
Chan fhaic mi san àm seo ach caorach air bheanntan:

Chanèil as a' ghleann ach fear Gall-da no dhà:

Am beagan a dh'fhan dhiubh air rudhaichean-mara

Gan iomain gu cladach 's gam feanadh le màl.

Tha luchd-fhearainn shaoir as an àm seo ro-ghaolach

Air stòras an t-saoghail a shlaodadh bho chàch;

G'èil innleachdan baoghail sa'

Ghàidhealtachd seo daonnan
Air fògair nan daoine 's chur chaorach nan àit.

'Se faileas nan daoine; 's nach sgarach an saoghal -

'Se 's fasan dha daonnan bhith caohladh gach là.

Nar coigrich air uachdar, cha mhaireann 's cha bhuan sinn

Is mìltean de thruaghain gam fuadach far sàil.

Cha labhair mi tuileadh mu euchd nan fear duineil

Ach ruigidh mi Rusia 's mullach Alma

Se daoiread an fhearainn chuir na Gàidheil an tainead

'S gun chuimhne air Sebastopol 's Balaclava

How sad I am here without a single companion

to raise a chorus, or understand or sing a song with me.

From the depths of my heart I send a farewell blessing

to the lads who sailed on the voyage to Manitoba.

I can see nothing but sheep on the hillsides:

there is no-one left in the glen but a stranger or two:

the few of them who are left are on headlands by the sea,

driven to the shore and flayed with rents.

The land-owning proprietors at this time are all too eager

to grab for themselves the worldly possessions of all the rest;

cunning schemes are always being

used here in the land of the Gaels to drive the people out and make room for sheep.

The people are but shadows; how fickle the world is

it is ever its nature to change day by day.

We are strangers upon its face, we are fleeing and impermanent,

with thousands of poor wretches being driven overseas.

I shall say nothing more of the deeds of the brave men

But I will mention Russia and the Heights of Alma.

It is the weight of the rent that has left the Gaels few in numbers:

Forgotten are Sebastopol and Balaclava.

There were many varying contexts in different places and at different times that led to the massive depopulation of vast geographic areas that became known as the Highland Clearances.

Among the complex economic and political climate of the time, there is no doubt there was systematic brutal injustice wielded on one part of society by another.

We are lucky that by the strength of bardic tradition that existed in the Highlands and Islands, these sad and cruel events were recorded at the time and are sung of frequently to this day.

If anyone is in any doubt as to whether the Highland Clearances occurred or not, delve into Gaelic songs written in the 1800s.

The evidence is stark and overwhelming.

Mikey. Hope you get an award for your awesome actions. Well done.'

Tricia McMenemy: 'Well deserved Mikey, well done.'

Sandra Douglas: 'Wow! Well done you and so well deserved!'

Vonnie Pearce: 'Well we can't all be wrong Mikey. You deserve it.'

Babs-kaz Wakeham: 'Very well deserved.'

Disappointed at Oban Phoenix Cinema AGM

Sir,
As an occasional user of social media and avid reader of *The Oban Times*, having attended the AGM of the Oban Phoenix Cinema group on January 22, which I did gladly on the night, and read your subsequent report, I felt I should voice my observations.

Prior to attending I sent a request asking if there was an agenda. There was not but I was told questions and answers could be exchanged with board members on the night. This was not properly facilitated and, bearing in mind the agenda and statement of accounts were only available on the night, proper questions were difficult to generate.

I appreciate that some of the board members were unable to attend, and I wish them well. There was an abundance of information provided by those in attendance but I do feel much could have been gained through a healthy, well-chaired, open question and answer session. I left disappointed.

Kenny McLennan,
by email.

Grateful for hospital treatment after fall

Sir,
On Monday January 22, after my wife and I had enjoyed a lunch in the Food from Argyll café, I had a fall.

The young man, Martin, serving in the café came to my immediate aid before the ambulance arrived and I received further attention on the way to A&E in Lorn and Islands Hospital, where I had several tests.

I'd like to place on public record my grateful thanks for the attention and treatment I received from all those people: Martin (the young man in the café), the ambulance personnel and the staff in A&E. Without highlighting anyone in particular, it is nice to be able to report, at a time when the NHS and A&E departments in hospitals are held up as being unable to cope, just how well I was treated there.

Fred Pole,
Benderloch.

Salmon farms are unhealthy for fish

Sir,
Michael C Smith suggested fish farm sea lice are responsible for the destruction of our native wild salmon stock (Letters, *The Oban Times*, January 18).

There are other negative consequences of intensive fish farming that also need to be addressed.

These are:

1. The sheer number of them. The visual impact of sea farm cages cluttering up so many of our most beautiful remote bays and lochs, making these places no-go areas for us and many other creatures.

2. The ethics of caging these wild creatures in the first place. Salmon are top predators. Can we put thousands of them in a crowded cage and expect them to be healthy and well? It is cruel to say the least. The stress alone is enough to

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
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THIG FÌOR À FANAID their an se-anfhacal, agus nach minig a chithear rudan an-diugh a bha sinne nar cloinn a' leughadh mar uirsgeulan ann an comaig!

Ged nach biodh ann ach an comas a th' againn bruidhinn ri chèile air fònaichean-làimhe, agus 's tric a bhios mi a' smaoinichadh air dè shaoileadh ginealach mo sheanar nu leithid sin de ghnoireas. Faisg air ceathrad is ochd bliadhna bho choisich Niall Armstrong air a' ghealach tha sinn a-nise a' faicinn chàraichean is làraidhean a' suibhal fo smachd choimpiutairean.

Ach 's dòcha gur e an gluasad as intinniche, neo as iargalta, an t-adhartas a th' air tighinn le siol planntais gin-atharraichte agus mar a tha sin air gluasad tro rannsachadh ainmhidheach gu obair ginteil daonna. Leis na bheil ann de dhearbhadh air sgeulachdan ficseanail a' tighinn gu fìorachd, cha leigeamaid a leas iongnadh a ghabhail a aithrisean a tha a-nise a' nochdadh gum bi tomhas mhòr de dh'obraichean an t-saoghail

make them diseased. The food they are fed is very different to what they would naturally eat in the wild.

3. The product produced at the end of the day may not be fit to eat. Ethoxyquin remains in the flesh of the salmon and we eat it too. The drugs azamethiphos, cypermethrin, deltamethrin and emamectin benzoate are used regularly on the salmon to kill sea lice. These are fast-acting neurotoxins and are toxic to mammals, birds, fish, other sea creatures and humans.

4. The negative long-term effect of salmon farms on our sea, shore and everything that lives in, on or near them has not been properly assessed. We don't know for how long the ground below fish farms remains void of life, toxic and harmful to the environment and us.

Who is accountable? The companies that cause the harm, the environmental agencies that allow it to go on or we as consumers for hiding our heads in the sand on this very emotive subject?

Eva Tombs,
Isle of Lismore.

Road is scarier than theme-park rides

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

If he does drive that route, 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 carry on replacing road surfaces without investigating the failures of some of the not so old surfacing work seems a total waste of money.

Is it narrow carriageways or lack of foundations that is the reason 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 mountainous areas of France, a much bigger country than Scotland, it has the kind of severe winters we experience, but their road surfaces are far superior when compared with the A82. If the specifications are right and the workmanship is acceptable, will the government make the urgent decision and start spending our money wisely instead of seeing year after year resurfacing over poor infrastructure?

Alan Robinson,
by email.

Numerous complaints about state of roads

Sir,
I attended the latest Argyll and Bute Council administration meeting with my fellow Conservative councillors.

I had the opportunity to discuss with our administration members the recent unacceptable lengthy disruptions to our internet service. I also made my views clear on the importance of keeping our public toilets on Islay open - all the more so if we are to keep and encourage growth in our important tourist industry. I have raised the numerous and justifiable complaints about our local

roads that I have been receiving. With our roads getting worse, a long-term solution is needed and that means large-scale investment instead of piecemeal patchwork.

Councillor Alastair Redman,
Islay.

Councillors are here to serve the public

Sir,
On February 22, the Argyll and Bute Council administration, which consists of Liberals, Conservatives and some Independent councillors, will reveal its budget for 2018-19. It has already considered 32 proposed savings, some of which appear sensible while others look (and are) ridiculous, and if carried out would be extremely damaging to the local population.

It is now evident the Scottish Government will hand the council the best financial settlement it has had in years, perhaps the best ever.

As a result, the council should immediately announce the cancellation of three wrong-headed proposals, namely: 1. to close 36 of the 57 public toilets - a crazy suggestion that would do irreparable damage to our tourist industry; 2. the suggestion to remove janitors, who provide a vital security role in our schools; and 3. cuts to the Citizens' Advice Bureau, an excellent organisation which saves the council approximately £3 million per year and whose support should be increased.

The council administration should recognise the needs of the local community when finalising the budget and remember they are here to serve the people of Argyll and Bute.

Robert Macintyre,
Serpentine Road, Rothesay.

Support for buy-out of Ulva was democratic

Sir,
In letters (*The Oban Times*, January 25) on the subject of the Ulva buy-out, Iain Thornber refers to 'Mull's democratically elected community council'. While I accept the validity of the community council's role and admire the public service of its members, in fact, as its seats were not contested in 2015, there was no election. The Ulva community buy-out ballot provided a more democratic result than the Mull Community Council's decision to reject it.

N Somerville,
Isle of Mull.

What research was done by professor?

Sir,
I was intrigued to read Professor Emeritus Ian Reid has been able to establish the current road damage between here and Fort William has been caused by timber haulage vehicles.

He must have done a tremendous amount of research to be able to state this as fact. I think it would be wonderful if he could share the results and methodology of this research with your readership.

Iain Moody,
Meadow Road, Dunbeg.

Ailean Caimbeul

gan coileanadh le ròbot taobh a-staigh uine nach bi fada.

Dha mòran luchd-fastaidh 's e fìor dheagh naidheachd a bhios an seo le dealbh a' nochdadh de sgioba-obrach a dh'fhaodar a chumail an sàs gun lasachadh, na tràillean as fheàrr a chunnacas riamh! Agus leis gum bi iad gun bheatha chan fheumar tuarastalan neo cisean de sheòrsa sam bith a phàigheadh às an leth, am feum? Uill, 's neònach mura cruthaich riaghaltas cisean ùra air an leithid, oir saoilidh mi gun lean feumalachd air an ionmhas a tha ga thogail a' cosnadh mar a tha iad an-dràsta.

Air aon sealladh, tha dòchas air leasachadh mòr eaconamach a' leithid seo de dh'adhartas, far am biodh cruthachadh bathair mòran na bu shaoire às aonais chosgaisean thuarastalan chosnaich agus nan cisean a bhiodh nan lùib sin.

'S dòcha, ri linn an fhàis anns an eaconomaidh gum biodh teachd-a-steach air riaghaltas tro chisean gnìomhachais cho buannachdail is nach biodh buaidh mhòr sam bith aig an lughdachadh a thigeadh air cothroman cosnadh dhan mhòr-shluagh, agus gum faodadh daoine a bhith a' dol air chluaineas sa mheadhan-aois!

Gun teagamh tuigear nach dèan ròbot a h-uile cil. Neo an dèan? Tha fhios nach eil a' cuingalachadh chomasan nan innealan sin ach ires gilean nam feadhna a tha gan cruthachadh, agus le aire air na th' air tachairt gu ruige seo fhèin cò aige tha fios càite am faodadh cùisean ruigheachd. Leis nach bi iad a' faireachadh pian neo tàmailt, an tig latha far am bi sinn fo riaghaldh ròbotan nach bi air chomas ach math a dhèanamh?

An e sin an aon slighe gus cur às do bhochdainn agus aimhreit an t-saoghail?

CONSIDERING mankind's extraordinary scientific and technological advances in the past century, the concept of a substantial proportion of all labour being undertaken by robots is credible.

Extremely attractive prospects for employers whose 'workers' would require neither wage nor rest. Will it take emotionless robots, capable of only doing good, to eradicate poverty and establish world peace?

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

Social media

Dozens of people have been nominating Oban resident Mikey McManus for a Pride of Britain award for his part in the search for a dog which was abandoned near Glen Creran during blizzard conditions. Angie DiMatteo: 'You are a great inspiration. I hope for others to follow the example you set for being a fabulous humanitarian. Kudos.'

Emma Welsby: 'Well done! You never cease to surprise me!'

Karen Theresa Daly: 'Anyone who does this for an animal, deserves an award. Well done Mikey.'

Karina Devlin: 'Well deserved. If you ever came into Aldi, I'd give you a hug.'

Liz Smith: 'Wow! Don't know you but good on you! Well done!'

Christine Murdoch: 'You deserve it

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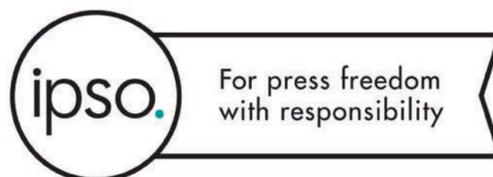
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We will abide by the decision of IPSO.



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.

Inspiring trio are three of a kind

Atlantis Leisure has been celebrating 25 years since it first opened. And to date it has had three chairmen, who are profiled here by fellow director MIKE FAULKNER

Hugh McLean – chairman 1992-2002. ‘Everyone can do something.’ This was, and still is, the mantra, the underlying convictions of Hugh McLean, a founding member and the first chairman.

Not a man given to burning out after a hard job is done - his commitment to Atlantis continues through his current involvement in more recent innovative health projects H20, Healthy Options and the developing Healthy Town initiative.

So when he reflects on 25 years of Atlantis, what does he think?

His pride is obvious but it is not pride centred on his own contribution.

‘The success and value of Atlantis, since its conception in 1991, is in the story of how the community pulled together to create these fantastic sports facilities for Oban.

‘Yes, it was essential that we had a core group of experienced and talented people who dedicated time and effort to keeping the vision on track but without the passion and belief of the wider community in the town, Atlantis would not be the success story we have today.’

Atlantis has become a significant player in the life of the town and for Hugh (and the other founding members) its importance is not just its physical presence and its facilities. ‘It has become a vital symbol of what Oban people can achieve for themselves and through their own efforts.’

Crucially, it has inspired other projects in the town such as Oban Phoenix Cinema and Healthy Options and has been recognised

across Scotland and as far afield as Australia as a leading example of how to develop a successful community-led social enterprise.

Hugh’s passion may have begun in a small way – born partly out of the frustration of running his children to Glasgow every week for tennis lessons – but once joined and inspired by others, he began to see a much wider potential, a bigger vision. ‘That,’ he says, with a heartfelt smile, ‘was the great gift of working on Atlantis – the working with others and working with the community. We all own the success together.’

Roy Clunie – chairman 2002-2007

‘What’s really exciting about this 25th celebration is that Atlantis has become a community anchor for Oban and the wider area around the town.’

Roy is an Oban man with world-wide knowledge and experience of community and social enterprise developments extending more recently to Africa and Pakistan. All of this exciting new interest, these amazing new experiences, he puts down to being inspired by the time he spent helping to found, launch and consolidate Atlantis Leisure.

He describes one vital legacy of the first 25 years of Atlantis as ‘demonstrating that Oban has made a special place which allows things, amazing things, to happen’.

Roy was a founder member and the second chairman and believes as strongly now as he did at the start of his involvement that once you get the town behind an idea, that idea can become a reality.

Atlantis’s achievements to date are a coda for and constant reminder to the town that ‘Oban is a place where dedicated individuals can achieve their vision’.

His own background as a farming



The three men who have led the board at Atlantis to date are, left to right, Roy Clunie, Hugh McLean and Neil Matheson

co-op worker, print business owner and community activist allowed him to give a strong and influential contribution to the way the vision for Atlantis was developed. But, along with his fellow founder directors, none of whom had direct experience of working in or developing sports facilities when they started meeting to plan Atlantis in 1991, he says: ‘Yes, Atlantis took a lot from us, more than any of us realised it would at the time.’

‘However, we have all been on a long, amazing and rewarding journey. My own plans for work and my life have been changed by it in a really fundamental way.’

Since its opening, Roy is proud that Atlantis has grown up from being a sports and leisure centre and has become a place that enables people

in Oban to change their lives, to achieve some dreams, to become healthier and happier.

It has become a central plank in the town’s social life and health improvement plans – both at an individual level and as a founding partner in the emerging Healthy Living Town initiative. He believes Atlantis has been a great ambassador, persuading many people in the town and across Scotland that ‘keeping the community believing it can do things is a vital element in maintaining community health and self-belief’.

His birthday wish is that Atlantis should, during this significant year of celebration, be proud of what it has enabled and believe in itself as an ‘engine for transformation in the town’.

Most importantly, it must use this period of time as a springboard to work closely with the community on discovering, exploring and unlocking new opportunities for the town.

Neil Matheson – chairman 2007-

As a leading and highly successful Oban-based businessman, you might expect that the original motives behind Neil’s interest in Atlantis were driven by a desire to make it into a profitable business.

That would not be doing justice to the passion he feels about his local community, nor would it explain why he has remained closely involved since 1991 and been chairman for the past 10 years.

He describes his involvement neatly, ‘Getting it on its feet was exciting; getting it to walk was challenging; keeping it going is fascinating.’

By any measure of success, Atlantis has performed beyond the original imaginings and anticipation of its founder members (Neil was one of them), and so leaving it to the care of others after helping it to stabilise its business performance would have been an option.

Neil, however, is made of different fibre and still demonstrates the passion, determination and relish for increasing the success of one of Scotland’s most successful social enterprises.

Like Hugh, Roy and others, it started with a desire to solve the problem of having very limited sports facilities available in the community, and the necessity for many young people to travel out of town (a long way out of town) to practise their sports at proper facilities.

The initial ideas spiralled into full-blown ambitions for something much bigger and more complicated. ‘Thinking about building the

sports facility was just the start and possibly the easiest part of our task. Persuading and enthusing the community was a bigger and more important challenge.

‘And developing the skills and capacity to release its greater potential for the town has required a great deal of effort and determination. People are the key to any successful organisation and, over the years, we have had some amazing people contribute to the success of Atlantis.’

Neil is a determined individual, with strong personal and business commitments to Oban’s on-going development. His time with Atlantis has enabled him to put plenty back into the town, but it has also allowed him to benefit from working in a totally different business model to his own businesses.

The challenges of running a community-led business are sometimes the same but quite often very different to those experienced in a private company.

Some private sector business leaders do not transition into and operate well in social enterprise environments but Neil has both contributed meaningfully and experienced the benefits at a personal and professional level.

Neil is passionate about the local community, and takes great pleasure in seeing a busy centre that offers an incredible range of activities and opportunities for all ages.

‘What started out as a project with a clear and realisable ambition (build a building), has become a personal commitment to developing a legacy for the town and has given me a deeper insight into the strength of the communities in Oban.’

‘After 25 years, I am really proud of Atlantis and I look forward just as much to the future achievements Atlantis will contribute to Oban.’

“We all own the success together”

“After 25 years, I am really proud”

Neil Matheson
Current chairman

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<p>B - Beginners LI - Lower intermediate UI - Upper intermediate ADV - Advanced u18s - Under 18s</p>	<p>30/07 – 03/08/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaelic 1, 3, 5, 7 Gaelic for Irish Speakers (ADV) Traditional Music Ensemble with Innes Watson Isle of Skye Piping School with Decker Forrest Gaelic Conversation (LI) with Joy Dunlop <p>06 – 10/08/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaelic 2, 4, 6, 8 A Seascope of Gaelic Song with Margaret Stewart Clàrsach (B-ADV) with Ingrid Henderson & Deirdre Graham Gaelic Conversation (UI) with Joy Dunlop* <p>13 – 17/08/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaelic 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 Digital Photography with Cailean MacLean Gaelic Creative Writing with Alison Lang The Music in the Fiddle with Charlie McKerron <p>20 – 24/08/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaelic 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 Adam Sutherland School of Fiddle* Learning through Living Culture (ADV) in Flodgarry Argyll Gaelic Song with Joy Dunlop

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Oban man given Pride of Britain nominations for rescue attempts

Mikey McManus said being nominated for the top award was 'hugely humbling' but a 'lovely gesture'.



AIDAN DONAGHY
editor@obantimes.co.uk

DOZENS of people have been nominating Oban resident Mikey McManus for a Pride of Britain award for his part in the search for a dog which was abandoned near Glen Creran during blizzard conditions.

Mikey led a search party for the 12-year-old border collie named Meg who had been left on Beinn Sgulaire after losing the use of her back legs during severe weather conditions.

Unfortunately, Meg did not

survive the ordeal and her body was discovered on Friday January 19.

Commenting on the nomination, Mikey said: 'To be nominated for the Pride of Britain award is a lovely gesture and hugely humbling, especially in a scenario where I would have expected anyone to do the same thing.'

'I only went out looking for the dog because I was a local to the search area and I'm a commercial drone pilot and figured there would be more than just me, so I could add my skill set to

the effort and find her quicker.

'I was intrigued by the circumstances and that the owners were ex-military, so, as a veteran myself, I wanted to know how the situation could have ever happened, but I understand the hill and mountains are treacherous and can change, through weather, almost instantly.'

'But as I was on the ground first, it gained momentum very quickly over five days and I became a sort of ground leader for the search, updating the online effort at any opportunity I had.'

'The massive public support

and their drive to say thank you is very over-whelming, but lovely just the same, and from all over the world too, Canada, USA, Mexico and various parts of Europe. The world is full of dog lovers.'

'Just to be nominated is a wonderful thing. Should it go any further, I will wait and see but I am sure there are far more deserving recipients out there. But it is out of my hands.'

If you would also like to nominate Mikey, you can do so via www.prideofbritain.com/ nominate

Mountain writing competition launched

A NEW monthly writing competition has been launched this month, with a top prize of £100 worth of mountain equipment.

The project is looking for stories based on the theme: 'The day a mountain changed my life.'

Trail Magazine will publish a winning entry each month for the rest of the year, along with a year's membership of the John Muir Trust for the successful candidate.

One overall winner at the end of the year is chosen to spend the day on a John Muir Trust-managed mountain such as Ben Nevis, with a guide from outdoor gear company Mountain Equipment.

Kevin Leland, head of development and communications for the John Muir Trust, said: 'As a charity that manages special and dramatic peaks, we're looking forward to reading people's accounts of the life-affirming relationships they have with mountains. Perhaps we'll find the next generation of inspirational mountain writers.'

In 1849, John Muir emigrated from his native East Lothian as a boy to America, where today he is celebrated as the founder of the conservation movement.

Muir was passionate about wild places which he explored, wrote about and campaigned to protect, and he helped establish several national parks in the US.

To find out more about the competition head to the Live For The Outdoors website: www.livefortheoutdoors.com/changedmylife

#NaeStrawAtAw plea to CalMac

OCEAN Defenders from Sunny-side Primary School in Glasgow have enlisted ferry operator CalMac to their campaign to ban plastic straws.

The group of P7 eco campaigners have been promoting their #NaeStrawAtAw campaign around the country and impressed the ferry company's new community board with their passion for conservation when they presented to them in Oban last week.

Funding will root out Glen Creran invasive species

A LANDMARK project to clear invasive rhododendron is taking place in Glen Creran thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund award.

The first of its kind in Scotland, the funding has been given to social enterprise Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) to work with the Glen Creran community.

Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland have also contributed funds to the three-year, 'Getting to the roots of Rhododendron ponticum' £96,000 project.

Training and provision of equipment to the community will enable it to take ownership of the issue in Glen Creran.

The project will also introduce the wider community and local school children to the delights of Glen Creran Special Areas of Conservation through a programme of education and guided walks.

HLF is contributing £50,000, SNH £36,000 and FCS £10,000.

Ross Lilley, vice chairman of ACT, recently met with members of the Glen Creran community to formally launch the project.

He said: 'HLF, SNH and FCS's support for this project enables us to demonstrate co-ordinated rhododendron ponticum control across an entire catchment.'

'We are grateful to the Glen Creran community for its commitment to the project.'

'Our Atlantic oakwoods are one of the few habitats in Scotland that are of outstanding



Glen Creran community members and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust celebrate the Heritage Lottery award.

global importance. Glen Creran Woods Site of Special Interest, Special Area of Conservation and National Nature Reserve has an exceptionally rich oceanic lichen assemblage, including four globally vulnerable species and 19 globally near-threatened species.

'It is the first of the top five priority sites in Scotland identified for complete removal of

rhododendron. There are other catchments in Argyll with similar attributes and hopefully lessons learned from this project will help to inform rhododendron ponticum control in these other areas.'

Lucy Casot, head of HLF Scotland, said: 'Our natural heritage is a most precious resource and, thanks to National Lottery players, HLF grants

have helped to protect an amazing range of landscapes, habitats, and species of plants and animals.'

'HLF is delighted to support getting to the roots of Glen Creran's invasive rhododendron problem and it will stimulate people's interest in the natural world and so help them conserve it for future generations.'

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 8

Beinn Duirinnis, Bonawe

This small hill is well placed for views of Loch Etive and the mighty Ben Cruachan opposite. Start at the junction of the B845

and the C-class road to Connel, NM986355, where limited parking is available. Follow the B845 across the River Esragan and the Blarreen Burn. Just past the second bridge, take a faint footpath E up a ramp to a gate at NM996353.

Climb the ridge to the summit of Ceann Creige, 478m. To avoid some boggy ground, head NE on the highest ground for 650m to a watershed at NN016349 before turning ESE up to the summit of Beinn Duirinnis, 555m at NN 021347. Descend the ridge to the E to reach the track at Rubha na Creige.

Follow the track SW along the

shore of Loch Etive, passing through Bonawe Quarry. Return to the start on the B845.

Grade: M+ Distance: 13km; Height to climb: 577m; Map(s): LR49/50, EX377. Meet at Longsdale car park, Oban, at 9.30am or North Ballachulish school at 9.05am. Start of walk at 10am. Leader: Graham Innes 01631 562290 or 07767 714503.

Sunday February 11

Druim Leathad nam Fias, Glen Scaddie

A high level traverse between two large glens with fine views of the rough Ardgour hills.

Park at the start of the es-

tate road at Inbhir Scaddail, NN021686. Walk back along the A861 across the two bridges and turn right on to the track past Aryhoulan.

Cross the bridge at NN006688 and climb the E ridge of Druim Leathad nam Fias to its first summit, 567m. Head W along the summit plateau over two more tops, 576m and 559m, and descend to a watershed at altitude 389m.

Contour SW for 800m to reach the spur at NN929703. Turn SE and descend the slope on the right side of the Allt na Luathre EX to Tighnacomaire bothy. Follow the River Scaddie

downstream, crossing to its S side on the bridge at NM945679. Continue downstream back to the start.

Grade: M+; Distance: 24km; Height to climb: 633m; Map(s): LR40/41, EX391. Meet at Corran Ferry slip for 9.15am sailing. Start of walk at 9.30am. Leader: Ian Moir 07973 836498.

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.

Saturday February 10

Meall Glas, Sgiath Chuil, Glen Dochart

Park on the S side of the road at a forestry road entrance about 500m E of Auchessan. Take the private road across the River Dochart to Auchessan and follow the track on the E side of the burn.

For Meall Glas, head slightly W of N, while for Sgiath Chuil, go east of north to cross the Allt Ribobain. Meall Glas can be reached by heading for the col just to the east of the summit.

Sgiath Chuil is approached on its broad SW ridge. To do both, leave Meall Glas on the eastern

ridge, passing a prominent cairn at point 908m, then go NE to Beinn Cheathach.

The direct descent ESE from this top is very steep for a short distance, but if you turn north then ESE, this minor difficulty can be avoided. Steep grassy slopes take you to Meall a' Churain, from where you turn south along the almost level ridge to the summit of Sgiath Chuil. Go SW to regain the upward route back to the start.

Distance: 16km; Height to climb: 1,300m. Suggested by Toril Frantzen and Robert Paterson; coordinated by Toril Frantzen.

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Duo combine space with trad

AT FIRST, it seems hard to comprehend how Géza Frank and Jean Damei's new album Event Horizon can incorporate traditional Irish and Scottish music with cosmological and astrophysical themes such as promixa centauri, photon wave, pulsar and meteor showers, writes Aidan Donaghy.

Upon listening to the album, the eclectic sound of modern day

house music is softly mixed in with uilleann pipes, whistles, flutes and the fiddle, which goes hand in hand with the space exploration theme on the album cover.

Austrian Géza Frank and Frenchman Jean Damei both graduated with a BA in Irish music and dance from the University of Limerick. While Frank went on to win numerous prizes competing

in Highland piping competitions, Damei continued his studies at the University of Limerick and collected his masters degree in Irish traditional music performance.

The duo, alongside synthesiser Barry Reid and violinist David Lombardi, travelled to CERN on the Geneva-Franco border to make a music video for their track Antimatter. CERN is an organisation

which conducts research into what the universe is made of and how it works.

This is the first album of numerous albums which will be released as part of the Event Horizon project. Géza explained: 'The age of space exploration is upon us and within our lifetime we will see technological leaps beyond our imagination.'

'We wanted to create a musical language that reflects this age.'

'We work a lot with musical and sonic colours and temperatures as well as sub-bass sounds in order to try to describe these concepts, such as the intense heat of the meteors into our atmosphere or the rhythmic pulses of a pulsing radio star.'

Jean added: 'I read a lot of articles

and books on the subject and when I was growing up I watched a lot of programmes about the universe. It's really exciting to combine this passion with my love for music.'

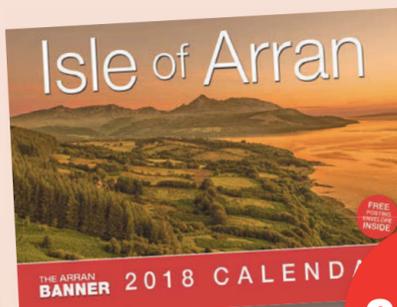
The live show, which will include a variety of world-leading dancers, will go on tour in 2018 and for more information on the Event Horizon project, visit www.eventhorizonproject.com

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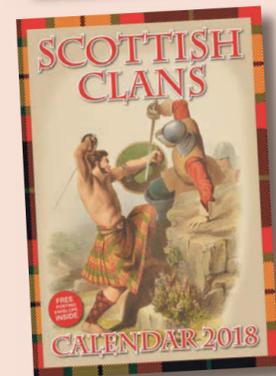
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WHAT'S ON

I N O B A N

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Thursday 8th February Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Better Business Websites The Enterprise Centre, Lochilphhead Please call to reserve space 01546 604551 10am-3pm Songwriting Session The Rockfield Centre 7pm-9pm Giselle Du Les Willis - Ballet West Production Corran Halls 7pm-10pm Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY Friday 9th February Bodyshop at Home Party New Hope, Oban 7pm-9pm Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans Calum MacPhail from 9pm Free entry Scratch Choir #Ironic The Rockfield Centre 8pm-10pm Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban DJ The latest and greatest hits. Party the night away until 2am Saturday 10th February Cearcall Còmhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group) Furan Gaelic Centre, 12pm-1.30pm	Oban Bach Choir & Orchestra Coffee Morning & Baking Stall Glencruitten Road Church Hall 10.30am-12.30pm Hill Walk Glen Dochart, Crianlarich All Day Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans Ewan Henderson & Norrie MacNaughton from 10pm Free entry Slow Trad Music Session The Rockfield Centre 2pm-4pm Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban DJ The latest and greatest hits. Party the night away until 2am Sunday 11th February Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Solem Quartet St John's Cathedral 3pm - 5 pm Highland Cattle Society 127th Spring Show & Sale Oban Livestock Centre All Day Craftwork Makers Meet Up The Rockfield Centre 1pm-4pm 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 12th February Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Highland Cattle Society 127th Spring Show & Sale Oban Livestock Centre All Day Oban Photographic Club Meeting Regent Hotel 7.15pm-9.30pm Tuesday 13th February Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Practical Basic Book-Keeping The Enterprise Centre, Lochgilphhead Please call to reserve space 01546 604551 9.30am-12.30pm Irish Dancing Classes St Columba's Cathedral Hall 4.15pm-5.45pm Wednesday 14th February Intermediate Food Hygiene Argyll College 9am-11am Under the Skin Camera Club The Rockfield Centre 6.30pm-7.30pm 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 Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club Inveraray Inn 8pm
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Madame Scotia, Madam Scrap

A BOOK about Argyll harpist Héloïse Russell-Fergusson, aka Madame Scotia, Madam Scrap, by her niece Héléne Witcher will be launched at Waterstones in Oban on February 10 at 2pm, writes Aidan Donaghy.



The book reveals the life of Héloïse, a musician born in Glasgow and raised partly at Ardtur, in Port Appin, pictured right. In the early 1920s she saw a Celtic harp in a Washington DC shop window, and instantly bought it, saying: 'It seemed no stranger.' It triggered a lifetime of learning and performance, as she devoted the rest of her life to learning about and sharing the traditional songs of the Hebrides with audiences from Finland to Bali and Cairo to New York.

Fascinated by the ways in which people use music universally to reflect their beliefs and respond to their surroundings, Héloïse brought back early understandings of world music that startled the conventional clarsach playing community of the 1960s.

Well known in pockets across the world, there is widespread curiosity about her story and a burgeoning awareness amongst musicologists and musicians of the al-

most prophetic quality of her later work. Her memory is cherished especially in Brittany where she was and remains, feted for introducing the harp and for her contribution to Celtic music.

Her fearless determination combined with a sense of mischief and sometimes eccentric creativity allows this memoir to be held in high regard in places where her work is cherished the most.

Her story sits proudly beside those of many extraordinary Scottish women whose lives are only now being recognised. Simon Chadwick, early Gaelic harp specialist, said: 'She was one of the most

original and creative of the Scottish harpists in the 20th century.'

Written by her niece, Madame Scotia, Madam Scrap aims to capture the essence of an intensely private yet very public woman and in doing so secures her position in Scotland's musical history.

Witcher, pictured above left, says: 'Héloïse was indifferent to belongings, had no house of her own and used her car as a garden and as a recording studio. Winkling out her story I found my grandparents; her Clyde shipbuilding father, her pig farmer mother who left for Africa with Crichton her butler in the 1930s,



and her youngest sister dancing in Aberdeenshire with a troupe led by one of the first recognised transgender individuals in Scotland. 'Unravelling the strands of her life and meeting those who had known her and who respected her work, helped me address my own struggle over whether and where I fitted. Despite a disconcerting ambivalence about my vote during the independence referendum, she helped to confirm, eventually, my sense of belonging in 21st century Scotland.'

Witcher signing at the book launch and will give a short talk about her aunt.



Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Connections over for another year

Another Celtic Connections is over and this year's 25th anniversary festival was an absolute blast. I have been lucky to attend and perform at a number of shows over the past few weeks that will live a very long time in my memory.

The final weekend of the festival certainly didn't disappoint. Thank you to everyone who attended our Tide Lines gig in St Luke's on Saturday night and, indeed, to everyone who has downloaded or shared the YouTube video for our latest single, Streets of Dreamers, released on Friday.

While we all had a night in on Friday to ready ourselves for the following day, many people were out at concerts such as Skipinnish in the Pavillion Theatre and the Elephant

Sessions in the Old Fruitmarket.

Those shows were both sold out and, by all accounts, completely lived up to expectations.

As usual, there were huge numbers of audience members across all the shows who had travelled down from the Highlands and islands for a weekend at Celtic Connections.

One such gentleman was Donnie Morrison from Kishorn who joined up with his old pal Donnie the Hearrach in a formidable double act known as 'the two Donnies' but now referring to themselves as 'the Double Ds!' Surely this duo are destined to be given a slot at next year's Celtic Connections.

Sunday was the final evening of this year's festival and, after gigs such as Mànran and The Young Folk in the O2 ABC, and The Mavericks in the Old Fruitmarket, everybody

descended on the festival club for one last horo gheallaigh until the wee small hours of the morning and gave this milestone 25th Celtic Connections the send off it deserved.

Mull and Iona prepare gathering

Friday February 16 will be this year's Mull and Iona Annual Gathering in the Glasgow University Union and it looks set to be a great night.

The evening will follow the traditional structure of a concert and then a late night dance to the music of West Coast favourites and 2016 Scottish dance band of the year, Trail West. Performing at the concert will be this year's Mòd Gold Medalist Rachel Walker, along with Fiona Hunter, Shannon Maclean, and Ian Smith

on the box. The concert begins at 7.30pm and the dance at roughly 10.30pm.

What's On

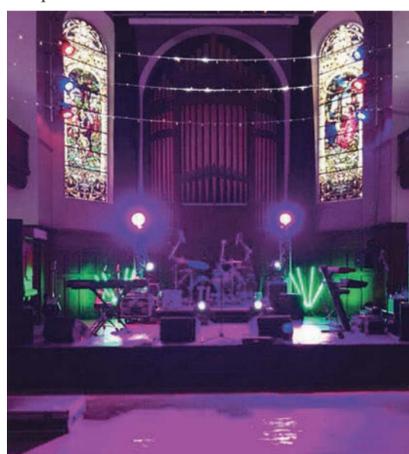
Friday February 9: Clydebank and District Highlanders Association Ceilidh in the Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, at 7.30pm. Saturday February 17: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Marag Supper in the Partick Burgh (Lesser) Hall with Mairi MacLean, Rory MacDiarmid, and Charles Macleod, starting at 7.30pm. Saturday February 17: The Highlanders' Club Ceilidh Dance in the Partick Burgh Hall, 8pm - 11pm, to the music of Martainn Skene's Band. Friday February 23: The Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street, at 9pm. Saturday February

24: The Glasgow Skye Association Buntata 's Sgadan in the Crawford Hall at 7.30pm.

Pub Scene

Islay Inn Friday February 12: Deep River

Saturday February 13: The Ragglaels Park Bar
Friday February 12: Trail West
Saturday February 13: Scott Harvey
Sunday February 14: Trail West



St Luke's was a beautiful venue for the Tide Lines Celtic Connections show last Saturday night and there were many amazing shows in the last weekend of this year's festival.

Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details. To list your event, please call 01631 568000

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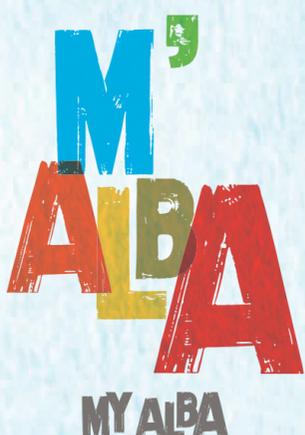
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Contact Nadine or Rhona on 01631 568000



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 ÒR NEW: Eòrpa 21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt) 21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Deoch (rpt) 22.00 Cuirm @ Celtic - The Great Gathering (rpt) 22.30 ÒR NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world 23.15 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan - Gavin James 23.25 Air an Rathad (rpt)	19.00 An Là - News 19.25 ÒR NEW: Pro 14 Live Rugby - Edinburgh v Leinster 21.30 Kerry is Kirsty: Asainnte 22.00 Belladrum 2017: Franz Ferdinand (rpt) 22.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Deoch (rpt) 23.00 Aghaidh ri Aghaidh - Puma v Adidas (rpt) 23.50 Dhan Uisge - Loch Maree (rpt)
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DISATHAIRNE 10 GEARRAN SATURDAY 10 FEBRUARY 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming 19.30 Machair (rpt) 19.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt) 20.00 Aibisidh - Quiz Show (rpt) 20.30 Turas a' Bhradaid (rpt) 21.00 Stòras (rpt) 22.00 Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world (rpt) 22.50 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan - Gavin James (rpt)	23.00 Feachdan Ionatain (rpt) 24.00 Ricky Ross (rpt)
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DIDÒMHNAICH 11 GEARRAN SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming 18.30 Seachd Là 19.30 Alleluia (rpt) 20.00 Eòrpa (rpt) 20.30 Leugh MI (rpt) 21.00 ÒR NEW: FilmG 2018 - Highlights from the 10th FilmG Awards Ceremony 22.00 Farpaisean Chon-chaorach (rpt) 23.00 Rathad na Deighe (rpt) 23.45 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan (rpt)	19.55 ÒR NEW: FilmG - Ceileach Peucaig 20.00 An Là - News 20.30 ÒR NEW: Kerry is Kirsty: Srath Narann 21.00 Trusadh - The Highland Railway (rpt) 22.00 Port (rpt) 22.30 Air a' Chanàl - Calum and Niall Iain explore Scotland's canals (rpt) 23.30 Fonn Fonn Fonn (rpt)
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DILUAIN 12 GEARRAN MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming 19.00 An Lot (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)	DIMÀIRT 13 GEARRAN TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming 18.55 Eileanan Fraoich - Raasay (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt) 19.55 ÒR NEW: FilmG - An Sgoil Bheag Mu Dheireadh 20.00 An Là - News 20.30 ÒR NEW: Leugh MI 21.00 A' Ghàidhealtachd (rpt) 22.00 Trusadh - The Highland
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Railway (rpt) 23.00 Òran na Mnà (rpt) 23.30 Alleluia (rpt)	DICIADAIN 14 GEARRAN WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming 19.05 Caistealan Alba (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt) 19.55 ÒR NEW: FilmG - Briste 20.00 An Là - News 20.30 ÒR NEW: Turas a' Bhradaid 21.00 Opry an Iúir (rpt) 22.00 Air an Rathad (rpt) 22.30 Port (rpt) 23.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt) 23.45 Hebridean Celtic Festival - Darrell Scott & Danny (rpt)
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DIARDAOIN 15 GEARRAN THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming 19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Rathlin (rpt) 19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt) 19.55 ÒR NEW: FilmG - Dhèanainn Sùgradh 20.00 An Là - News 20.30 ÒR NEW: Eòrpa 21.00 ÒR NEW: DIY le Donnie 21.50 Belladrum 2017: The Pretenders (rpt) 22.40 ÒR NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world 23.25 Air an Rathad (rpt)



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HebCelt first acts announced

HEBCELT, the Hebridean Celtic Festival set for July 18-21 in Stornoway, has announced its first round of acts featuring Deacon Blue, Eddi Reader and Roody Woomble, writes Aidan Donaghy.

The line-up also includes Scottish bands Skipinnish, Blazin' Fiddles, Tide Lines, The Tumbling Souls, Kinnaris Quintet and Trail West, pioneering musicians Niteworks, Dante and TRIP, country singer Martha L Healy, Canadian band Yves Lambert Trio, and Habadekuk from Denmark.

Festival director Caroline MacLennan said: 'The festival is renowned for promoting well-known, established acts alongside the best of young talent to create a diverse and vibrant blend of music in our unique setting.'

Singer-songwriter

Roddy Woomble, who is currently based in Mull and hosts the annual Iona Village Hall Music Festival, added: 'I always love visiting Lewis and the Outer Hebrides. This will be my third time playing HebCelt - it's a great festival, in a lovely town on a unique island.'

Skye band Niteworks, who combine the Gaelic language and traditional music with techno and electronic sounds, were also excited to return: 'We cannot wait to come back to HebCelt. It was one of the very first festivals we played as a band, so it's always felt like a bit of a homecoming every time we play.'

'And this year we have lots of new material planned to make sure our return is extra special.'

Following their full-length debut Wake, Scottish alt folk band Dante release a new

album I Wear Your Weight With Mine in March, which looks set to continue their growing success in leading the charge of the newer indie/folk rock bands.

TRIP, formed in late 2016, are a new trad band based in Glasgow but drawing on influences from the cultures and traditions of Scotland, England, Ireland and the Isle of Man. The six-piece are all second-year students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, including Lewis Gaelic singer, Mairi MacLennan.

Glasgow-born Martha L Healy, who has been heavily influenced by female artists such as Sheryl Crow, Carol King, Dolly Parton and Patsy Cline, is building a strong reputation via performances at festivals including Country to Country (C2C) and Glasgow Americana. Her debut album, Bet-



ter Days, was recorded in Nashville in 2014 and she recently returned

from three months there writing and recording her second album, Keep

the Flame Alight, which is released this year.

Eddi, a frequent visitor to HebCelt, most recently in 2016 with her band, is currently putting the

finishing touches to a new album which will be released this year.

Her career has now spanned three decades, including front woman for Fairground Attraction and also as a solo artist. In that time she has released nine critically-acclaimed solo albums, had three BRIT awards, a number one single and an MBE for outstanding contributions to the arts.

For more information and tickets, visit www.hebcelfest.com



Above: Deacon Blue

Far left: Roddy Woomble

Left: Eddi Reader

Tiree hosts first film festival

By Aidan Donaghy THE ISLE of Tiree hosts its first film festival this spring, and will also see the launch of a new company, Screen Argyll, to support film-making in the region.

The three-day film festival, which will celebrate women in film, has been organised for March 2-5 and will include an ideas lab and public screenings with Q&A sessions.

Screenings will include Make more noise - the

Suffragettes in Silent Film, the Gleaners and I and a National Library of Scotland archive film programme.

Speakers for the weekend include the head of Queen's Film Theatre in Belfast Joan Parsons, Rona Murray from the Women's Film and TV History Network, and Nuala O'Sullivan of the Women Over 50 Film Festival.

Festival director Jen Skinner said: 'It is important to me that

when bringing people to Argyll, they give something back. During this weekend we will have the opportunity to hear from women working in film, their ideas and share in their knowledge as well as joining in their discussion.'

'This festival will focus on 'powering women in film'. The Times Up campaign and #MeToo have been massively influential over the last six months and I hope that Sea Change will give

women the opportunity to reflect on new ways of working and how to engage audiences, make change within their industry and form a network to support each other. We will also celebrate women in film through the medium of cinema. The screening I expect to be the biggest hit with the local audience is the Adventures of Prince Achmed which is going to be screened with a live musical accompaniment. This

event will see the launch of a new company: Screen Argyll. Building on the success of Screen Tiree, Screen Argyll has been created to support and grow all forms of cinema and film activity in Argyll.

'We hope that this lab will become a biannual event here on Tiree, with Sea Change focusing on a different subject'

For further details email Jen Skinner via screenargyll@gmail.com

OFFERS & competitions

To enter, send separate entries (in the same envelope) with your name, address, telephone number and email address to Scottish Field Competitions, Fettes Park, 496 Ferry Road, Edinburgh EH5 2DL or enter at www.scottishfield.co.uk. Closing date, unless otherwise stated, is 28 February 2018. Winners drawn from all competitions also enter a prize draw to win a bottle of Berry Bros. & Rudd Islay Reserve whisky.

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Oban Times LEISURE TIMES

Eye to eye with John Wallace

DIY Problems

The DIY season has barely started and already I am regularly seeing patients who have ignored all advice and have managed to injure their eyes. The most common problem I see is small shards of metal embedded in patients' corneas. The cornea is the main lens of our eyes and, if damaged or injured, can dramatically reduce our ability to see clearly. The prime reason for this sort of injury is hammering, chipping or grinding metal without using eye protection. If you were a tradesman working in such an environment you would be legally obliged to wear appropriate safety equipment, including eye protection, provided at no charge by your employer. Most patients I see with eye injuries are working age and would never dream of risking their eyes at work, not least because failing to wear their safety glasses could have them instantly fired ...BUT ... they are seemingly

oblivious to the dangers of DIY at home. Hitting a steel nail with a hammer can cause small fragments of nail to break off and fly through the air at extremely high speed. Do any of you remember doing physics at school? Force equals mass times acceleration. So a very small fragment of metal travelling at very high speed can strike your eye with tremendous force. If you are lucky the metal will embed itself in your cornea. If you are unlucky the small fragment can penetrate inside your eye. Last year I had a patient who lost an eye in a freak accident when a tiny fragment of metal penetrated deep into their eye. In virtually all cases use of proper eye protection will dramatically reduce the resultant injury, if not totally prevent it. Putting on safety glasses takes seconds and could save you from a lifetime of blindness!

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP
Wallace Optometrists
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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 Maccoll, 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's 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

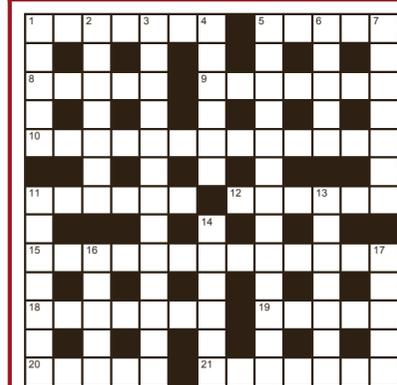
THURSDAY: 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13.00 Molly's Mix, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen, 17.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 18.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christines Collection, 20.00 Christine's CD Collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00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

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



- Across**
- Frog seat (4,3)
 - Tel Aviv native (5)
 - Guardian spirits (5)
 - Window divider (7)
 - Kinship (13)
 - Wanders (6)
 - Confused (6)
 - Car ferry (4-2,4-3)
 - Starchy food used as a thickener (7)
 - Succeed (5)
 - Ply (5)
 - A place for a office visitor (7)

- Down**
- Rational (5)
 - Second, inside layers (7)
 - Red, blue and yellow (7,6)
 - Type of limiting control (6)
 - Putting 'me' first (4-9)
 - Traditional Shrovetide dish served with caviar and sour cream (5)
 - Irritated (7)
 - Conjugal (7)
 - Have a peep (4-3)
 - Roasting spit (6)
 - Cheeky mouth covering (5)
 - Spot (5)



2018 Fort William MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

21st - 25th February



The Fort William Mountain Festival 2018 - celebrate the great outdoors. Fort William Mountain Festival 2018 programme announced - superb line-up of uplifting talks, exhilarating film screenings, mountain skills workshops and exhibitions

Celebrate everything that the great outdoors has to offer at The Fort William Mountain Festival 2018, in association with the Nevis Landscape Partnership, Heritage Lottery Fund, the Outdoor Capital of the UK, and the Council, being staged in and around the bustling Highland town of Fort William, at the heart of the 'Outdoor Capital of the UK', from Wednesday to Sunday February 21-25 2018. 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 for the festival said: 'Visiting Lochaber in February for the Mountain Festival is the perfect time of year to experience the stunning landscape of the region first hand, with the best winter walking, climbing and snowsports conditions of the year. 'The Fort William Mountain Festival offers the added bonus of another superb line-up of uplifting talks from top climbers and mountaineers, mountain bikers, and mountain filmmakers, together with exhilarating film screenings from cutting-edge outdoor athletes and adventurers; mountain skills workshops and exhibitions.'

The five-day programme is packed full of inspiration, education and entertainment, action and adventure.



To find out more about the Fort William Mountain Festival 2018 go to: Festival website - <https://www.mountainfestival.co.uk/> Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/fort.william.mountain.festival>

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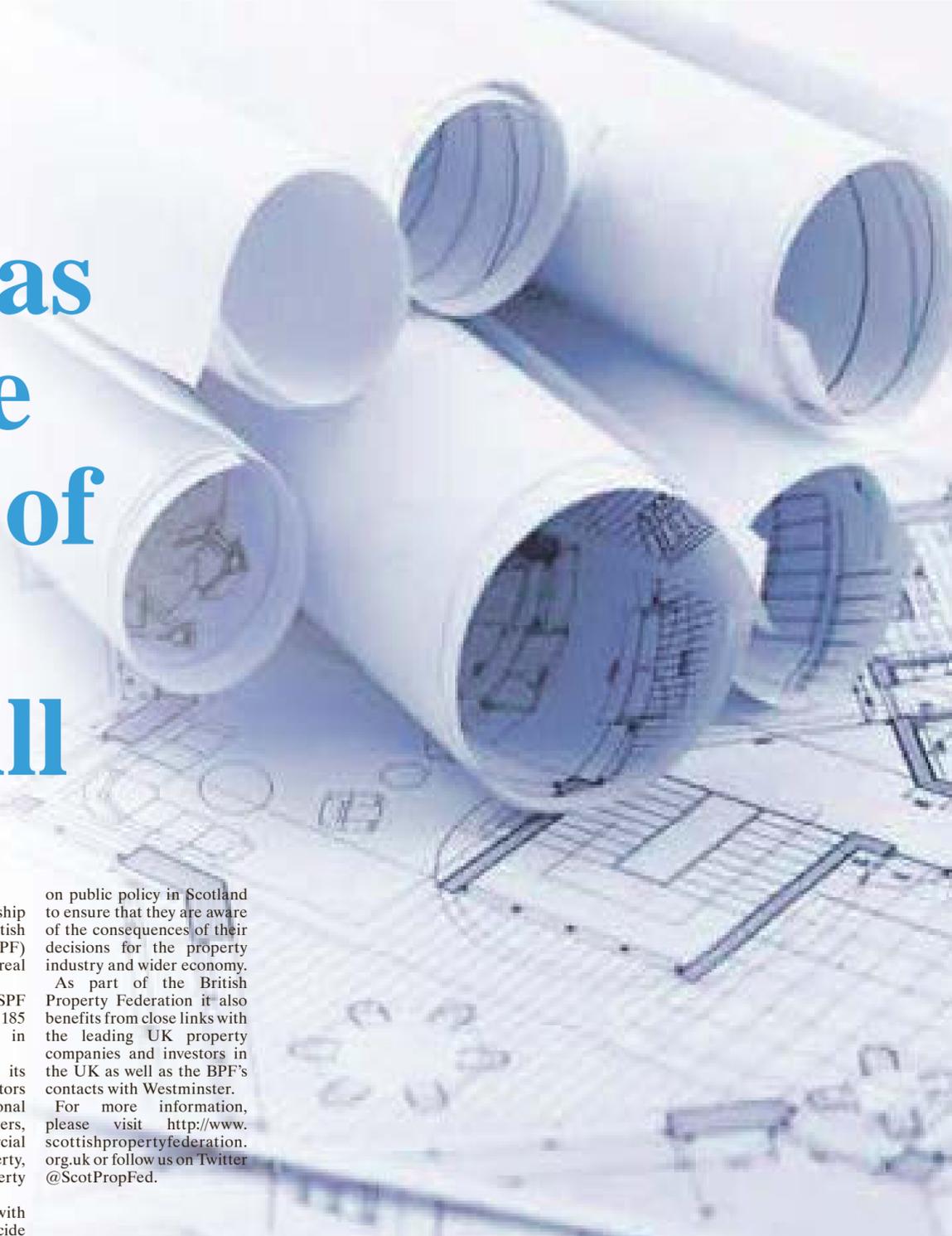
The Scottish Property Federation has reacted to the introduction of the Planning (Scotland) Bill - SPF

ANDREW Sutherland, chairman of the Scottish Property Federation and Joint MD of Miller Developments, said: 'The proposals in the Bill deserve a cautious welcome from the Scottish real estate sector. 'Altogether they hold some promising suggestions to move from a regulatory system to a positive and active enabler of good quality development, with appropriate early engagement and focus on growing the economy to secure new investment and development. 'If we are to drive local

economic growth, jobs and investment we must have strong public leadership and an efficient, aspirational and delivery-focused planning service. 'However, we continue to hold major reservations over the prospect of a Scottish Infrastructure Levy and further discretionary fees when we are yet to see a step change in performance. 'We look forward to seeing these concerns addressed further if the Bill is fully to realise its potential to unlock development and deliver the much-needed infrastructure for our growing population

and business needs.' As a membership organisation the Scottish Property Federation (SPF) is the voice of Scotland's real estate industry. Established in 2007, SPF represents more than 185 organisations operating in Scotland. It includes among its members: property investors including major institutional funds, developers, landlords of commercial and residential property, and professional property consultants and advisers. The SPF works closely with those who advise and decide

on public policy in Scotland to ensure that they are aware of the consequences of their decisions for the property industry and wider economy. As part of the British Property Federation it also benefits from close links with the leading UK property companies and investors in the UK as well as the BPF's contacts with Westminster. For more information, please visit <http://www.scottishpropertyfederation.org.uk> or follow us on Twitter @ScotPropFed.



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A small toilet, store and changing room has been created under the staircase of the above property.

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by introducing online sales and marketing.

The property is located right in the heart of the retail area of Lochgilphead with good passing and local trade.

Lochgilphead has a catchment area of approximately 4,000 residents, with a good number of visitors during the tourist season.

The town has a good range of amenities such as its hospital, high school, supermarket, veterinary surgery, post office, major banks, a variety of unique local shops and an excellent selection of eating and drinking hostleries.

Anyone interested in buying the business or shop should contact the selling agent, Miller Stewart, on 01546 607094, 07771 541578.

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2017 was a boom year for farming



TOTAL income from farming is estimated to have increased by £245 million in 2017, after a modest increase in 2016.

The chief statistician in the Scottish Government last week published Total Income from Farming Estimates for Scotland 2015-2017, which contains near-final estimates of total income from farming (TIFF) for 2016 and an initial estimate of 2017 TIFF.

The figures show net income rose by five per cent in 2016 compared to the previous year, with initial estimates for 2017 suggesting a further increase of 36 per cent.

Agriculture was worth £672 million to the Scottish economy in 2016, up from £639 million in 2015, with improvements in potatoes and sheep farming offsetting the effect of the fall in milk price.

Although not all the data are yet in, TIFF for 2017 appears to risen to about £917 million, which, once inflation is taken into account, is the third highest since 2000. The dairy sector contributed most to the increase, with the average price of milk increasing 28 per cent to 28.2p per litre. A moderate increase in production resulted in the value of milk increasing £117 million to £434 million.

In the cereal sector, a 10 per cent increase in the barley harvest, together with an improvement in prices, saw the value of barley increase £67 million, or 36 per cent, to £253 million. The value of wheat also rose on the back of good prices to £128 million.

Overall, livestock is estimated to have seen a small increase in value in 2017. The largest sector, the beef industry, again remained reasonably steady in 2017, with prices slightly above 2016 throughout the year. Output from slaughter or sales of cattle amounted to an estimated £716 million in 2017.

The sheep sector saw a second year of price rises, with output worth £222 million. Higher prices saw a 24 per cent rise in the value of pig meat, to £108 million, while the poultry sector saw a modest decline to £80 million. The value of eggs increased eight per cent to £89 million.

A good potato harvest offset depressed prices resulting in a four per cent increase in the value of potatoes, the seed sector remaining steady. The vegetable sector saw strong growth in both 2016 and 2017, and now stands at an estimated £155 million. Fruit, on the other hand, dropped back slightly in both years, and now stands at £134 million, though this is still well up on 2014.

Total costs were estimated to have fallen slightly in 2016, but are expected to have increased about seven per cent in 2017. Feed costs fell £18 million in 2016 to £521 million, and may increase to an estimated £550 million in 2017.

The cost of fertiliser fell 18 per cent in 2016, but is estimated to have remained steady in 2017. Fuel costs fell nine per cent in 2016 but look increasing about 17 per cent in 2017 to £126 million. Labour costs, having remained fairly steady in 2016, look like increasing £34 million to £416 million in 2017.

Subsidies, including coupled support, amounted to £511 million in 2016 and £554 million in 2017. The 2017 figure, which for accounting purposes is based on the payment year irrespective of when payments are actually made, is made up of £425 million in pillar 1 support, a further £82 million in pillar 2 payments, and £47 million in coupled support.

In the longer term, income from farming has been rising steadily since a dip in the late nineties. However, within that trend the figures have fluctuated from year to year.

The publication also includes a range of related data. This includes comparisons with elsewhere in the UK, which show Scotland and Wales consistently below other areas, with Northern Ireland at similar levels to the lower performing English regions.

Scottish regional estimates show that, on a per hectare basis, the highest level of income from farming was in the North East. Productivity indicators, which measure the amount of output per input, irrespective of prices, show improved productivity in four of the past five years.

Income from farming information is used to monitor the performance of the industry, but also as part of the calculation of Scottish GDP and in the UK National Accounts. The 2017 figures will be revised next year, once more complete data are available.

The figures released today were produced by independent statistical staff, free from any political interference, in accordance with professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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NFUS lobbies MPs at Westminster debate

NFUS SCOTLAND representatives returned to Westminster last Thursday, February 1, for an important parliamentary debate on future agricultural policy frameworks post-Brexit. The Westminster Hall debate, led by Orkney and Shetland MP Alistair Carmichael after continuous talks with NFU Scotland, focused on the operation of policy frameworks in the UK and the devolved nations once the UK leaves the EU and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Briefing MPs ahead of the debate on Thursday, political affairs manager Clare Slipper and director of policy Jonnie Hall outlined that commonly agreed regulatory regimes in the UK will be essential to maintain the effective functioning of the UK single market and the negotiation of beneficial future trade deals with the EU and other partners.

Issues identified by the union as areas best suited to be managed on a commonly agreed 'framework' basis are animal welfare and traceability, public health, pesticides regulation and food labelling.

Thereafter, NFU Scotland is clear that the objectives and mechanisms of support for agriculture must be both developed and delivered entirely on

a devolved basis - a principle which the union was pleased that all parties speaking in the debate supported.

Speaking after the debate, Mr Hall said: 'Agricultural and rural development policy, and its delivery, already diverge across the UK, yet all under the regulatory framework of the CAP.'



In essence, UK agriculture policy operates on different playing fields, but we all play by the same rules of the game

'In essence, UK agriculture policy operates on different playing fields, but we all play by the same rules of the game.'

'There is no reason why this should change after we leave the EU.'

'In Scotland, for example, it will remain essential in the medium to long term to target funding to less favoured areas, and for flexibility for coupled support to be retained.'

'This is vital for socio-economically important sectors across rural Scotland.'

'In other regions of the UK, there will be different areas of emphasis.'

'Speaking during the debate, the UK government's Defra



From left: NFUS officials, political affairs manager Clare Slipper, vice president Gary Mitchell and director of policy and member services Jonnie Hall.

minister George Eustice suggested that maximum flexibility for the devolved administrations will form an important part of the UK government's upcoming Agriculture Bill.

'Mr Eustice also outlined that the UK government is

keen to continue the engagement and involvement of NFU Scotland as it formulates the Command Paper which will be published in late spring, and which will inform the future legislation.

'This is significant, and it jus-

tifies NFU Scotland's continued presence in Westminster, which has massively ramped up in the past 12 months.

'We will continue to work with all politicians and policy-makers to secure the best future for Scottish agriculture.'

Around the markets

STIRLING - Caledonian Marts sold on Thursday February 1 194 cattle, comprising 92 prime bullocks, heifers and young bulls, 77 cast cows and bulls and 25 storks and calves. A poorer show of prime cattle for quality would be no cheaper on the week.

Bullocks averaged 212p
Heifers averaged 221p
Black and white bullocks averaged 154p

Young bulls averaged 190p
Beef cows averaged 132p
Dairy cows averaged 108p
Bullocks sold to 250p for a Limousin from Learielaw, Broxburn to T Johnston, Butchers, Falkirk, and to £1621 gross for the same animal.

Heifers sold to 250p for a Limousin from Upper Spittalton, Thornhill, to G Kirk & Sons, Butcher, Denny, and to £1626 gross from Brockwoodlees, Canonbie.

Young bulls sold to 198p for a Limousin from Giffordland, Dalry, and to £1694 gross from Cairnbog, Kilsyth.

Leading prices:
Bullocks p/kg;
248p & 242p Learielaw 240p (twice) Seggersdean and Brockwoodlees 230p (twice) Bankhead (Kerr) 228p (twice) Spittal & Faskine 225p (twice) Spittal, Seggersdean & Strageath 220p Millearne and Strageath
Heifers p/kg;
248p (Twice) Learielaw and Brockwoodlees 245p Faskine, Upper Spittalton and Brockwoodlees 235p Bankhead 230p Faskine 225p Wester Carmuir 222p Dullomuir 220p Spittal (Bilsland)

Also forward were 77 cast cows and bulls.

Beef cows averaged 132p selling to £1310 for a Limousin from A Kennedy & Sons, Seggersdean and to 162.5p for a Charolais X from D Reid, Middlerigg.

Dairy cows averaged 108p selling to £930 from J & G P McConnell, Hoodyard, and to 126.5p for the same beast. Cast bulls averaged 109p selling to £1280 for an AA from D Mair, Easter Langhill and to 116.5p for a Charolais from J & D Mitchell, Offers.

Other leading prices
Beef cows per head

£1300 Middlerigg £1280 Mains of Burnbank £1230 Seggersdean £1180 Craigend (McCord) (Twice) & Murrayshall £1160 Kincape and Seggersdean

Beef Cows per kilo
161p Craigend (McCord) 159p Mains of Burnbank 157.5p & 155p offers 151.5p Seggersdean 150.5p Craigend (McCord)

Dairy Cows per head
£870 Gallamuir £850 Hoodyard £810 & £790 Blairmains £760 Walton

Dairy Cows per kilo
115.5p Gallamuir 113p Gallamuir 112.5p Hoodyard 111p Blairmains & Hoodyard to 110p Blairmains & Easterton

Cast Bulls per head
£1160 Wester Hassockrigg £1150 Offers
Cast cows and bulls are required on a weekly basis, for more information please contact Oliver Shearman on 07730 046252.

Also forward was a very strong show of 25 calves and storks. More could have been sold to sellers advantage as stock was in high demand.

Top price of the day was £440 (Twice) for Charolais X Bullocks from R Epps, Ardnave, Islay.

Other Leading Prices:
Beef
Sim X Heifers £360, £330, £310 (twice), £210 Mid Forrest
Sim X Bull £260 Mid Forrest
Lim X Bull £300 Walton
Black & Whites
Ayrshire £170 & £110 Walton
£60 (Twice), £55, £50 Nyadd
The next sale will be Thursday February 15. Please contact Laura Bailey on 07561 305922 for more information.

STIRLING - United Auctions on Wednesday January 31 sold 1,228 store cattle and young bulls, and 105 cast cows and forward cattle, also sold 1536 store and feeding sheep. Bullocks (748) - averaged 223.95p to 264.50ppk for a 242kg LimX from Gleniron, and to £1400 for a 699kg SimX from Fornech & a 674kg AAX from Preston. B&W Bullocks (30) - averaged 155.26p to 224.3ppk for a

370kg HFX from South Brackenridge, and to £830 from South Brackenridge. Heifers (414) - averaged 215.85p to 248.90ppk for a 436kg LimX Bankswood, and to £1230 for a 580kg CHX from Balgroggie.

Young Bulls (36) - averaged 211.69p to 250.70ppk for a SimX from Sunnyhill, and to £1100 for a SimX from Thomanean.

Cast cows (70) - averaged 136.81p to 191.90ppk for a BRBX from Claylands and £1490 for a LimX from Binn. Dairy cows (23) - averaged 108.06p to 147.55ppk for a HOX from Claylands and to £955 for a HFX from Nyadd.

Forward cattle (12) - averaged 190.17p to 208.00ppk for a LimX from Hatton of Cargill and to £1370 for a LimX from Hatton of Cargill.

Bullocks: Up to 205kgs - Gleniron £640; 264.5p; 250-300kgs- Auchafour £780; 263.50p; 301-350kgs- Barlauchan £905, Chapel 263.90p; 351-400kgs- Millands £1045; 263.9p; 401-450kgs- Farden £1085; Westerton 248.0p; 451-500kgs- Gairdrum £1195; 245.90p; 501-550kgs- Preston £1280; Easter Garden 241.2p; 551-600kgs - Preston £1335; 234.20p; 601-650kgs - Preston £1375, Whitfield 219.7p; 651-700kgs - Preston £1,400, 207.7p.

Heifers: Up to 250kgs- Barlauchan £610; 246.0p; 251-300kg - Barlauchan £730, 243.3p; 301-350kg- Barlauchan £800, 241.0p; 351-400kgs- Nether Dalkeith £960, 244.3p; 401-450kgs- Gatehead £1090, 248.9p; 451-500kgs- Cowans £1160, 239.0p; 501-550kgs- Glendamp £1,175; Gairdrum 229.9p; 551-600kg- Balgroggie £1230, 218.80p.

Young bulls: 251-300kgs- Keirsbeath £570, 220.90p; 301-350kgs- Keirsbeath £670, 220.40p; 351-400kgs- Sunnyhill £950, 250.70p; 401-450kgs- East Merklund £1,000; 240.40p; 451-500kgs- East Merklund £1090, Crosshouse 219.40p; 550-600kgs- Thomanean £1,100; 193.70p; 601-650kgs- Knowehead £1,100, 182.10p; 651-700kgs- Knowehead £1090,

165.20p.
OTM Cows:

£ per head - Binn (Lim) £1490; Headshaw (Sim) £1430; Easttoun (BRB) £1330; Headshaw (Her) £1170; Balgroggie (CH) £1150; Headshaw (BAZX) £1110; Claylands (MO) £1050; Thomanean (BA) £1010. PPK- Claylands (BRB) 191.90p; Binn (Lim) 189.10p; Headshaw (Sim) 165.10p; Thomanean (BA) 151.70p; Headshaw (BAZX) 145.70p; Balgroggie (CH) 143.40p; Headshaw (Her) 135.10p; Claylands (MO) 122.40p.

OTM Bulls:
£ per head - Hardieston (Lim) £1410; Balleny (CH) £1050. PPK- Lurgan (Lim) 175.80p; Balleny (CH) 94.10p.

United Auctions also sold 1536 Store & Breeding Sheep.
Top Prices:
Hoggs- Sauchrie Mains (Suff) £92.00; Shields (Tex) £88.00; Dalfask (BTex) £66.00; Castleton (Chev) £64.50; Rhodders (BF) £61.50.

Breeding Sheep
3 Crop Texel scanned twins to BTex £132 East Mains; Texel Gmrs scanned 100 per cent to BTex £120 East Mains; 2 Crop Suff scanned 200 per cent to BTex £112 East Mains; 2-4crop mules scanned 200 per cent £104 East Mains.

DINGWALL - Dingwall & Highland Marts on January 30 sold 14 prime cattle.
Prime bullocks (2) averaged 217.5p (+8.5p) and sold to 218.0p and £1,253.50 gross. Prime heifers (12) averaged 216.8p (+8.3p) and sold to 224.0p per kg and £1,390.50 gross.

Prime bullocks (2) averaged 217.5p (+8.5p) and sold to 218.0p and £1,253.50 gross for a 575kg British Blue from Easter Sheep Park, Balblair to Messrs John M Munro Limited, Dingwall.

Prime heifers (12) averaged 216.8p (+8.3p) and sold to 224.0p per kg for a 610kg Blonde D'aquitaine from Easter Hardmuir, Nairn to Messrs Fraser Brothers, Butchers, Dingwall and £1,390.50 gross for a 675kg

Limousin cross from Bridgend F arm, Dingwall.

Other leading prices per kg:
Bullocks: Easter Sheep Park, (BRB), 217.0p.

Heifers: Bridgend Farm, (CharX), 222.0p; Easter Hardmuir, (LimX), 222.0p; Easter Hardmuir, (LimX), 221.0p; Bridgend Farm, (LimX), 220.0p.

Other leading prices per head:
Bullocks: Easter Sheep Park, (BRB), £1,215.20.

Heifers: Bridgend Farm, (CharX), £1,387.50; Easter Hardmuir, (BAX), £1,366.40; Bridgend Farm, (CharX), £1,360.90; Bridgend Farm, (LimX), £1,354.50.

They also sold 472 prime sheep. Old season lambs (393) averaged 194.3p (+9.4p) and sold to 219.0p per kg and £96.50 gross.

SQQ 36.5kg to 45.5kg (262) averaged 200.9p (+10.0p) per kg.
Feeding sheep (79) sold to £129.00 gross.

Old season lambs (393) averaged 194.3p (+9.4p) and sold to 219.0p per kg for a pen of 42kg Beltex crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge and £96.50 gross for a pen of 60kg Texel crosses from The Dell of Killiehuntly, Kingussie.

SQQ 36.5kg to 45.5kg (262) averaged 200.9p (+10.0p) per kg.
Feeding sheep (79) sold to £129.00 gross for a Texel ram from Dalchiel, Dornoch.

Other leading prices per head and per kg:
Old season lambs: TexX - Torgorm, £93.00, Easter Dalziel, Dalcross, 214.3p; Chev - The Cloy, Fortrose, £92.00, 214.0p; SuffX - Easter Dalziel Farm, £90.00, Torgorm, 210.6p; CharX - Torgorm, £90.00, 211.8p; Mule - Alvie Estate, Kincairg, £87.50, 190.2p; BF - Craigard Cottage, Langal, £83.00, 193.0p; Lyx - Craigard Cottage, £83.00, 197.6p.

Feeding sheep: Tex ram - 1134 West Langwell, Rogart, £114.00; TexX ewe - Muirton Mains, Urray, £104.00; TexX ewe - Easter Dalziel, £97.00; HB ewe - Muirton Mains, £91.00; SuffX ewe - South Clunes, Kirkhill, £91.00.

CAP greening report published

A common approach to sustainability and recommendations to inform future farming policy and mechanisms

THE FINAL report and recommendations of Professor Griggs CAP Greening Review Group have been published.

The report examines how future policy and support mechanisms could achieve environmentally and economically sustainable farming in Scotland.

Welcoming the report, Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing said: 'This report presents a common approach to sustainability and sets out a shared set of recommendations that take forward the debate in an evidence-based way, without glossing over the very real environmental challenges the farming sector faces.'

'Along with the work of the Agriculture Champions and the National Council of Rural Advisers, this report is something we can draw on in designing future farm policy in Scotland in the months and years ahead.'

'I am grateful to Professor Griggs and to all the members of the group for their important and thorough contribution. The report gives us independent support



over the direction of travel, which Scottish Government policy has been taking in recent years – for example, through the introduction of more geographical targeting of environmental schemes.'

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham added: 'We are committed to ensuring that greening rules are effective for the environment and I therefore

welcome this report that looks at how to encourage more sustainable and environmentally friendly farming in the future.'

She added that it was important to develop a shared understanding of the challenges to address, and to explore the principles that could help to ensure future measures are effective in protecting the farmed environment.

Ewing slams ban on live exports of animals

COMMENTING on UK Government plans to ban all live exports of livestock, Scotland's Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing said: 'The UK government appears to be ready to ban all live exports of livestock.'

'So let me be absolutely clear: this is one UK-wide framework the Scottish Government will not be participating in. I will not support anything that creates further challenges or difficulty for our farming sector or puts Scottish ag-

riculture at a disadvantage. 'Any such move would potentially do substantial harm to our quality livestock sector, not least farming in the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney, as well as trade with Northern Ireland.'

'The Scottish Government will, therefore, not support the banning of live exports of livestock, but will remain committed to the welfare of all animals during transport adhering to the current rigorous standards which apply – standards and regulations provided by the EU – that are already world class and protect us all through animal, plant and chemical health measures and enabling our produce to be traded around the world.'



Any such move would potentially do substantial harm to our quality livestock sector

Grimsay project studies potential for new dairy in Uists



GRIMSAY Community Association has launched a new initiative for those interested in dairy production and manufacturing.

Called Bringing Back Dairy, it will consist of talks, discussions and workshops from March 8-10.

The association said: 'The Bringing Back Dairy conference will discuss dairy production and dairy manufacturing with an emphasis on cheese making, with the goal of developing practical plans for small-scale dairy production in the Uists.'

'Speakers will address both the practicalities of raising dairy animals (cows, sheep, goats), cheese production and marketing, environmental impacts and regulation, and bring up-to-date practical information to crofters and others who might be considering going into dairy or cheesemaking.'

The speakers and workshop leaders include:

Kathy Biss, who has run the West Highland Dairy in Wester Ross since 1987 with her husband David, producing a wide range of cow and sheep milk cheeses and is known as an adviser and trainer in cheese

production.

Wendy Barrie is founder and director of the Scottish Food Guide and Scottish Cheese Trail, and leader of Slow Food Scotland's Ark of Taste.

Bosse Dahlgren is a former farmer of heritage breeds and a member of a small cooperative dairy.

Dave Eastwood founded the Isle of Lewis Cheese Company, producing the island's first artisan cheeses from their own herd of milking goats.

Alasdair MacEachen is a Benbecula crofter involved in lamb and small-scale meat production, with more than 40 years' experience in the environmental health sector.

On March 8 and 9 Kathy and David will lead a short hands-on cheese-making course.

Bringing Back Dairy will be held in the new centre and kitchen at Ceann na h-Airigh, Grimsay.

A day of talks and discussions will be held on Saturday March 10 with the speakers and local experts. The conference will run from 10am - 4pm, and include lunch.

Places for both are limited, so contact Matt on 01870 603359 or info@grimsay.org to book.

The Highlanders are Coming

127th Spring Show & Sale 2018
Sunday Monday February 11 and 12

Highland Cattle Society

FOR 126 years the Highland Cattle Society has held a Spring Show and Sale of the best pedigree Highland cattle...and the 127th is an event not to be missed with 90 entries.

Sunday: Oban Livestock Centre will host some of the top UK breeders and their cattle to provide an opportunity for expert stockmen to present their immaculately groomed animals to judge Charlie MacLean, Mortimers Farm, Eastleigh.

Monday: Raymond Kennedy of United Auctions will invite bids from breeders, experienced and new, who have travelled from all over the world to buy new stock in the exciting atmosphere of this, the Original Highland Cattle Sale.

All visitors are welcome as well as buyers and enthusiastic spectators. With helpful staff and hundreds of

knowledgeable members of the Highland Cattle Society in attendance, there is no better place to discover all you need to know about this iconic breed.

The AGM takes place on Saturday at The Royal Hotel, followed by a drinks reception.

Trophies will be presented at the society's dinner and ceilidh at The Royal Hotel on Sunday February 11 at 7pm.

This year various Oban businesses have kindly offered to support the show and sale by serving pure pedigree Highland beef.

Whether you cook the skillfully butchered meat yourself or sit back and let local expert chefs show you how it is done, it is a great chance to enjoy pure pedigree Highland beef.





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New Holland T5040 4WD, 2010, c/w MX T6 PCH Loader, 85 HP...£20,995	
Kubota M9540, 2010, c/w Kubota loader / bucket, hyd shuttle, 40k...£20,995	
Landini Vision 90 4WD, 2003, c/w Quicke loader, 90HP...£19,795	
Zetor Proxima 95, 2010, only 1100 hours, 90HP, 80% tyres, 90HP...£19,495	
New Holland TL100, 2003, c/w Trima loader and bucket, ex council...£17,995	
Zetor 7341 4WD, 2004, c/w Tracflit Loader, 1 owner from new...£15,495	
Case 895 XL Duo, 4WD, c/w Quicke 2560 Loader 85HP...£10,995	
Goldoni 30DT Compact 4WD Tractor, Trailer & Mower...£8,995	
John Deere 2140 2WD, 1981, SG2 cab, 82HP, Power synchron...£7,295	
John Deere 2140 XE 2WD, 1985, 80HP approx., 2 spools, top link...£6,795	
Kubota B2400 Compact, 2006, Snow Plough and Salt Spreader...£4,995	
International 674, 2wd, c/w loader, bucket and fork...£3,795	
Kubota U25-3 Mini Excavator, 2.5 Ton, 2007, c/w 3 buckets...£13,495	
Bobcat E08 Mini Excavator, Brand New, c/w 3 buckets...£12,795	
Neuson 3001 3 Ton Swivel Skip Dumper, 2013, AWD, Hydrostatic...£11,995	
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Oban Highland beef Promotion

HIGHLAND CATTLE SOCIETY
127TH SPRING SHOW & SALE 2018
Sunday 11th & Monday 12th February

The Oban businesses below have kindly offered to support the Show & Sale by serving Pure Pedigree Highland Beef from Friday the 9th February.

Whether you cook the skillfully butchered meat yourself or sit back and let local expert chefs show you how it is done, it is a great chance to enjoy Pure Pedigree Highland Beef.

Our thanks also goes to Millers of Speyside & Charlie Bruce for supplying the beef.

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HIGHLAND CATTLE SOCIETY
127TH SPRING SHOW & SALE 2018
Show 11th Feb 10am & Sale 12th Feb 10am

United Auctions, Oban Livestock Centre, PA34 4SD

For 126 years the Highland Cattle Society has held a Spring Show & Sale of wonderful Pedigree Highland Cattle. The 127th is an event not to be missed. All welcome, buyers and eager spectators.

Judge: Charlie MacLean, Auctioneer: Raymond Kennedy



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Society Office: 01786446866 UA Market Office: 01631562233

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As the Mechanical Engineering Supervisor, you should have relevant experience and be capable of applying your problem-solving skills and knowledge of continuous improvement to good effect, especially in the areas of repetitive breakdown. Computer literate and with first rate organisation, communication and influencing skills, we also expect the ability to consistently deliver when working under pressure, as well as being committed to both individual and team successes.

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To be considered you must already be a highly respected Farm Manager or well established in a Senior Husbandry position within the Aquaculture Industry and be able to demonstrate your commitment in developing a strong safety culture. You will be open, honest and communicate with ease at all levels. Your ability to plan ahead will be matched by close attention to details. It is essential to value our unique identity and have the skills to grow premium quality differentiated salmon for customers with the highest expectations.

SSF Farm Managers are expected to be industry leading with competence in finance, budget control and planning, stock management, stakeholder interactions, personnel management and promotion of health and safety.

In return, we will offer an attractive remuneration package along with an individual development plan. A relocation package will be offered as required.

If you would like to be considered for this vacancy, please contact **Angela Hand, Recruitment & HR Coordinator** on 01786 445521 or email angela.hand@scottishseafarms.com

Closing date for applications: Friday 16th February 2018.



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www.hie.co.uk

Operating across half of Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is one of Europe's most highly-regarded development agencies. HIE's unique integration of economic and community development is central to its mission to generate sustainable economic growth in every part of the Highlands and Islands, particularly in fragile areas.

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Supporting clients to manage and deliver large and often complex capital projects with multiple funders will be a key aspect of this role. It will require the post-holder to be proactive in bringing together key funders from the private, public and third sector.

You will have proven experience in project management and appraisal, including detailed financial analysis, as well as knowledge of local social enterprise and community activity.

The ability to establish and develop effective working relationships, both internal and external is essential and you will also utilise your strong communication skills to engage with and influence stakeholders across the public, private and third sector.

Experience of supporting social enterprise growth activity is desirable, as is involvement in multi-agency/partner projects.

TO APPLY ONLINE VISIT:
www.hie.co.uk/vacancies

JOB REFERENCE: 750

CLOSING DATE: 25 February 2018

INTERVIEW DATE: 12 March 2018 - in Lochgilhead

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Cooke Aquaculture Scotland
Refusing to go with the flow

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.

Inverloch Castle

Payroll and Accounts Clerk

We are looking for an experienced Accounts & Payroll Clerk to become a full-time member of our finance team. Knowledge in SAGE 50 and SAGE Payroll, as well as the preparation of monthly management accounts would be beneficial. Good familiarity of Microsoft Office is required.

If this position is of interest to you then please email your cv to Fiona@inverloch.co.uk

We have various hospitality roles available, please go to www.inverlochcastlehotel.com/contact/careers

KILMARTIN

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£24,000 per annum pro rata (0.6 FTE)
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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.

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TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

THE A85 TRUNK ROAD (INVERARAY JUNCTION, LOCH AWE) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF SPECIFIED TURNS) ORDER 2018 THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS give notice that they have made the above Order under sections 2(1) and 2, 4(1) and 14(1)(a) and (4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984...



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...

Argyll and Bute Council BID4OBAN LTD NOTICE OF AGM Tuesday 13th March 2018 Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Breadalbane Street, Oban 6.00 pm for Members 6.20pm for General Meeting

Argyll and Bute Council DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (ON-STREET PARKING PLACES AND CHARGES) (OBAN) 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.

www.highland.gov.uk THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL 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...

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017 Marine Fish Farm - Atlantic Salmon - New site comprising 12 x 120m circumference pens and feed system

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017 Alloy wheel manufacturing facility, alterations and improvements to existing secondary plant access and associated access arrangements, hard standing, landscaping, car parking, and ancillary development

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES First Registration of a Croft Mrs Christina Mary Khan has registered her croft 135 Kilmory, Ardnamurchan and Sunart, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 Installation of additional 2 moorings - Tuath, Isle of Mull Notice is hereby given that The Scottish Salmon Company has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government...

Argyll and Bute Council Councillor Roddy McCuish (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles) Councillor Jim Lynch (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles) Councillor Elaine Robertson (E.W. 5 Oban North and Lorn) Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles) Councillor Kieron Green (E.W. 5 Oban North and Lorn)

CROFTING COMMISSION COMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD PUBLIC HEARING A Public Hearing will be held by the Crofting Commission into the application by Archibald John Maclean to decroft part of the croft at 1 Kirkapoll, Tیره advised as extending to 0.456 Ha.

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 Existing Moorings and Addition of a New Moorings, Seil Sound Notice is hereby given that Seil Sound Moorings Association has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government...

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Balvicar 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, AB1 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or by email to: MS.MarineLicensing@gov.scot, quoting reference: MCMS No.: 06603 Applicant: Seil Sound Moorings Association

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.

First Registration of a Croft Mr J D Morrison has registered their croft Penmore Mill, Kilmornaig/Kilmore on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service NOTICE OF THE CLOSURE AND RELOCATION OF THE OBAN PROCURATOR FISCAL'S OFFICE Procurator Fiscal's office Boswell House, Argyle Square Oban PA34 4BD From 23 February 2018 the Oban Procurator Fiscal's office will close and relocate to new premises within Oban Sheriff Court House.

Scottish Calendars 2018 HALF PRICE SALE Enjoy Scotland at its best all year round with our selection of stunning calendars. Featuring the breathtaking landscapes and diverse architecture from around Scotland. We also have a Scottish Clans Calendar, featuring illustrations by R.R. McIan. Our Scottish Calendars make the ideal gift. To see all the images from our 2018 range visit: www.scottishcalendars.co.uk ORDER ONLINE AT www.scottishcalendars.co.uk or call us on 01371 851 868

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BIRTHS

RUTH - Martin and Deirdre (McCulloch) are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter, Elizabeth Emily McCulloch, on January 29 at Walter Reed Memorial Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland. First grandchild for Joe and Isabel, Glasgow and Bob and Ann, Oban.

DEATHS

CAMPBELL - Peacefully and cared for at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on February 3, 2018, Ena aged 96 years, beloved wife of the late Calum Campbell, Fidden. Much loved mother, grandmother, great grandmother and friend. Funeral at Creich Church on Friday February 8 at 12noon and thereafter to Bunessan Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection to Heart Foundation and Bunessan Surgery.

EGGINTON - On Wednesday January 31, 2018, (Leslie) Gay, Of Wester Garth, North Ballachulish. Grateful thanks are expressed to friends and medical staff at Ballachulish and the Belford Hospital. A private cremation will take place.

ISAACSON - (née Christie) Christine Mitchell, born July 22, 1921, in East Laroach, Ballachulish, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2017, aged 96 years. The service and interment of her ashes at St John's Church, Ballachulish, will be held on Friday February 16 at 11.00am.

LINFIELD - Peter Malcolm died February 1, 2018, aged 80 years. Much loved husband of Jennifer, dear Dad to Mark, Melza and Gavin. "Grumpy" to grandchildren Kyle, Nikita, Lorna, Gregor, Ethan, Shayla and to daughters-in-law Ilona and Fiona. Funeral service will be held on Wednesday February 14, 2018, at 11.30am in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Fort William, thereafter private committal.

MACSPORRAN - Flora MacSparran, formerly of Mull and Oban, died peacefully at Liberton Hospital, Edinburgh, on February 4, 2018. Much loved mother of Fiona, Archie and Mandy and grandmother to Lewis, Sarah, Alice and Liam. Funeral service at Mortonhall Crematorium, Pentland Chapel, Edinburgh, on Monday February 19 at 3.30 p.m. Family Flowers only please.

MACTAGGART - Peacefully at her home, 48 Highbank Park, Lochgilphead, on January 31, 2018, Miss Jean MacTaggart, in her 85th year, beloved daughter of the late James and Mary MacTaggart (Islay), dearly loved sister of Ann Fletcher and a much loved aunt and great aunt. A good neighbour, former work colleague and dear friend to many. Funeral service was held in Lochgilphead Parish Church, on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, followed by interment at Achnabreac Cemetery. Forever in our thoughts.

McGILL - At Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch, on February 2, 2018, in her 84th year, Joan McGill, beloved wife of the late Archie, much loved mum to Ian and Cairena and grandmother to Hugh, Iain, Sophie and Euan.

MENZIES - Suddenly, at her home, 13 MacDonald Terrace, Lochgilphead, on February 4, 2018, Joy Menzies, née MacKenzie, aged 66 years, wife of the late Kenneth Menzies, much loved mum of Jamie and the late Kenneth, granny of Calum and Kian, loving sister of Fay and Sheila and a dear aunt and great auntie. Funeral service will be held in Ardriahigh Parish Church, on Friday, February 9, 2018 at 11.00am, thereafter to Achnabreac Cemetery.

MUIR - Peacefully, at Raigmore Hospital on Sunday February 4, 2018, Jeanette Muir, aged 78 years. A loving wife, mother and grandmother. Funeral Service will be held on Thursday February 15, 2018 at 12 noon in Kilmornivaig Parish Church, Spean Bridge, thereafter to Blarour Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William tel. 01397 702128.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMPBELL - Margaret and the family of the late Isabel Campbell would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for phone calls, flowers and cards on their recent sad loss. Thanks to all doctors, nurses and district nurses at the Lorn Medical Centre and the Lorn and Islands Hospital for the care given to mum. The community care team and Occupational Therapists for their kindness. Moreen Gracie for the lovely flowers. Special thanks to all the girls at Eadar Glinn Care Home for the care given to mum. Catriona and all at Hoey's Funeral Directors, Fr James for his comforting words, the Olive Garden and everyone who attended the church and graveside. Thanks to all that donated to Eadar Glinn Resident's Fund, amount raised was £387.31.

COOPER - Hermione would like to thank everyone for their kind messages of sympathy, Mass cards, flowers and support following the death of her mother Joey. Thanks also to all who attended her Requiem Mass and to the Bridge Cafe' for the catering. Special thanks to Fr Danny and to Scott and William of McLellan Funeral Directors.

HEAP - Isobel, Robert, Joe, Lorraine, Louis, Sophie, Morgan and wee Buster would like to thank all family, friends, good neighbours and SYFG for the lovely flowers, visits, phone calls, many cards and gifts they received following the sad loss of Bob. Thanks also to Dr Fattah, Dr Nicki Campbell, Betty Graham and all nurses and staff at Oban Hospital and Macmillan Day Bed Unit, Dr Glen, nurses and staff at Lorn Medical Centre, Paul and staff at Gordon's chemist for all the care to Bob over the years. To Rev Dugald Cameron for a comforting service and Donald MacKinnon for his lovely eulogy about Bob, to Ian and staff at D&A Munn's for their caring, efficient and very friendly service, to Moreen Gracie for the beautiful floral tributes and the Royal Hotel for catering. A special thank you to our friend Frances Parkinson for all her help at this difficult time for which we will be forever grateful and finally a huge thank you to everyone who attended Bob's funeral at the church and graveside, the generous sum of £509 was raised for ABCD and Macmillan Day Bed Unit in Oban.

MACCOLL - A huge heartfelt thanks to everyone who travelled far and near to pay their respects to Hector and to the Rev Ken Hunter for the uplifting service. To everyone at the Lorn and Islands Hospital and Connel Surgery who cared so kindly for Hector over the years. Sincere thanks to the staff at the Olive Garden (one of Hector's favourite places) and to D & A Munn's for their kindness and professionalism and to all who donated to ABCD. God bless you all.

MACDONALD - The family of the late Susie would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy shown to them following the recent sad loss of their Mum. Grateful thanks to Mossparc Care Home for looking after Mum, to Fr Roddy McAuley for his many visits and for his comforting Mass, to Mike McFall Funeral Directors for their caring and professional services, to MacDonald Bros Florists for floral arrangements and to the Lochy Bar for refreshments provided. The collection raised £485.92 for Mossparc Resident's Fund.

MACRAE - The family of the late Katie Mary MacRae wish to thank everyone for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them in their recent bereavement. Many thanks and appreciation to Rev Johnny Paton for heartfelt eulogy, Mr William McClymont for efficient funeral arrangements and Salen Hotel for catering. Our thanks to all who paid their last respects at the church and graveside in spite of the adverse weather conditions. Deep gratitude to friends, neighbours and carers who supported Katie in the last three years and enabled her to stay in her local community.

PAISLEY - The family of the late John Paisley would like to thank all family and friends for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them at this sad time. Grateful thanks to Dr John Wallace, all doctors and nurses at Craig Nevis Surgery, the Belford Hospital, along with the Home Care Team for their loving care and attention over the years. Sincere thanks to Rev Richard Baxter and Fr Roddy McAuley for their heart warming service. Special thanks to Scott Greenlees and his team at John McLellan Funeral Directors for their caring support, comfort and guidance at this time.

PALMER - The family of the late Roberta "Gaga" Palmer would like to sincerely thank all family and friends for the love and support shown in our recent sad loss. For all the beautiful flowers, cards and messages, we are truly grateful. Gaga would have been overwhelmed by how much she was loved. Special thanks to Dr John Wallace for his care and attention to Gaga over the last few years, to the Belford Hospital, to Scott, Linnie and the team at McLellan's for their compassionate handling of funeral arrangements, Alyson Stewart for her lovely tribute to Gaga and to the Ben Nevis Hotel. Thanks to everyone who attended the funeral service and made donations to the collection which will be shared between Craig Nevis surgery and the Belford Hospital.

SMITH - The family of the late Kenneth Smith would like to express their heartfelt thanks to family, friends and neighbours for their kindness, support and expressions of sympathy following the sad loss of their Dad. Grateful thanks are also due to the staff Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital for their kind and compassionate care. Special thanks to the Rev Chris Fulcher for a very comforting service and to Ian MacInnes and staff at D&A Munn for their guidance and efficiency. To Moreen Gracie for the beautiful flowers and the staff at the Royal Hotel, Oban for providing the buffet and refreshments. Finally, sincere thanks to all who attended at the church and the graveside and who generously donated to ABCD. The amount raised was £615.16.

MEMORIAMS

GALL - In loving memory of Victor, who died twenty five years ago on February 8, 1993. A new year comes Another goes But the gates of memory Never close. Gone but not forgotten. - Richard, Linda and family.

MACCORMICK - John. February 11, 2014. When thoughts go back as they often do We treasure memories we have of you. - Iona and family, Healthervale, Mull.

MACINNES - In loving memory of a dear father and grandfather Roddy, who died February 6, 2013. Just a prayer from the family who loved you, Just a memory fond and true, In our hearts you will live forever, Because we thought the world of you. Sadly missed. - Your loving family Oban and Erikskay. Thank you grandad for the years we shared, For the love you gave, and the way you cared, You left a place no one can fill, We miss your Grandad and we always will. - Your loving grandchildren and great-children.

MACLEAN - Ian Matheson (Cleasy). Loved and missed every year Many a day a silent tear Rest in peace Cleasy. - Libby, Pat and family.

MACLEAN - In loving memory of Mary Campbell, who died February 8, 2005, aged 65 years. Much loved wife of the late Alistair. A loving mum and gran. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day. - Dugald, Arlene and families.

MACLEAN - Remembered always, Mary Campbell, a dear sister, sister-in-law and auntie, who died February 8, 2005 and Alistair a dear brother-in-law and uncle, who died March 19, 2016. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day Unseen, unheard but very near Still loved, still missed and very dear - Margaret, Archie, Fiona and Duncan.

MENZIES - In loving memory of Hamish, a dear husband, father and grandpa who died February 10, 2007. Always in our thoughts. - Betty, Elizabeth, David and Isla.

ROBERTSON - In loving memory of Robert (Sugar), died February 11, 2015, beloved husband, father and grandfather. We little knew that morning That God was going to call your name It broke our hearts to lose you You didn't go alone For part of us went with you The day God called you home You left us precious memories Your love is still our guide And though we cannot see you You are always by our side Our family chain is broken And nothing seems the same But as God calls us one by one The chain will link again - Margaret, Anne and Robert.

ROSS - In loving memory of a dear mother Lorraine, who passed away February 12, 2016. Some time has passed since that fateful day When Gaecia swooped in and took you away This year I was wed and missed you so I tried hard to be happy but felt so low You were with me still as a whisper in my mind It does get easier, but you see I find Each day has news I want to share But you are a whisper and still not there I miss you mum with each passing day But know you are watching in your own special way I love you mum always and forever Your loving family, we shall forget you never XXXXX

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS
Oban Times
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS
Oban Times
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

Armed forces charity 'needs YOU!'

CLUBS, businesses and schools in Oban are being challenged to fundraise for Armed Forces charity Poppyscotland. This year the country marks 100 years since the signing of the Armistice that heralded the end of the First World War and the charity has adopted Lord Kitchener's famous mantra - 'Your country needs YOU!' - to launch its latest fundraising quest to bring in £1,918 or more in 2018.



The charity, which funds services in advice, employment, housing, mental health, mobility and respite, is also fundraising across Argyll, the Highlands and Islands.

The 1918 Poppy Pledge - which can take any fundraising form the participants see fit - is a lasting tribute to those who fell in the First World War, but, importantly, it will also allow Poppyscotland to make a step change in the scale of support it is able to provide those in the Armed Forces community who rely on the charity's support today.

Gordon Michie, head of fundraising at Poppyscotland, said: 'The Kitchener poster is one of the most iconic and enduring images of the First World War and serves as a reminder that military service back then was all-encompassing rather than the situation today where each and every one of us has a choice as to whether we wish to serve our country in this most important of ways.'

'It is the unspoken hope that our world will never suffer war on this scale ever again, but it is a stark fact of modern life that,

as I stand here, there are countless conflicts taking place across the globe; many of which involving our brave servicemen and servicewomen.'

Mr Michie added: 'Poppyscotland is committed to providing life-changing support to the Armed Forces community. Most people will be most familiar with us through the annual Scottish Poppy Appeal. The money raised from the appeal allows us to provide tailored funding and assistance, and we also fund services in advice, employment, housing, mental health, mobility and respite.'

'This year, though, it is Poppyscotland's turn to say: 'Your country needs you!' Since we launched The Poppy Pledge on Remembrance Weekend last year, we've had 102 pledgers sign up, which would result in the wonderful sum of at least £195,000 being raised, but the target is 250 - or £480,000 - which means we need schools, churches, rotary clubs, sports clubs, businesses, community groups - you name it - in Argyll and Bute and the

Highlands and Islands to get on board and do their bit for our brave troops and their families.'

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion The Royal and Mechanical Engineers (REME), based at Leuchars Station, were the first to sign up for the pledge. Corporal Craig Wood, from the REME, said: 'This year marks an important milestone in our nation's history as we reflect on the 100-year anniversary of the end of the First World War, and the sacrifices made by so many. 'The work of Poppyscotland is as vital today as it was back then and that's why we were the first to sign The 1918 Poppy Pledge. We hope that other military units, and the public as a whole, will join us in supporting this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.'

Go to poppyscotland.org.uk/poppypledge



Thought for the week

I'm a minister and I generally start the week with various intentions. I want to visit certain people, I want to work on something I'm planning, I hope to drop in here or there but first I have appointments in my diary and need to prepare for school assemblies, meetings, Sunday and so on.

As a result, many good intentions are postponed to the following week and the cycle continues. I'm sure lots of you can recognise this pattern.

In their song, Time, Pink Floyd sing: 'Every year is getting shorter never seem to find the time, plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines' until, 'The time is gone, the song is over though I'd something more to say'.

J M Barrie wrote: 'The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story, and writes another; and his humblest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with what he vowed to make it.'

We might be busy but sometimes we also, as Pink Floyd put it, 'fritter and waste the hours in an offhand way'.

I suppose we can mourn the passing of time or, better, try to make the most of each day.

Rev Sandy Stoddart,
Church of Scotland minister at Duror linked with Glencoe: St Munda's.

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Saints see stars at night as they crash out of Marshall Cup on penalties



Oban Saints and Red Star players observe a minute's silence of remembrance for the crew members of the Tarbert-based fishing boat Nancy Glen.

Match report and photos Derek Black

'We just never turned up' - Alex Craik

Oban Saints	1
Lochgilthead Red Star	1
Jimmy Marshall Trophy	

Red Star won 5-4 on penalties

ON A THOROUGHLY miserable night of wind and rain at Oban High School last Tuesday night Oban Saints produced a performance to match the conditions and tumbled out of the Scottish Amateur Football League Jimmy Marshall Trophy to Argyll rivals Lochgilthead Red Star.

Saints' proud record of having reached at least the semi-finals stage of the Scottish Amateur Football League's premier cup competition in each of the last five seasons came to an end when second half substitute Colin Weir fired penalty kick number 14 past Thomas McCulloch to seal a 5 - 4 shootout victory for the visitors.

This, however, is no hard luck tale with the victory deservedly going to Red Star who played the better football on the night and created the better chances.

Injuries to Keith Millar, Myles McAuley and Steven MacLeod forced manager Alex Craik into yet another line-up change with Paul Carmichael returning and Jamie Graham and Kerr Newbigging making

their first starting appearances of the season.

Saints lined up with a back three of Jamie Graham, Craig Campbell and Paul Carmichael. In midfield were Matthew Kelly, Kerr Newbigging, captain Donald Campbell, Willie Gemmell and Scott Maitland. Up front were Craig MacEwan and Daniel MacCuish. Work commitments kept Graham Douglas out so Thomas McCulloch helped out between the sticks. The Gaffer once again named himself on the bench alongside Ross Maitland, Steven MacLeod and youngsters Ruairidh Horne and Craig MacMillan.

Prior to kick-off both sets of players and referee Jimmy Litster observed one minute's silence of remembrance for the crew members who lost their lives when the Tarbert-based Nancy Glen fishing boat recently sank.

Saints kicked off attacking the old Games Park end and playing into the strong wind and driving rain. Kerr Newbigging, making his first starting appearance of the season, had Saints' first attempt on goal shooting wide of Ben Pollock's right hand post in the fifth minute. Star responded in the 13th

minute with an Ian McGuinness shot, also wide of target, after good work by Kyle Selfridge and Lee McLean.

Saints created their best opening of the first half after 15 minutes but were denied by an excellent double save from Ben Pollock. The new front pairing of Daniel MacCuish and Craig MacEwan linked up well to create a shooting opportunity for skipper Donald Campbell, which Pollock parried. Craig MacEwan was first to the loose ball but, from close range, Pollock made another vital stop to deny Saints' leading goalscorer.

Former Saint Martin Bonar, who impressed in central midfield, upended former team-mate Willie Gemmell on the edge of the centre-circle in the 17th minute. Saints failed to capitalise on the set-piece opportunity with Gemmell's free-kick drifting harmlessly behind and were caught cold from Pollock's goal-kick. Rab Docherty on the Star right sent Lee McLean in behind a square looking Saints back three and the Star youngster made no mistake with a powerful strike across Thomas McCulloch and into the bottom corner to give the visitors the lead.

Matthew Kelly had a 23rd

minute chance for an unlikely headed goal but failed to direct his glancing effort from a Willie Gemmell free-kick on target.

Saints continued to huff and puff their way through a disappointing opening period but had a good case for a penalty kick dismissed by referee Litster in the 25th minute. Donald Campbell won a free-kick on the right on the corner of the Star 18-yard box. Willie Gemmell played the ball short to Campbell whose delivery into the box was forced behind for a corner kick. Donald Campbell couldn't quite get Gemmell's clever low ball from the corner flag out of his feet on the six-yard line with the loose ball breaking to Paul Carmichael who was sent sprawling in the box under what Mr Litster deemed to be a fair challenge.

In a half of few chances Scott Maitland cut in from the left in the 38th minute but shot harmlessly across Ben Pollock and wide of the far post.

Mr Litster added three minutes for stoppages after head knocks to Aaron Moore and Jamie Graham before blowing for half-time.

Star got the second half underway and made a determined start forcing Thomas McCulloch into action inside 30 seconds. McCulloch was showing no sign of fatigue on just his second start of the season and came to the rescue again just two minutes later to deny Lee McLean a second goal.

An adventurous run on the left wing from Scott Maitland won a 54th minute free kick on the corner of the 18-yard box when he was upended by Martin Bonar. Willie Gemmell curled a delicious effort around the Red Star wall but couldn't beat an inspired Ben Pollock who threw himself to his left to finger tip the ball behind for a corner kick.

Pollock, however, could do

nothing to prevent Kerr Newbigging from opening his Saints goal scoring account when he thumped home Matthew Kelly's low delivery from the corner flag on the half volley.

The evergreen Ross Maitland entered the fray in the 56th minute replacing young Daniel MacCuish. Maitland was quickly involved placing a corner kick from the left onto the head of Paul Carmichael after another driving run from namesake Scott. Carmichael's thumping header from four yards out narrowly cleared Ben Pollock's crossbar as Saints pressed for a second goal.

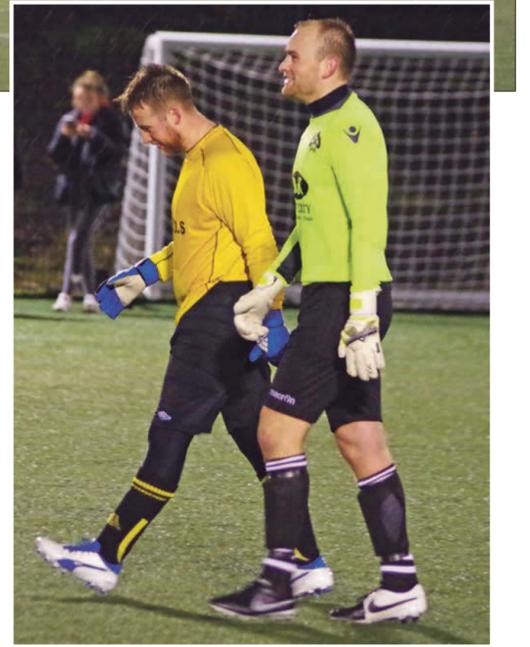
Ross Maitland was in the thick of the action again in the 67th minute getting in behind the Red Star defence and beating the advancing Pollock, however his unconvincing finish allowed Aaron Moore to get back and clear off the goal-line.

The visitors almost took full advantage of this let-off drawing a spectacular double save from Thomas McCulloch to keep the scores level going into the final 20 minutes.

Jamie Graham's first half head knock finally forced him off to be replaced at the back by manager Alex Craik who clambered off the substitutes' bench where survival suits rather than track suits were the order of the day.

As might be expected in a local derby there was one or two tasty challenges as both sides pushed for a winner, however referee Litster remained in control keeping tempers firmly in check.

With the clock ticking down towards a penalty shoot-out Saints squandered one final opportunity for what would have been a scarcely deserved win. Ross Maitland broke free on the right and delivered a perfect cross to the back post where Donald Campbell's text book downward header



The two goalkeepers - Ben Pollock and Thomas McCulloch head towards the Dalintart end goal for the penalty shoot-out.

bounced over the gloves of Ben Pollock but unfortunately also over the crossbar much to the disbelief of the large crowd who had braved the elements to cheer on their favourites.

With no winning goal forthcoming during the 90 minutes the tie went straight to penalties with Mr Litster selecting the Dalintart end for the shoot-out.

Paul Carmichael and Ross Maitland successfully converted for Saints with Aaron Moore and Kieran Moore replying in kind for Red Star.

The goalkeepers then intervened with Ben Pollock saving efforts from Kerr Newbigging and Craig MacEwan, and Thomas McCulloch denying Lee McLean and Neil Russell.

Willie Gemmell and Andrew Weir sent the shoot-out into sudden death with emphatic finishes which gave the keepers no chance.

Scott Maitland sent Ben Pollock the wrong way with the first of the sudden death penalties a trick which Ben Forbes immediately repeated to keep Red Star in the tie.

Then came the crucial inter-

Football

vention from Ben Pollock who guessed correctly to block Matthew Kelly's effort low down to his left and hand the advantage to Red Star.

All Saints hopes now rested on the shoulders of Thomas McCulloch, however, the big man couldn't repeat his earlier heroics which had kept his side in the tie and was beaten high to his left by a sweetly struck penalty from Colin Weir to win the tie for the visitors.

Besides local bragging rights, the prize for Red Star is a third round away tie at either Rutherglen or Duncannrig FP.

Saints manager Alex Craik said: 'We have no complaints. Red Star were really up for the game but we never turned up on the night.'

'They were the better team and deserved to go through although we could have nicked it near the end.'

'Penalty kicks are always a lottery but good luck to Red Star in the competition they are a good side and I fancy them to do well.'



Paul Carmichael sends this header inches over the bar.

West too strong for Lorne

West of Scotland	60
Oban Lorne	19
West Under 18 Cup - Group D	

Youth rugby

OBAN LORNE U18 travelled to Burnbrae on Saturday to kick off their West Regional Cup campaign.

West started strongly and scored two early tries to stun the Oban boys.

After 15 minutes the Oban side settled and managed to get more of the ball.

Strong defence from Finn Charlton, Lorne Sinclair and Craig Cook helped to stem the attack from a well-drilled West side.

From an Oban lineout on half way, Sandy Bavington hit James Divers, who made a lovely break through the defence, beating a second defender. David Cameron was on his shoulder to support and gather the offload.

Cameron had the pace to finish off a lovely try against the run of play under the posts. Ben MacFarlane Barrow added the extra points.

West fought back and used the width of the park to expose Oban out wide and add another converted try.

The home side showed slick

handling to ship the ball wide at every opportunity and the game plan worked when the right wing got under the posts to make the score 28-7 at half time.

The second half started with the West winger scoring in the corner after a good kick and chase. This was quickly followed by another converted try. Scoreline was now 40-7.

The Oban boys started to mix up how they played the more experienced side and had some joy in attack. It was through loose play in the attacking 22 metres that Oban recycled the ball quickly and again Divers linked up with Cameron to crash over the line and the extras added for 40-14.

This only spurred on West who went on to score four more tries. Oban managed to get one more score from MacFarlane-Barrow, who also added the extras to make the final score 60-19.

West were a well-organised team who deserved the points.

The next match for the U18 team is at home on Saturday against Glasgow Hawks.



Oban on the attack during the game against Dumfries.

Oban hockey are second top

Dumfries 2nds	0
Oban	7
West District Division 4	

OBAN men's hockey team are now second in the West District Division 4 table with two games in hand as the second half of the season gets underway.

Saturday saw them meet Dumfries seconds in Glasgow - where both home and away games are played - for the first time due to an earlier postponement. The return match is only a few weeks away.

For much of the first half Oban dominated the action; with only a slight hiccup in the final minutes when injury forced a slight restructuring of the side. The passing and move-

ment of the players produced gaps and ensured superior possession. However, when the whistle went for the break there were only two goals to show for this advantage.

Concentration

Dumfries had shown on occasion that they too could pass and there was always the threat of conceding if concentration wasn't maintained. Andy Head in the Oban goal kept his wits about him as on a couple of occasions Dumfries had close range efforts saved.

The second half continued in the same vein and the momentum increased as the minutes passed. It seemed inevitable that the next goal would come and sure enough

Hockey

it did, followed by four more. Stuart Head scored a hat trick with Lewis Gibson (2), Andy Hodge, and George Gauley all appearing on the score sheet.

The defence was resolute and composed as Dumfries still showed signs that damage could be done. Finally however, in the last few minutes, they capitalised on a rare mistake scoring to reinforce the point.

Whilst Oban dominated this game the enterprise and capability of Dumfries means that Oban will again have to perform well on the February 24 if they are to win the 'home' leg - in Glasgow.

Islay girls travel to Oban

Oban Under 15s	34
Islay Under 15s	10
Challenge match	

Girl's rugby

THE OBAN under 15 girls welcomed a rather inexperienced Islay team on a sunny Saturday afternoon at Oban Lorne Rugby club.

The visitors' lack of experience went unnoticed as the game went on. The wet surface forced a few knock-ons resulting in quite a slow match with lots of scrums.

The Oban girls dominated the first half, with some big carries from Jordan MacIntyre and captain Isla MacGillvary.

After the half-time whistle, Islay kicked to Oban's scrum-

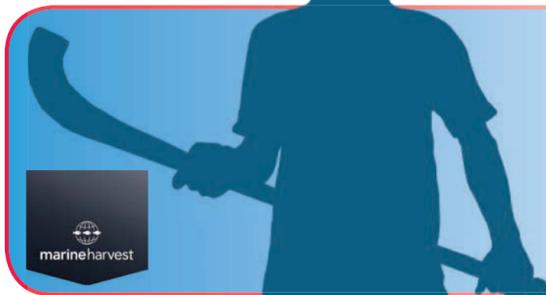
half Rona Shearer who caught the ball and confidently burst through the Islay defence for a breakaway try scoring under the posts.

The next kick-off fell to Amy Gibson who managed to show off some impressive footwork and get through the defence to increase Oban's lead.

The final try came after Oban's forwards managed to turn the ball over in a scrum on the five-metre line. The ball was passed to Rowan Drummond, who ran around the blind side of the scrum and scored to bring the final score to 34-10.



Oban and Islay met at Oban Lorne Rugby Club.



SHINTY

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New shinty season gets under way with friendly fixtures

A NUMBER of pre-season friendly matches beat the elements last Saturday.

Oban Camanachd 3 Inveraray 0

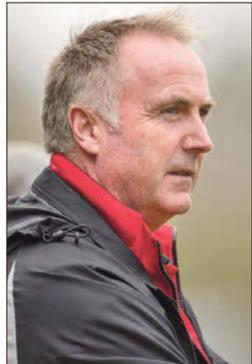
Oban Camanachd took the field for the first time this season as Ian Hay's side entertained Inveraray.

With the Oban High School 3G pitch on stand-by, an 8.30am Saturday morning pitch inspection ruled Mossfield playable.

Both teams were short of players with Lorne Dickie, Scott MacMillan, Daniel MacCuish and David Lafferty amongst the Oban Camanachd absentees.

Oban Camanachd took the lead on 10 minutes. Daniel MacVicar played in a ball from the left and found Aidan MacIntyre just outside the D.

MacIntyre, who had lost his marker, struck the ball into the top corner of the net to make it 1-0.



Oban Camanachd manager Ian Hay.

Oban Camanachd had keeper Gavin Stobbart to thank as Inveraray went on the hunt for a quick leveller.

It was then Inveraray custodian Scott MacLachlan's turn to show his worth with some good stops.

The Oban side doubled their head on 37 minutes. Andrew 'Papa' MacCuish, who had a great battle with Garry MacPherson in the middle of the park, played a fine pass down the right to Aidan MacIntyre. MacIntyre ran in, drawing keeper MacLachlan and a defender, before slipping the ball to Craig MacDougall, who steered a shot into the open goal.

Whilst Inveraray had their chances during the first period, Oban Camanachd were dominant after the break.

They went 3-0 ahead on 37 minutes. Daniel MacVicar saw a 20-yard shot saved with his legs by goalie Scott MacLachlan but Aidan MacIntyre was

quickly in to knock home the rebound for his second goal of the game.

The goal seemed to knock the zip out of the match and only a commanding performance from Scott MacLachlan prevented the hosts going further ahead.

Manager Hay was pleased with his team's work. 'It was a useful exercise for both teams. Inveraray are a good side and I'm sure they will go on to have a good season.'

'We had Lorne Dickie missing so 'Papa' MacCuish went into the centre and was very good. There wasn't a bad player out there and young Daniel Sloss played really well at half back whilst Malcolm Clark, who had to come off for a bit for treatment to a cut head, was good on the wing.

'Craig MacDougall did well and Aidan MacIntyre was always clever on the ball. He's an intelligent player who creates chances for others.'

Oban Celtic 8 Taynuilt 0

The Oban Celtic first team squad were due to travel to the Taynuilt Sports Field to play Taynuilt. However, this 2pm throw-up was postponed on Friday evening as the pitch was unplayable.

With Mossfield ruled playable for the clash between Oban Camanachd and Inveraray, Camanachd boss Ian Hay made his Oban Celtic counterpart Kenny Wotherspoon aware that the Oban High School 3G pitch was free for use so a hastily rearranged encounter between Oban Celtic and Taynuilt went ahead on the all-weather surface at 12.30pm.

Both teams did well to reassemble their squads at short notice although, understandably, both had key players missing.

Oban Celtic had 16 players to choose from, including two under 14s - John Douglas and Innes MacDonald - whilst Dylan Cooke, their pre-season signing from Glenorchy - started on the wing.

The teams played 40 minutes each way and, at the end of the first half, a brace from captain Daniel Madej and a spectacular Neil Carmichael volley gave Celtic a 3-0 cushion.

Oban Celtic, prompted by the excellent Daniel MacMillan, went for more goals after the restart but former Lochside Rovers keeper Beano Logan did well in the Taynuilt goals.

Both teams took the opportunity to chop and change their line-ups throughout the match.

Daniel Madej completed his hat-trick to make it 4-0, whilst Ross MacMillan added

a couple of fine strikes with his brother Daniel MacMillan adding a seventh.

A debut goal from Dylan Cooke completed the scoring, making it 8-0.

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon said: 'The match was a good work-out for both teams and I'm pretty pleased with how it went. It was also good for Celtic to give a couple of 13-year-olds 20 minutes of game time. We'll move on to the Oban Camanachd match this Saturday. It's a game I'll miss as I'm away but it will be a good test for the players.'

Fort William 4 Ballachulish 0

The Fort William second team lined up against Ballachulish in a 1.30pm throw up at An Aird.

Young Victor Smith, Padraig McNeil, who has rejoined the club after a season with Inverness, Scott Henderson and Grant Disher got the goals in Fort William's 4-0 victory.

Balla' confirmed that Scottish international John MacDonald will be their captain for the season ahead, taking over from Lorne Brown. Cian MacPhee will be vice-captain.

Glenurquhart 2 Inverness 1

Glenurquhart and Inverness saw their first action of the new term when they met at Blairbeg.

Glen had keeper Stuart MacKintosh back from injury and Fraser Heath played but John Barr and Ally MacKintosh were missing as were Eddie Tembo, Arran MacDonald, Euan Lloyd, James Hurwood and Oliver Black.

The sides were level at the break with James Cameron on target for Inverness and Finlay Ralston scoring for the Glen.

Finlay Ralston got his second after the break and that proved to be the winner.

Glen's James MacPherson had an effort ruled out for offside.

Inverness were also minus some regulars and they gave a good account of themselves against top flight opposition. David Campbell at full back and Dougie Rankin at backshee back stood firm to withstand a lot of pressure and it finished 2-1.

The clubs' reserve sides were also scheduled to meet but that encounter was called off on Saturday morning.

Caberfeidh 8 Strathglass 0

Caberfeidh and Strathglass were to meet at Castle Leod but an unplayable field led to a venue switch to the Dingwall Academy astro pitch with the teams playing 10-a-side.

It proved a testing afternoon for Strathglass, who were forced to include five second team players in their 15-man squad, as Cabers ran out 8-0 winners.

Craig Morrison and Ally MacLennan, back after injury, both grabbed a hat-trick with Blair Morrison and Calum MacKinnon getting the others.

Glasgow Mid Argyll 4 Tayforth 0

Glasgow Mid Argyll took on Tayforth at Yoker.

Craig Anderson and Seb MacMillan scored in the first half to leave GMA two up at the break.

Calum Mclay netted twice after the restart to round off the 4-0 win.

Lochaber 3 Newtonmore 4

There were goals galore at Spean Bridge as the Newtonmore seconds edged out the

Lochaber seconds by the odd goal in seven in their 1pm throw.

The Newtonmore goals were scored by Craig MacLeod, former Aberdeen University and Boleskine player Ewan Fraser, Cameron MacNiven and Iain Robinson.

A Max Campbell brace and Stuart Callison counted for Lochaber.

Strathspey Camanachd 3 Aberdour 5

Strathspey Camanachd welcomed Aberdour to a snowy Grantown Grammar School for a 1.30pm throw up.

The snowfall ahead of throw up could well have led to a postponement but both teams opted to brave the elements for what was a fine team building exercise.

Aberdour made a strong start, attacking their hosts but struggling to find the target.

'Dour were punished for their wastefulness when Strathspey, who gave debuts to a number of youngsters, went 1-0 up through Donald Colville.

The conditions made it difficult for both teams and Strathspey took their single goal advantage into the break.

The hosts made the better start to the second period and Donald Colville got his second to make it 2-0.

Aberdour fought their way back into the match and David MacKenzie pulled a goal back.

Strathspey restored their two-goal cushion when Dane Taylor found the net from distance.

'Dour, with five under-17 players in their squad, responded in the best possible way and went on to have their best period during the final 20 minutes of the match.

They got their reward as first Jamie Anderson and then a second from David MacKenzie made it 3-3.

Ally Abbott then put Aberdour ahead for the first time in the match and David MacKenzie grabbed a hat-trick goal to seal a 5-3 win.

Newtonmore P Kinlochshiel P

The match between Marine Harvest Premiership champions Kinlochshiel and 2016 league winners Newtonmore at the Eilan didn't go ahead.

North Skye P South Skye P

Skye Camanachd took the decision not to play the Ewen Morrison Memorial Cup match between North Skye and South Skye at Paic nan Laoch, Portree for fear of damaging the pitch ahead of their pre-season friendlies.

Liz Young Sixes

With six teams named for the popular Liz Young Sixes, it was the Blue team who took the honours following the 12.30pm start at Dalfaber.

The winning team was Owen Reid, Chris Holleyson, Rory MacGregor, Derek Young, Rachel Young, Jordan Reid, James Falconer, Somhairle Fraser and coach Barrie Dallas.

Strathspey Ladies are the champs

The final championship from the 2017 shinty season was decided when Lochaber Ladies and Strathspey Ladies met on Sunday February 4 with the Marine Harvest North Division 2 title at stake.

This 1.30pm throw-up was to take place at Grantown Grammar School but an unplayable field led to a venue reversal to



Inveraray's Lewis MacNicol shields the ball from Oban Camanachd's Willie Neilson during last Saturday's friendly match at Mossfield which the red and blacks won 3-0. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Spean Bridge. This play-off came about when the sides finished level at the top of the table at the end of the season.

A close first half finished goalless but Strathspey's Jessica Hart and then Jade Longworth got the goals that made the difference, cancelling out Anna Berardelli's effort for Lochaber, to clinch a 2-1 win.

Strathspey are promoted to the Marine Harvest National Division 1 as champions although a second placed finish would also have allowed a step-up as Lochaber are a reserve side and their first team already competes in the top flight.

Kilmurray in at Taynuilt

Taynuilt have confirmed that Gerry Kilmurray will be their assistant manager for the 2018 shinty season.

Kilmurray will assist boss Neil Gillies and the side follow up last weekend's friendly match with Oban Celtic with a game against Col Glen at the Taynuilt Sports Field this coming Saturday.

This weekend's fixtures

The latest round of pre-season friendly matches takes place on Saturday February 10.

There is an Oban derby to look forward to at Mossfield as Oban Camanachd and Oban Celtic lock horns in a 2pm throw-up.

There should be a good match at Ganavan where Marine Harvest South Division 1 champions Lochside Rovers play host to Glengarry, newly promoted to Marine Harvest North Division 1 after winning the North 2 title. Throw-up in this one is also at 2pm.

There is also an interesting tussle between Fort William and Lovat at An Aird with Balgait an option if Fort's home pitch is unplayable.

Inveraray are at home to Kinlochshiel whilst Strathglass have invited Skye Camanachd to Cannich.

Glasgow Mid Argyll host Newtonmore at Yoker whilst 'More's' Badenoch rivals Kingussie play Caberfeidh at The Dell.

The Skye Camanachd second team play Lewis Camanachd at Paic nan Laoch, Portree with the John 'Kaid' Maclean Cup once again at stake.

Taynuilt and Col Glen clash and there is a Badenoch reserve team derby between Newtonmore and Kingussie at The Eilan.

Celtic, Sutherland, Bullough and Strathdearn Cup draws announced

Glasgow Celtic Society Cup Draw

The Glasgow Celtic Society Cup draw has been announced. With just 10 teams taking part, there are just two first round ties before the seeded teams enter the competition. 2017 winners Kyles Athletic and runners up Oban Camanachd came out of the hat in opposite sides of the draw.

First Round - Saturday March 31

Col Glen v Taynuilt
Oban Celtic v Bute

Second Round - Saturday April 21

Oban Camanachd v Ballachulish
Oban Celtic / Bute v Glasgow Mid Argyll
Kyles Athletic v Tayforth
Col Glen / Taynuilt v Inveraray

Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup 1st Round Saturday April 7

Kingussie v Scots Camanachd
Lochside Rovers v Aberdour
Glasgow Mid Argyll v Caberfeidh
Lewis v Beaully
Kilmallie v Lochaber
Inverness v Lovat
Glenurquhart v Boleskine
Strathspey v Strachur
Fort William v Glenorchy
Kinlochshiel v Skye

Byes: Lochcarron, Newtonmore, Inveraray, Kyles Athletic, Strathglass, Bute.

Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup 2nd Round Saturday May 5

Newtonmore v Glenurquhart / Boleskine
Lochcarron v Fort William / Glenorchy
Lochside/Aberdour v Kyles Athletic
Strathglass v Inveraray
Bute v Kinlochshiel / Skye
Glasgow MA/Caberfeidh v Kingussie/Scots Camanachd
Kilmallie / Lochaber v Lewis / Beaully
Inverness / Lovat v Strathspey / Strachur

Bullough Cup 1st Round Saturday May 26

Glasgow Mid Argyll v Inveraray
Aberdour v Scots Camanachd

Byes: Bute, Kyles Athletic, Strachur, English Shinty Association, Lochside Rovers, Glenorchy

Bullough Cup 2nd Round Saturday June 16

Strachur v English Shinty Association
Bute v Glenorchy
Glasgow MA/Inveraray v Lochside Rovers
Aberdour/Scots Caman v Kyles Athletic

Strathdearn Cup 1st Round Saturday May 26

Lovat v Newtonmore
Glenurquhart v Beaully
Kingussie v Boleskine
Strathspey v Strathglass
Kilmallie v Caberfeidh
Inverness v Fort William
Lochcarron v Lochaber
Skye v Kinlochshiel

Strathdearn Cup 2nd Round Saturday June 30

Lovat / Newtonmore v Strathspey / Strathglass
Lochcarron / Lochaber v Skye / Kinlochshiel
Glenurquhart / Beaully v Inverness / Fort William
Kilmallie / Caberfeidh v Kingussie / Boleskine



In the wars - Oban Camanachd's Malcolm Clark with his head bandaged after an accidental clash. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Glencoe's Helen Nelson turns out for Scotland in Women's Six Nations

Wales	18
Scotland	17
Women's Six Nations	

GLENCOE'S Helen Nelson turned out for Scotland Women in the first game of the Six Nations on a cold but still day at Parc Eirias in North Wales with the home team just fighting off a determined Scottish comeback.

Scotland recorded a victory over Wales in the last campaign in a tense and tight affair at Broadwood and both sides were eager to show what they are capable of in this year's championship.

A cagey opening start from Scotland gave the home team plenty of possession but they seemed to have escaped without conceding when they cleared their lines.

Patient build-up

It wasn't long before Wales came again, however, and worked the ball well down the wing after some patient build-up to score in the corner.

A couple of strong lineout drives put the Welsh backs in good space but a dropped ball in space let off the narrow Scottish defence. The visiting scrum, which had struggled up to this point, was much firmer

this time round and Helen Nelson was able to find a good touch.

The Scots' scrum continued to grow and with it some confidence in open play and they enjoyed their best period of play so far. But to no avail as a loose kick to the Welsh back three gave the hosts possession to build from.

Some good defence from Scotland ended in a penalty to Wales as some aggressive work over the ball was pulled up for the tackler not releasing. The chance was duly converted by Evans to stretch Wales' lead to eight.

Scotland were gifted a platform from the restart when Wales knocked forward in their 22 and consistent Welsh infringements gave Scotland penalties and subsequent lineouts on the five-metre line.

They carried patiently and powerfully but Wales were equal to them and held out before a head injury assessment for Wales' debutant Jade Knight caused a break in play.

The visitors restarting scrum held firm but came to nothing as they were penalised for a ball carrier not releasing.

Once again, play moved back into Scottish territory but a

fumble, hack and spill trying to gather the ball gave Scotland's resurgent scrum the opportunity to win a penalty and clear.

With minutes left on the clock, Wales were able to capitalise on some messy play to drive deeper into Scottish territory and set themselves up with a scrum penalty.

The quick tap was effective, and Hannah Bluck scored to round off the half.

Half time: Wales 13-0 Scotland.

A number of positional and personnel changes at half time seemed to spark Scotland into action.

Debut

With Siobhan McMillan on for her debut and the more experienced Sarah Law and Lana Skeldon coming on to the park the visitors seemed to hit their straps.

Scotland put a kickable penalty in the corner and a well-worked try through the hands put Chloe Rollie in to record their first points of the match.

Another break for the Scots wasn't far behind and things were looking positive but Wales struck back ruthlessly.

Overpowered at the scrum, Scotland were get caught defending narrowly and Lake

Women's rugby

finished a simple score.

Looking for fresh legs to bolster energy levels, more subs saw Jodie Rettie and Siobhan Cattigan come on for their international bows.

A turnover forced in midfield saw Hannah Smith attacking at pace and give a late pop to Thomson who floated it out to Rollie creating a fantastic score to draw the teams back to an eight-point margin.

Scotland kept coming and they once more found themselves within striking distance. A thumping tackle that the vocal travelling support thought was high forced a fumble from Thomson and Wales seemed to have escaped the danger.

However, another spill from the home side opened the door and Scotland bludgeoned over, Sarah Law's conversion bringing them to the brink of a startling comeback.

Wales were giving as good as they got and sustained pressure was only halted by ferocious defence and opportunism, making a half break of a loose pass before turning the ball over once more.

The visitors were able to force



Helen Nelson in action during a recent game against Spain.

one more opportunity when they turned over with seconds remaining but a pilfer from Wales with the clock red was

enough for them to hold on for the win.

Full time: Wales 18-17 Scotland.

Scotland Women welcome France in round two of the Women's Six Nations at Scotstoun on Saturday February 10.

Emotional day for all at Tarbert

Tarbert	2
Easthall Star	1
SAFL Premier Division 2	

LAST Saturday Tarbert welcomed Easthall Star to Cil Andreis for their first match since the tragic sinking of the Nancy Glen fishing boat.

Both teams and a huge home support took part in a two-minute applause pre-match for the men who are still missing, one of whom, Duncan MacDougall, was a huge part of Tarbert Football Club for more than 30 years.

Soft conditions underfoot meant that it wasn't going to be a day for silky passing football, however, the opening goal of the game was a fine piece of play. Tarbert battled well to win the ball in midfield and a



Tarbert and Easthall players hold a two minute applause before the game.

defence-splitting through-ball allowed Johnson to race into the box and square for the unmarked Nikki MacDougall to tap home.

A couple of fine saves from Selfridge in the Tarbert goal kept the home side ahead of the team sitting third in the league table until the half hour mark when a fairly tame effort managed to slip into the Tarbert net to make the half time score 1-1.

Further inspirational words at half time upped the tempo in the second half and Tarbert took more control of the ball. Some half chances came and went but the bulk of the play was centred around tough tackling and each team battling to

regain possession. Some feisty challenges were flying in which would come to boiling point later in the game but on the hour mark, Tarbert took the lead.

Some hesitation in the Easthall defence allowed MacKinnon to nip in and round the keeper before slotting into the empty net and sending the home crowd into raptures.

This was no more than Tarbert deserved given the effort and application shown throughout the match and proved to be decisive in the end.

The last half an hour of the match was full of fouls as the away side grew more and more frustrated and it came to a head with 15 minutes to go as

Football

Selfridge and the Easthall forward were both shown straight red cards.

One further chance fell to Tarbert late on to seal the result but in the end 2-1 was enough for the three points and a fitting end to a very emotional day.

This weekend Tarbert are away to Port Glasgow on league duty. Fundraising efforts continue in support of the Nancy Glen campaign with various raffles and other events underway - any contributions are most appreciated and welcome at this difficult time.

Double up for Dunoon

THE ANNUAL badminton team championship, the Argyll Cup, in its 68th year, was recently competed for in Lochgilphead.

Teams from Oban, Dunoon and a combined Mid-Argyll/Campbeltown come together to compete for the two trophies, the A Team and the C Team (folklore suggests there might never have been a B team cup).

Grueling

Five pairs of mixed doubles from each association compete in a gruelling round robin format which sees each couple compete in a minimum of 20 sets of badminton with the energy-sapping thought of a possible 30 games. All told there were a possible 150 matches to be played in just eight hours on five courts. Quite a day's badminton.

Things were fairly tight in both competitions until about

2pm when, on the strength of just three or four games, the pendulum swung in Dunoon's favour with both trophies finally being secured with a handful of games left to play. At this stage it became (as the Tartan Army famously say) 'mathematically impossible' for them to be caught.

At the after-tournament dinner, generously hosted by Lochgilphead Bowling Club in its pavilion, the awards were handed to the triumphant team captains.

Cowal Badminton Association stalwart Gordon McKinnon delivered some carefully chosen and very kind words, complimenting all competitors on the standard of play and all involved for keeping the tournament going in the spirit it was intended.

A new trophy was awarded for the first time this year with

Badminton

Campbeltown's Stephanie Mitchell receiving the Charlie Ellis Prize for Sporting Excellence with the winner chosen by Charlie himself.

Pledges

The proceeds from the tournament together with pledges received on the day and from Lochgilphead Bowling Club in the evening, saw a donation of £650 made to the Nancy Glen fund via the Clyde Fishermen's Trust Just Giving page. Mid-Argyll Badminton Association would like to thank all involved for their generosity and help on the day.

Final Scores: A Team - Dunoon 29, Oban 24, Mid-Argyll/Campbeltown 18, C-Team - Dunoon 35, Oban 28, Mid-Argyll/Campbeltown

Youngsters encouraged to become next generation of sporting influencers

YOUNG people in the Argyll and Bute area have the opportunity to help influence and shape the future of Scottish sport by applying to become a member of one of the country's leading sporting programmes.

Led by sportscotland, and supported by Young Scot and The National Lottery, the programme is a national platform created to represent a voice of young people across the country.

With 2018 designated the Year of Young People, the sport panel is more determined than ever to ensure that

young people across Scotland get the chance to have their voices heard.

As the national search begins to recruit new panel members, Eilidh Gibson, a 22-year-old from Perth, said: 'I came to the panel with a real passion for promoting gender equality in sport. We formed a women's and girls' working group to try and increase opportunities in sport for these groups and raise awareness of the benefits of sport to all women and girls across Scotland.'

'We have had the opportunity to

shape content for Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Week in 2017, creating social media content and writing articles for sportscotland and Young Scot websites.'

In 2016, sport panel members had the chance to input on national policy by attending sportscotland board meetings and were introduced to public health and sport minister Aileen Campbell MSP at the Scottish Parliament where they had the opportunity to take part in a Q&A session with Ms Campbell, discussing how to

raise the profile of sport among young people across the country.

They were also part of Scotland's homecoming event to mark the success of the Scots on Team GB and Paralympics GB at the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio in 2016.

Last year saw the panel work on four key project areas; women's and girls' sport, disability sport, community sport hubs and active schools. They also consulted on the new safeguarding standards for children and young people in sport with Children First.

Stewart Harris, chief executive of sportscotland, said: 'It's been an amazing experience working with our young people's sport panel. The commitment and passion these young people have for sport is incredible.'

'We're looking for passionate and ambitious young people who have the drive to really make a difference in Scottish sport. If this sounds like you or someone you know, we'd love to invite you to be part of our team.'

Young Scot CEO Louise Macdonald said: 'It's a wonderful opportunity

Future of sport

- especially for young people who have faced barriers to sport and young people who want to represent Scotland's diversity and I'd encourage all to apply.'

Applications for the young people's sport panel are now open for young people aged between 14-23 years and will close on Thursday February 22 at noon. Visit www.sportscotland.org.uk/sportpanel to apply.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3500

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

F McCormick
Catalina Ave
Oban

C MacIntyre
Quiraing View
Skye

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

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.

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



Please tape your £1 coin here (only if posting)

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Address
Tel No.

Saints reach last 16 of Scottish Cup

Kilbride Thistle	2
Oban Saints	3
Scottish Amateur Cup - 6th round	

OBAN Saints bounced back in defiant style from their midweek Scottish Amateur Football League Jimmy Marshall Trophy defeat at the hands of Argyll rivals Lochgilphead Red Star to book their place in the last 16 of the Scottish Amateur Cup at Kilwinning Sports Club last Saturday.

Hosts Kilbride Thistle from West Kilbride had already claimed some significant scalps on an impressive run to the sixth round of the Scottish Amateur Football Association's blue ribbon event and looked sure to pose a major threat to Saints cup aspirations. However, a first-ever goal from 17-year-old Daniel MacCuish ultimately proved to be the difference between the teams as Saints edged out the Ayrshire Amateur Football Association Premier League title hopefuls by the odd goal in five.

Kilbride Thistle kicked off attacking the pavilion end but it was Saints who were first to threaten with a dangerous Willie Gemmell free-kick onto the six-yard line after Daniel MacCuish had been impeded by Blair Grey. Jack McWilliams nipped in ahead of Donald Campbell and made a vital headed clearance to deny the Saints skipper an early strike on goal.

The hosts won the first corner kick of the match on their left in the seventh minute when Alex Craik headed a long ball over the top behind. Thistle failed to capitalise on the set-piece opportunity with the ball drifting harmlessly out of play on the opposite flank. From the throw-in Saints launched a swift counter with Willie Gemmell and Scott Maitland linking up to send Craig MacEwan away on the left. MacEwan's dinked effort from edge of the box left Thistle keeper Ryan Harvie rooted to the spot as the ball landed agonisingly on top of the crossbar and bounced behind for a goal kick.

The home side took the lead in the 12th minute from their first meaningful attack of the match.

Striker Ryan Wilson, who remained a handful throughout, got away from Paul Carmichael on the Thistle right and fired a low cross along the six-yard line which skipper and fellow Ayrshire Select member Darren Frye turned in at the back post.

Saints replied just three minutes later after Cameron Rainey had knocked a Myles

McAuley throw-in behind for a corner-kick. Willie Gemmell's in-swing from the left was glanced on in the six-yard box by Kyle Finnie with Donald Campbell first to react to the loose ball. From a tight angle on the edge of the six-yard box Campbell's left-foot half-volley was saved by the outstretched left boot of Ryan Harvie at the expense of another corner kick.

From the opposite corner flag Willie Gemmell went deeper looking for Paul Carmichael whose attempted return ball was deflected wide for another corner. Gemmell's delivery was this time met perfectly by the head



Determination written all over Matty Kelly's face as he wins this header.

of Craig MacEwan who nodded the ball past the stranded Ryan Harvie and into the unguarded net.

Saints number one Graham 'Sugar' Douglas produced a smart save to deny Kyle Finnie in the 19th minute from a Ryan Wilson cut-back from the left. From Sugar's clearance Saints immediately broke up-field with Donald Campbell drawing another good save from Ryan Harvie.

Jack Sillars broke up a promising Saints move in the 22nd minute making a vital interception to prevent Myles McAuley from making his way into the

Football

box. Darren Frye then quickly turned defence into attack with another ball up to Ryan Wilson who got away on the right again. Wilson's cutback sat up well for Kyle Finnie but the supporting midfielder sliced his right foot effort wide of target.

Two minutes later Daniel MacCuish held the ball up well for Myles McAuley to join the attack and pick out Donald Campbell on the left. Unfortunately Campbell's lofted ball to the back post was fractionally too high for Craig MacEwan who couldn't direct his header on target. Saints kept pressing forward with Myles McAuley coming close to adding to his fourth and fifth round goals with a left-foot shot which slipped inches wide of Ryan Harvie's right hand post.

As the first half wore on the two sides continued to serve up an entertaining spectacle for the small crowd who had gathered at the excellent Kilwinning Sports Club facility. Among the interested spectators were exiled Obanites Brian 'Gleik' McGleish and Iain 'Tanno' MacDonald who had come along to lend their support.

Despite Saints looking reasonably comfortable in possession it was the hosts who came closest to adding to the scoring with another lightning quick counter attack in the 38th minute. Not for the first time Thistle managed to break up a Saints attack midway inside their own half and feed the ball quickly to danger man Ryan Wilson. The pacy striker left Alex Craik trailing in his wake and raced into the box where Graham Douglas made a perfectly timed fingertip interception at Wilson's feet to push the ball wide. The loose ball was eventually picked up by the supporting Scott Hindmarsh but, with Douglas now safely back in his goal and the Saints defence returning in numbers, Hindmarsh shot tamely into the side netting.

Saints kicked off the second half and were immediately on the attack with Craig MacEwan winning a free-kick 30 yards from goal. Paul Carmichael got his head to Willie Gemmell's high ball to the back post but could only help it on its way behind for a goal-kick.

Steven MacLeod regained possession for Saints from Ryan Harvie's long clearance and fed Myles McAuley in the centre circle who sent Matthew Kelly breaking forward. Kelly picked



Paul Carmichael, Scott Maitland, Matty Kelly and Craig MacEwan congratulate Daniel McCuish after the youngster had put Saints 3-1 in front. Match report and photos Derek Black

out Craig MacEwan 22 yards from goal who held the ball up well before laying off to Donald Campbell who rifled a terrific first time right foot shot past the despairing left hand of Ryan Harvie to give Saints the lead.

In the 51st minute referee Scott Bunting produced his first yellow card of the afternoon for an extremely late sliding challenge on Alex Craik by Alexander Sommerville inside the centre circle.

The hosts had the ball in the net in the 55th minute, however, Mr Bunting, who handled the match well under the close scrutiny of an Scottish Football Association referee's assessor, correctly ruled the 'goal' out for a foul on Graham Douglas by Ryan Wilson.

A set-piece from Thistle skipper Darren Frye wide on the right almost proved to be Saints undoing as Blair Grey was allowed to steal in unmarked at the back post and turn the ball back along the six-yard box but thankfully just too far in front of the outstretched right boot of Cameron Rainey.

Kyle Finnie joined Alexander Sommerville in the referee's notebook for another heavy challenge on Daniel MacCuish in the 63rd minute.

Putting in another good shift in the busy midfield area Matthew Kelly won a good opportunity for Willie Gemmell to test Ryan Harvie with the dead ball. Gemmell's effort from 30 yards succeeded in clearing the four-man Thistle wall but unfortunately kept rising and cleared not only the crossbar but also the perimeter fencing.

With just 10 minutes of the 90 remaining Ryan Harvie pulled off the save of the match to deny Craig MacEwan. Scott Maitland and Daniel MacCuish linked up well to feed MacEwan whose attempted lob from 25 yards looked certain to catch the keeper off his line but the big

man adjusted his feet well to get back and finger tip the ball over his crossbar.

Myles McAuley picked up Saints first caution of the match in the 81st minute with Ryan Wilson heading the resulting free-kick harmlessly behind.

Thistle goalkeeper Ryan Harvie's earlier good work was undone in the 83rd minute when his touch let him down dealing with a back pass. Daniel MacCuish was the grateful recipient of Harvie's beneficence easily



Two former Obanites now living in Ayrshire Brian 'Gleik' McGleish and Iain 'Tanno' MacDonald were interested spectators at the game.

beating the keeper and rolling the ball into the empty net to open his Saints goal scoring account.

It was certainly a 'head in hands' moment for the big keeper and in no other position on the field can you go from hero to zero with such devastating effect despite an otherwise flawless performance.

Matthew Kelly pushed the patience of Mr Bunting too far when he continued his protests after a forlorn free-kick appeal midway inside the Thistle half. Kelly became the fourth name in the referee's notebook and to compound the agony a free-kick to the home side immediately followed to heap pressure on the

Saints rearguard.

Despite having kept the Thistle danger man under better control in the second half the Saints defence failed to deal with Ryan Wilson's aerial threat from the set-piece with the tall striker winning a knock-down to second half substitute Scott Bell who lashed the bouncing ball high into the roof of the net to give the home side an 85th minute lifeline.

Daniel MacCuish made way for Kerr Newbigging in the 88th minute moments after Darren Frye had tested Graham Douglas with a dipping volley which the Saints keeper was happy to push over his crossbar.

Joining the action in an unaccustomed striker's role, Kerr Newbigging almost immediately added to his midweek strike against Lochgilphead Red Star.

After powering away from Blair Grey in the middle of the park, Newbigging also outpaced Glenn Lewis to crash a fierce right foot strike, which had the keeper well beaten, strike off the left hand upright.

While the advantage remained at one goal the prospect of yet another Scottish Amateur Cup replay for the Saints home faithful to savour loomed large.

However, the experience gained from consistently reaching the later stages of the national cup competition was enough for Alex Craik and his charges to see off the youthful challenge of a good Kilbride Thistle side and clinch their place in the last 16.

This Saturday Saints stay on cup action this time in the West of Scotland Cup when they take on Caledonian League side Woodhall Thistle for a place in the last 16.

Kick-off at Glencruitten is 1.30pm with extra time and penalties, if required to see who goes through to the next round.

Referee in charge is the experienced James Gallacher from Dumbarton.

Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup, 6th round - Kilbride Thistle 2, Oban Saints 3; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils 2, Rutherglen 1; Premier Division Two - Castlemilk 0, Lochgilphead Red Star 3; Tarbert 2, Easthall Star 1.

This Saturday's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup, 5th round - Oban Saints v Woodhall Thistle; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils no game; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v Houston; Port Glasgow OBU v Tarbert.

Saints' youth team results and fixtures

LAST weekend's results: Scottish Cup, quarter final - Grassroots Development Coaching 8, Under 13s 1. Scoring for Saints was Kyle Cooper. League - Renton Craigandro 1, Under 14s 7. Saints scorers were Ross Higgins (2), Innes MacDonald, John MacDonald, John Douglas, Owen MacCorquodale and Kieran Denholme. League - Cambuslang 0, Under 15s 9.

On target for Saints were Conor Moore (4), Toby MacFarlane Barrow, Fergus Carmichael, Szymon Chmielecki, Ryan Barclay and Ruairidh Munro. Regional Cup - Mill United v Under 16s. Walkover to Mill United. League - Drumchapel United 2, Under 17s 6. Saints marksmen were Cameron Kerr (3), Cameron Hill (2) and Rory Dowd.

Next weekend's fixtures: Dumbarton Riverside v Under 13s; Under 14s no game; Under 15s v Cambuslang; Under 16s v Helensburgh; Under 17s v Ardencaple.



Craig MacEwan heads this Willie Gemmell corner into the net to make the score 1-1.

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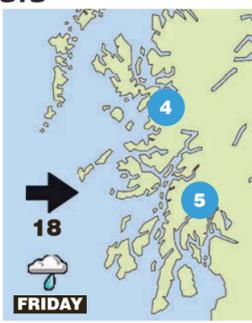
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WEATHER

Thursday	Light rain Winds moderate West South Westerly Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.
Friday	Cloudy with light rain showers Winds strong Westerly Temperatures 2°C to 5°C.
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain showers on Saturday Sleet showers on Sunday Winds strong South South Westerly Temperatures 1°C to 5°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 8, 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			
Thu 05.11	1.5 10.55	3.0 18.01	1.8	23.51	2.9	Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Fri 06.09	1.7 12.21	2.8 19.14	1.9	** ** *	**	Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Sat 01.37	2.9 07.19	1.9 14.37	2.8	20.50	1.9	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Sun 02.51	3.0 08.56	1.8 15.40	3.0	21.53	1.7	Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mon 03.43	3.2 10.09	1.7 16.11	3.2	22.36	1.5				
Tues 04.25	3.4 10.53	1.5 16.45	3.4	23.12	1.3				
Wed 05.04	3.7 11.28	1.3 17.21	3.6	23.44	1.1				

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

LOCHABER TIMES

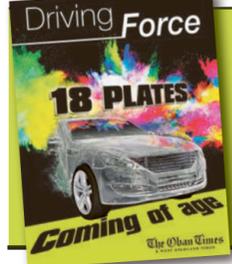
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Town 'apathy' prompts event organisers to cancel Fort Con

NEILL BO FINLAYSON
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

ORGANISERS of Fort William's annual comic convention have cancelled this year's event, claiming there was a 'lack of support' and 'apathy' from the town.

Last September, hundreds of fans from across the UK flocked to the Nevis Centre in Fort William to take part in Fort Con – one of the biggest pop culture events in the Highlands.

However, in a public announcement last Friday, organisers confirmed the 2018 event has been scrapped.

The announcement, released via the Fort Con Facebook page, stated: 'Some of us live in the town and it has been our long-standing belief that Fort William and the Highlands was a great location for this event. It seems we were wrong. There is very minimal support. Nothing we can do will change decades of event apathy in the region.'

'We are literally heartbroken that we can no longer continue to run this event. This was our baby but without that support and the attacks from other people and businesses, we cannot go on.'

The statement also claimed local businesses have 'no real interest in the event' and that because of high accommodation rates in Fort William, 'nothing is now conducive to running an event of this scale' in the area.

Fort Con is an annual celebration of comic books, television shows and films which has featured famous sci-fi film and TV stars in previous years.

The organising team estimates the event has boosted the local

economy by £78,000 in the past two years.

Event director Ben Belton told the *Lochaber Times* of his deep disappointment, saying the 'intricate reasons are too many to behold' but 'the main reason is lack of support'.

'We have more support in the south of England for Fort Con than in the Highlands. Why is it that people hundreds and thousands of miles away see the benefit of an event like this but locals don't?' he asked.

'You can't change decades of the cultural mentality that there isn't a relevant world outside of this town. Well, there is and we tried to bring that relevancy here and it wasn't accepted.'

Mr Belton, a director at UK comic con company Alliance Conventions, said the cost of maintaining the convention, which is upwards of £30,000, is no longer worth it and would be detrimental to his company and the potential for future events.

He explained: 'I would struggle to see the purpose of rallying people together in this part of the world when the apathy shown from almost all businesses, council, local press and local people means nothing happens outside of A82 protests, indie rallies, charities and outdoor sports events. We've worked real hard in the town to try and change things, but to no avail. We can't help turn Fort William into anything more than that middle place it always wants to remain.'

There was widespread response to the news on the Fort Con Facebook page, with most comments expressing their regret at the decision to cancel the event and offering support.

Crackdown on Mount Alexander fly tipping



Waste crime investigator Kath McDowall sifts through illegally-dumped material on site at Mount Alexander last week as part of efforts to identify the origin of the waste and those responsible. Full story on page five.

Monkeytron Collective, regular exhibitors at conventions across the country, said: 'We were really sad to hear this news today. The whole Monkeytron family were looking forward to returning to Fort Con.'

And Ali Docherty commented: 'Absolutely gutted. My daughter and myself have looked forward to Fort Con the last two years and have always thought it would just get bigger and better.'

People were shocked at the news, considering the high turnout last year, with Fiona Ball adding: 'I was at the last two Fort Cons and on the crowds I would say that's support!' Mr Belton has not given up

hope of hosting future conventions in Fort William, saying: 'If there is a way for us to garner support for Fort Con in the background, then we can build a mandate to bring back the event in 2019.'

Derailment probe starts

INVESTIGATIONS into a derailment caused by a landslip at Loch Eilt in January have begun.

On Monday January 22, a passenger train travelling between Arisaig and Glenfinnan struck a landslip, causing the leading carriage to derail. The five passengers on board escaped uninjured.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) said: 'The accident happened in darkness following a period when significant snow melt occurred at the same time as moderately heavy rainfall.'

'The landslip originated above the railway boundary. A proportion of the several hundred tonnes of material that slipped was deposited on the railway. This destroyed a section of a fence installed recently to protect the railway from loose boulders rolling down the adjacent slope.'

The investigation will seek to identify the sequence of events which led to the accident and will consider arrangements for protecting the railway from landslip debris at the site, Network Rail's procedures for managing the effects of adverse weather and any other underlying factors.

The investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry or by the industry's regulator, the Office of Rail and Road.

The RAIB will publish its findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation.

This report will be available on its website. See page three.



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School supplies secure despite wood pellet shortage

HIGHLAND Council has said a current Europe-wide shortage of wood pellets will not affect schools in Lochaber which have biomass heating systems installed, after sufficient supplies were secured.

A dozen schools and other council properties across Lochaber have biomass heating systems. However, a local authority spokesperson assured the *Lochaber Times*: 'The council has secured fuel supplies of pellet and chips from our heating contractor and is unaffected by any shortage.'

Schools and other council premises in Lochaber which have biomass heating systems installed are Arisaig Primary School, Caol Community Campus, Charles Kennedy Building, Eigg Primary School, Fort William Gaelic Primary School, Inverlochy Primary School, Invernevis House Resource Centre, Lochaber High School, Lochaber Lei-

sure Centre, Lochaline Primary School, Lochside RC Primary School and Lundavra Primary School.

According to the UK Pellet Council, January saw the UK experiencing large-scale shortages across the market, in particular with bagged wood pellets, with most bagged suppliers providing 50 per cent or less of their typical winter volumes. The Europe-wide shortage of wood fibre, from which pellets are made, has severely restricted supply and massively increased the cost of pellets at point of manufacture.

The key reasons for the shortages are unseasonably warm and wet weather, including flooding, in many European forests, causing timber operations to be halted. Timber contractors rely on frozen ground to support their heavy machinery in these the forests, otherwise the equipment gets bogged down. And with the

UK being a net importer of pellets, it is causing shortages of bagged pellets here.

One Ballachulish resident said she had been informed there would be no more bagged pellets available from her usual supplier until April and was advised to try elsewhere. 'We were then told by someone else we'd have to order a minimum of 100 bags at a time from a supplier in Ireland and we just don't have the space to store that much,' she said.

'It might be alright for the council and other users of pellets in bulk but what are ordinary householders meant to do – freeze?'

Describing the situation as a 'perfect storm for the pellet market' this year, the UK Pellet Council says this winter has also seen a number of new biomass-fuelled power stations in Europe come online, creating created significant demand for the same raw material.

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Whale of a mission for Banavie scientists in icy South Atlantic

MARK ENTWISTLE
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THE ICY waters of the South Atlantic can be some of the most inhospitable and dangerous seas on the planet, but an eight-strong team of whale researchers, half of who have Fort William connections, is currently aboard a survey sailing vessel braving these hostile waters off South Georgia.

The international team, led by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), is carrying out the first scientific whale survey since whaling stopped in the area in the 1970s.

The target of the five-week expedition is the region's southern right whale populations which were decimated after nearly 300 years of hunting in the South Atlantic.

The team of eight researchers and three crew are aboard the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) research vessel *Song of the Whale* to investigate the health of the animals in their feeding grounds.

In addition, they hope to solve the puzzle of why large numbers of dead southern right whale calves have washed up on the shores around Argentina in the last decade.

The crew includes Banavie-based husband and wife researchers Russell Leaper and Susannah Calderan, as well as Inverloch skipper Brian Morrison and engineer, Mat Jerram, who grew up in Fort William.

Russell will be known to many in Kilmallie as secretary of the community council.

A mathematician by profession, Russell, who grew up in London, has worked as a freelance consultant to the IFAW for the last 30 years and has been a member of the scientific committee of the International Whaling Commission since 1996 and a long-time member of its UK delegation. He studied mathematics at Oxford University before first joining *Song of the Whale* in 1988 to study sperm whales. He initially worked on developing acoustic methods to study and count whales and his subsequent research has covered a wide range of marine mammal conservation and welfare issues with an emphasis on survey methods and population assessment.

More recently he has been



Russell searching for blue whales in the Antarctic on a previous expedition. Photograph: Paula Olson.

working to address threats to whales from underwater noise and collisions with shipping and has authored more than 30 scientific publications and presented more than 50 papers at international conferences.

In the South Atlantic, photo-identifications and satellite tagging have revealed seasonal migrations of right whales between South Georgia waters and their calving ground at Peninsula Valdés in Argentina.

However, this area has had notably high calf mortalities, and a growing body of evidence suggests that South Georgia environmental conditions directly influence the breeding success of these whales.

The team will locate the whales using advanced acoustics and, once found, will take photographs for photo-identification, collect skin samples, and attach satellite tags to identify and track the marine leviathans.

Team members will also fly drones over the whales to assess their body condition and general state of health.

The southern right whale is so-called as historically they were the 'right' whales to hunt owing to their slow swimming speed, inquisitive nature which

“Susannah and I will be using acoustic equipment to try and locate whales. We've done that with blue whales”

Russell Leaper

led them to commonly approach whaling vessels and because they floated once killed. Their oil was used by industry in a wide variety of products including lamps and vehicles, margarine and soap. The South Georgia Right Whale project spans two

consecutive years and has two research aims. The first is the EU-funded SWIM project to carry out a health check of the southern right whales that use the feeding grounds around South Georgia and find out where they are feeding. The second, funded by Darwin Plus, aims to discover if the species is in recovery.

How a mathematician like Russell came to be involved as an international whale expert living in Banavie began with a life-long love of sailing.

'I first got involved with the IFAW after it bought a sailing boat as a research vessel back in 1987, called *Song of the Whale*,' Russell told the *Lochaber Times* during a break from packing for the trip.

'I had done a lot of sailing before, so was interested in the sailing side as well as the science side, and I ended up actually skippering that boat for them for a few years, mainly in the North Atlantic. Spending such a lot of time at sea sailing, you often see whales and seeing them up close made me want to learn more about them.'

Part of that period in Russell's life was spent working in the waters around the Azores, stud-

ying sperm whales. The focus of those projects was the use of underwater acoustics.

'Sound is the most important sense for whales and you can gather a lot of information from listening to them and you can do it remotely without causing disturbance to the animals. I am a mathematician by training which is really quite useful for this type of work because a huge amount of maths and statistics are involved in interpreting biological data. It has become my niche and with the acoustic work, you need a good understanding of the physics of sound.'

'When I went to university I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do but I'd always enjoyed maths and knew it would let me fit into a lot of other disciplines.'

The current *Song of the Whale* is the second IFAW vessel to carry the name and was custom-built to be one of the quietest boats of its type with even the engine and propeller designed to be muffled to prevent them disturbing the giant cetaceans.

Russell explained: 'There is a lot of advantages to using this type of boat for this sort of project - as well as being quiet it has a very tall mast which is really important as it makes

it easier for the radio aerial to receive signals from acoustic sonar buoys.'

On the growing concern over the last 10 years about the number of calves washed up dead, he said: 'As a result of those deaths, scientists in Argentina and Chile got together a management plan through the IWC, so we are contributing to that and the first results of our project, once collated and analysed, will be presented to the scientific committee of IWC.'

'A lot is known about the breeding grounds of the species but very little on their feeding grounds and South Georgia is known to be an important feeding area for them.'

'Southern right whales and northern right whales are very similar. The northern population was heavily reduced by whaling and has never fully recovered. There are still only about 450 northern right whales but the southern species recovered very well and is growing at about six or seven percent every year since whaling stopped. It is only recently there have been some concerns because of these dead calves being found.'

Russell's wife, Susannah, is a marine mammal biologist and world expert on whale acoustics and he says they have always enjoyed working together.

'We work from home as there is a lot of data to analyse. We are trying to focus on addressing threats to whales. The fact that we can go on trips like these together is much better and we've always enjoyed working together. Generally we are on one trip to the Antarctic a year. There is quite a narrow window weather-wise and these trips take a lot of planning. Down there at the moment it is mid to late summer and probably the warmest time of the year - and hopefully the calmest as the winds round South Georgia can be very strong and that can be the biggest problem.'

'Susannah and I will be using acoustic equipment to try and locate whales. We've done that successfully with blue whales.'

'We are able to detect them from several hundred miles away and direct the ship to them.'

'The key thing is get photos of known individual whales so we can compare them with this well known catalogue of animals from Argentina.'

WHAT'S ON IN LOCHABER

LOCHABER residents will get the chance to see the acclaimed documentary film *Resilience* in Fort William thanks to the Stramash Social Enterprise.

The film explores the insights science is gaining about the long-term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) which scientists say is one of the leading causes of everything from heart disease and cancer to substance abuse and depression.

The event on Saturday February 10 at Kilmallie Free Church in Caol consists of two parts. First, people will get the chance to view *Resilience*, which makes clear the hidden struggles 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 starts at 10.30am and runs until 1.30pm, with tickets priced £15.

STAFF and volunteers from Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC) for sight and hearing support will be in Ardnarnachan on Monday February 12.

The outreach team will be at Acharacle Medical Centre from 10.30am to 11.30am and at Strontian Medical Centre from 12.30pm until 1.30pm. At both venues 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 refuting for hearing aids if required. No appointment necessary.

FORT William residents are encouraged to give blood at a donation session at the Nevis Centre this Wednesday, February 14. From 1.30pm to 4pm and 5pm to 7.15pm, a team will be on hand to take blood donations. To book your appointment call 03459 090999. Bookings must be made by 4pm the day before your session.

KILMALLIE Community Centre committee is calling on gardeners and volunteers to help at another session to restore Kilmallie Community Gardens on Saturday February 17. Contact Sarah Kennedy on 07768 805040 for more information.

THE VINTAGE Motor Cycle Club (VMCC) is active in Scotland and a meeting to consider setting up a new section in North Argyll and Lochaber is due to take place next month.

Anyone with an interest in old motorcycles is invited, whether or not they are VMCC members. Go along to the Alexandra Hotel, The Parade, Fort William, at 7.30pm on Friday February 23.

The VMCC's national president Rodney Hann will chair the meeting. President-elect Alastair Alexander will also attend. Contact Chris Jones on 07768 268854, email cjhoneshome@btinternet.com for more details.



On one occasion, *Song of the Whale* had to be broken free from the frozen Caledonian Canal.



A southern right whale in the south Atlantic. Photograph: Dave Allen

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View from the Chamber

LOCHABER Chamber of Commerce, representing the Outdoor Capital of the UK, is proud to support the Fort William Mountain Festival which runs from February 21 to 25 and marks the 16th year it has been held in Fort William.

The Fort William Mountain Festival exists to create and promote opportunities for people to share and find inspiration in mountain experiences, ideas and visions to promote the understanding and appreciation of the world's mountain places and mountain communities.

Every February, festival audiences and participants are treated to inspiring presentations on a wide range of outdoor pursuits, adrenaline-filled and thought-provoking outdoor films, skills workshops and masterclasses from top instructors and an inspiring arts programme.

It is an important event for all local



businesses as it attracts more than 2,000 people to the area over the five days and firmly places Lochaber as The Outdoor Capital of the UK.

It celebrates the mountains and the outdoor lifestyle that surrounds all of us daily, and encourages visitors to come back and enjoy the scenery and activities.

Well-known writer and broadcaster Cameron McNeish will be recognised

for his contribution to mountain culture when he receives this year's prestigious 'Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture' at a special event at the festival.

With biking, climbing and running and lots more besides, there is something for everyone with a taste for the outdoors. This year's festival is presented in association with Nevis Landscape Partnership, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and the Highland Council.

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce represents businesses throughout Lochaber with a focus on encouraging economic growth, job creation and promoting Lochaber as a great place to live, work, study and visit.

For more information on this year's Mountain Festival visit www.mountainfestival.co.uk

January sees bumper season on Lochaber's ski slopes

MARK ENTWISTLE
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THIS winter, nature has already provided a brilliant snowy bonus for Lochaber's two mountain ski areas.

January saw many of Scotland's skiers and snowboarders making their way to the country's five mountain ski areas, including Glencoe and Nevis Range, where they enjoyed superb conditions, including waist-deep powder at the latter.

Glenshee, The Lecht and CairnGorm Mountain have also enjoyed great conditions.

Chairman of Ski-Scotland Andy Meldrum said: 'We predicted that, following a disappointing season last year, there would be good snow this winter.'

'Great snow and weather conditions in early January brought out skiers and snowboarders who'd been frustrated last season.'

'It's almost like there's a pent-up desire to come sliding at one or other of our five mountain resorts.'

That demand has been reflected in skier and snowboarder numbers, recorded as 'skier days' by the snowsports resorts.

Already last year's season total has been surpassed. Results are also way ahead of the previous

season (2015-16) and hot on the heels of the very successful winter of 2014-15.

'It's ironic really,' continued Mr Meldrum, 'that three of our ski areas have obtained the use of Technoalpin snow factories to make snow in marginal conditions and yet nature has delivered natural snow for all of our resorts. Long may that continue.'

Technoalpin is an Italian company which has created its snow factories to produce snow at warmer temperatures and at lower altitude - ideal for Scotland's mountain snowsports areas.

The snow is produced using an innovative heat exchanger to cool the water to freezing point without the need for any chemical additives.

As the refrigeration circuit remains closed, snow can be produced in any outdoor temperature.

And Mr Meldrum added: 'We expect interest to grow as a result of the Winter Olympic Games which start in Pyeong-Chang tomorrow (February 9).'

'Ski-Scotland wishes all TeamGB athletes the very best for the winter games and looks forward to welcoming everyone who is inspired by the games to try sliding on skis or a snowboard amid our stunning



Skier Charne Hawkes, Inverness, high above Nevis Range gondola in January.

Scottish Highland scenery.'

Snowsports form a significant part of Scotland's winter tourism economy; for each £1 spent at a ski area, a further £4 is spent 'off the hill' in local businesses such as accommodation; places

to eat and drink; shops, filling stations etc.

Since season 2009-10, Scotland's snowsports areas have hosted around 1.8 million 'skier days' which, using current data, have generated over £180million

for the national economy.

Ski-Scotland is the marketing partnership which has promoted snowsports in Scotland collaboratively for around 30 years and comprises the five mountain ski areas (CairnGorm Mountain,

Glencoe Mountain, Glenshee, The Lecht and Nevis Range), the sport's governing body Snowsport Scotland, indoor real-snow centre Snow Factor in Glasgow and VisitScotland, the country's tourism agency.

Mudslide train removed from West Highland Line

SCOTRAIL engineers supervised the removal of the train derailed by the recent mudslide at Loch Eilt last week and on Sunday it was transported by lorry through Spean Bridge to Brodie Engineering in Kilmarnock for assessment.

The West Highland Line was closed for a week after tonnes of mud and stone covered the track in the landscape between Arisaig and Glenfinnan.

None of the five passengers on board were injured and all the carriages stayed upright but services were disrupted between Fort William and Mallaig.



Knoydart Hall campaign gathers financial steam

CAMPAIGNERS aiming to raise funds for a major renovation of Knoydart Community Hall are almost a third of the way to meeting their target after just two weeks.

Knoydart Community Hall committee launched a crowdfunding campaign last month in the hope of raising £35,000, which will go towards an extension and refurbishment of the hall. To date, 114 supporters have raised £10,885 - 30 per cent of the campaign's target.

The overall projected total for the revamp is £418,000, three-quarters of which will be accessed through agency and charitable trust funding.

Knoydart Community Hall SCIO has devised a range of initiatives to raise the remaining £105,000. As well as the online campaign, the local community will be supporting the cause with fundraisers, merchandise, events, volunteering and their own money.

Campaign organisers said: 'The support shown has been amazing - from the good luck messages to shares of videos on social media and our generous supporters.'

Built in 1958, the brick fabric of the hall needs repaired, while leaks and a lack of hot water and insulation have become too much to bear for the community.

Kyle RBS closure reprieve welcomed by MP

NEWS that Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) has bowed to public pressure and delayed its decision to close the Kyle of Lochalsh branch has been welcomed by Ian Blackford MP.

The Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP has also vowed to carry on the fight to save others, as the future of the Mallaig branch still hangs in the balance.

The Kyle of Lochalsh branch is one of 10 rural banks that will remain open until the end of 2018, despite previous plans to close them were proposed in an RBS review.

The closure would have left the community with no bank, leaving customers faced with a trip to Portree to do their banking. RBS has now, however, reprieved branches where they are 'the last bank in town'.

The change of mind comes after huge public opposition, led by Mr Blackford and Kate Forbes MSP, who met with communities and organised petitions urging the bank's management to think again.

As leader of the SNP Westminster group, Mr Blackford also kept up the pressure in parliament raising the matter with Theresa May during Prime Minister's questions.

He said: 'This is great news for the people who were facing having no bank in their communities and I am delighted management of RBS has listened and done the right thing by them.'

'I congratulate everyone who has stood up to these threats and the reward is theirs. It is a fantastic result for Kyle and for the local businesses using the branch, especially those in tourism who deal largely in cash. It was a ridiculous idea that they would have to travel all the way to Portree to do their banking.'

'However while this is good news for 10 branches, two of which are in my constituency, I have not forgotten the Mallaig branch has not been reprieved. I, along with Kate Forbes and the local community will continue to make the case for its retention.'



An architect's impression of the revised plans shows the proposed building within the grounds of the former St Mary's RC Primary School.



Developers say the new design is 'less monolithic'.

Fresh plans for Fort student flats

DEVELOPERS have revised their plans to build a three-storey, 40-bed student accommodation building in the centre of Fort William, three months after their initial design was rejected.

Cityheart Ltd have presented a fresh planning application to build within the grounds of the former St Mary's RC Primary School after being forced to go back to the drawing board when their original plans were rejected after councillors agreed it would have a 'detrimental impact' on surrounding properties.

In October last year, the Highland Council planning committee rejected Cityheart Ltd's previous application on the basis that the height and mass of the building was 'overbearing' and 'not acceptable' in relation to neighbouring houses.

The Chester-based property developer, which has already built flats in An Aird for students in Fort William, said it had taken on board the councillors' concerns and had submitted a 'substantially changed' design which aims to alleviate any 'issues

of overbearing to neighbouring properties' and to make the building appear 'less monolithic'.

In the completely revised plans, the building will be situated on the far end of the site, next to the Belford Hospital, rather than next to the neighbouring residential cottages which the previous plans had set out. The plans for the building itself have also been drastically changed, with lower pitched roofs and with a 'more varied' front. The new residential block aims to ease accommodation problems in the town after an increase in students studying at the West Highland College UHI in recent years. On refusing Cityheart Ltd's initial application last year, Lochaber councillor Andrew Baxter commented: 'The principle of student accommodation on this site was supported by all seven Lochaber councillors and I still support the principle of it. But I think it can be better designed and better placed within this site.'

They will be considered by the council's planning committee in the coming weeks.

Controversial Kings House Hotel revamp approved

HIGHLAND councillors have approved controversial plans to refurbish the Kings House Hotel at Glencoe.

The planned overhaul of the original 17th-century driving inn was given the green light by Highland Council last week and owners Black Corries Estate Ltd are looking to begin work as soon as possible.

The £10 million revamp will see a three-storey, 60-bedroom hotel erected on the landmark site in Glencoe. Work has been under way since last year, with parts of the existing building already demolished.

The plans have proved controversial, with several objections being lodged against the original planning application.

Mountaineering Scotland was one of the main objectors to the plans, saying the 'industrial-style building' would be 'completely out of character both with the original building and the surrounding landscape which is part of a much-loved National Scenic



An impression of the revised plans for the Kings House Hotel in Glencoe.

Area'. Objections also came from leading conservation organisations the John Muir Trust and the National Trust for Scotland which urged the council to reject the plans on the grounds that the designs were not in-keeping with the surrounding area. The owners did, however, receive support from local residents, businesses and the community council, which welcomed the investment into the local economy. The project

team behind the plans said they were delighted with the council's decision.

James Allan of managing agents Bidwells said: 'This is a superb result for our client who has been very focused on providing a well-thought-out project which will bring employment to the area and encourage more visitors to this stunning part of Scotland.'

'The plans for the hotel are in-keeping with the majestic environment and our client is very focused on mak-

ing this a sustainable project which complements their existing business interests elsewhere in Scotland, such as the Drymnn whisky distillery on the Morvern Peninsula.'

The hotel is one of the West Highland's most iconic stopping off points and is well renowned with climbers and hillwalkers.

'The de Spoelberch family recognised the hotel needs money and care and should be a place for people who enjoy sport and the outdoors. They consider this project as an impact investment, which is close to them and the things they love, whilst ensuring the proposal is economically viable.'

Mr Allan continued: 'They have always been adamant that they didn't want to do anything that would displease the community and would not have proceeded with something that was not supported.'

Construction work is due to start on the hotel as soon as possible with a projected completion for the beginning of 2019.

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fw
Calls to repopulate empty glens welcomed

SKYE MSP Kate Forbes has welcomed Community Land Scotland's (CLS) desire to reverse the trend of depopulation in the Highlands.

Last week CLS published a report on the subject, which called for land that was previously lived and work on to be repopulated – an issue that Ms Forbes has previously highlighted.

The MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch has been one of the most vocal politicians about the need to reverse depopulation across the Highlands.

'The current planning system has a lot to answer for in terms of restricting rural regeneration,' she said.

'One of my hopes is that the Scottish Government's welcome new planning bill will actively transform rural communities, by giving them more of a say, by reducing the burdens of planning applications and by making planning more proactive.'

'I would love to see policies which are built round the importance of repopulation and resettlement of empty glens.'

'I have previously argued for more incentives to turn old, decrepit buildings into homes across rural Scotland as we all know of run-down, abandoned buildings which have been neglected for too long.'

Ms Forbes added: 'I like the suggestion by Community Land Scotland that land which has been abandoned is once again full.'

'My own ancestors were cleared off fertile soil on the Applecross peninsula and left to make a living on the barren coastline.'

'These communities are now essentially empty.'

'Whilst the Highlands has seen something of a population revolution in the last 15 years with many people choosing to move to the Highlands, we still need to do more to attract skilled people to the Highlands – particularly those who left as youngsters to learn or train and would love to come back but can't.'

'There aren't enough affordable homes and the cost of land plays a big role in that so anything that reduces the cost and increases the availability of land should be welcomed.'

Skye pupils write to education minister about state of school

MARK ENTWISTLE
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SCHOOL pupils on Skye have written to Scottish education minister John Swinney to complain about the state of their crumbling primary.

Some of the children who suffer from asthma even believe damp problems at the school are making their health problems worse.

Highland Council has said it is considering Broadford Primary School for inclusion in its next capital investment programme.

A local authority spokesperson told the *Lochaber Times*: 'The council is currently reviewing its capital programme, the outcome of which should confirm a capital investment plan for the next 10 years.'

'Investment in Broadford [and other Highland schools] is being considered as part of that

Youngsters believe poor state of building is making health problems worse

process.' But Skye MSP Kate Forbes slammed the council for what she decried as a 'year of inaction' that has led to the 'despicable state' of Broadford primary.

Ms Forbes spoke out after children at the school wrote to council representatives, as well as Mr Swinney, about the desperate condition of their school building. There is apparently no safe drinking water supply so pupils cannot brush their teeth at school; there is very limited access for wheelchair users because of the number of steps; pest control could not stop slugs reappearing in the classrooms

and there is no gym hall. Last year Highland Council leader Margaret Davidson visited the school, but the local authority has not committed to any significant upgrades on the ailing premises.

An angry Ms Forbes said: 'Broadford Primary School building is in a despicable state and has been for many years.'

'I visited the school just before Christmas and spoke to members of the parent council.'

'Only by visiting do you truly appreciate the damp, rot and mould in the building and the obvious impact this must be having on children's learning and

health. Last week, the children, the parents and I wrote three letters to be delivered to Highland Council and to the Cabinet Secretary for Education.'

'The thing is this school has been disintegrating for many years so Highland Council has no excuse for not investing in the school.'

'There are three independent councillors on Skye, all of whom are part of the administration, so I sincerely hope they will be fighting side-by-side with me, the parent council and Broadford Community Council for Broadford Primary School.'

'I hear Highland councillors arguing that funding constraints are the reason why Broadford hasn't been given the attention it deserves, but that does not wash when you consider how long Broadford has required investment – through years of plenty and years of less.'



Above and right: Broadford Primary School is in a 'despicable' state, according to MSP Kate Forbes.

'Ultimately, school infrastructure is a matter for Highland Council and excuses are wearing thin.'



Russell Smith, SCF chairman, meets MP Ian Blackford.

Crofting federation meets MPs to discuss Brexit

THE SCOTTISH Crofting Federation (SCF) has met with two Highland MPs to convey suggestions for a post-Brexit Scotland producing high-quality food for export.

With Brexit again dominating the headlines and the outcome no clearer, Russell Smith, chairman of the Scottish Crofting Federation, met with Skye MP Ian Blackford and Jamie Stone, MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, to put forward the SCF's views on the way forward.

Mr Smith commented: 'The key points are to maintain tariff-free access to the EU market for Scotland's very high quality lamb and beef; then, assuming we are to continue to provide these goods at less than cost-price,

production support for crofters in the Highlands and Islands will need to be maintained so that crofting remains economically viable.'

Mr Smith continued: 'We need the support systems that replace the CAP to be designed with crofting in mind from the outset.'

'Too often crofting, especially common grazings, are an afterthought to a system that has already been established.'

'I met with Highland MPs Ian Blackford and Jamie Stone to get this across and to ask for their help to get the message to Westminster.'

'Both have agreed to pass on the SCF post-Brexit ideas to Michael Gove Secretary of State for the Environment.'

Council to get extra £1.2 million

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar is to receive an extra £1.2 million after revised budget proposals were unveiled by Finance Secretary Derek Mackay.

Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan has welcomed the news saying the SNP budget would give Scots the best deal in the UK, with investment in public services and a tax cut for lower earners. Speaking after the budget was passed at its first parliamentary vote, Mr Allan said: 'Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will see an above-inflation rise in their revenue funding – with an extra £1.2 million to spend on local services.'

'That's a good deal for taxpayers and for public services and will go towards extra funding for the NHS, an expansion in childcare, £600 million for the continued roll-out of superfast broadband and a pay rise for hard-working public sector employees. This is only possible because of the SNP's progressive tax reforms, backed by a majority of the Scottish public.'

Airlines to axe flights between Stornoway and Glasgow

FLYBE and Eastern Airways are stopping their flights between Stornoway and Glasgow from March 4, due to lower than expected demand.

Operated by Eastern Airways, the services were run in competition to Loganair flights.

The flights were only introduced in September 2017 and Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan has expressed his disappointment at the airlines' decision to end the flights.

The flight operators have also announced an additional 12 flights per week between

Stornoway and Aberdeen. Mr Allan, who has now spoken with Flybe's chief commercial officer about the decision, commented: 'It is disappointing that competition on the Stornoway to Glasgow route did not become long term. However, this was not unexpected news, as both companies seemed to be focused on pushing each other off this route, rather than on providing islanders with a wider choice of flights.'

'This has caused more than a few issues in terms of timetabling and airport arrangements. I very much hope Flybe's

competitor Loganair will now ensure there is the capacity that its island customers need and stay away from the option of increasing fares. I will be writing to Loganair to seek assurances on this.'

Mr Allan said the news about Flybe's extra services between Stornoway and Aberdeen appears to be more welcome and said he had asked the company to check the revised timetable works better for islanders working offshore in the oil industry than the old one did, as this had been a major problem in the past.



Alasdair Allan MSP

“ You've been thinking about kitchens- speak to us and together we can make this happen ”

MSP slams year-long ferry services review

HIGHLANDS and Islands Conservative MSP Donald Cameron has accused the SNP government of kicking the issue of a second ferry into the long grass, following an announcement taxpayer-funded consultants will be hired to conduct a review of ferry services to the Western Isles.

The review, announced by the Minister for Transport and the Islands Humza Yousaf MSP, will take around a year to complete, which means, says Mr Cameron, that islanders and local businesses will have to wait at least another year for the SNP government to take action.

This is despite recent criticisms over the capacity of the current *MV Seaforth* vessel which currently serves the Ullapool to Stornoway route.

Mr Cameron said local SNP MSP Alasdair Allan had described the issue as a 'priority' more than six months ago.

'It is galling the SNP Government considers the word 'priority' to mean well over a year and possibly even up to two years before anything actually happens,' said Mr Cameron.

'Since I have been elected, the issue of capacity on the *MV Seaforth* has been one of the most talked-about issues by islanders, yet we have the SNP government kicking it into the long grass by dragging the issue



Donald Cameron MSP.

out until at least 2019. If Alasdair Allan and Humza Yousaf went out and spoke to local businesses and residents in Lewis, they would hear people's concerns directly and take decisive action, instead of hiring

expensive taxpayer-funded consultants to state the obvious.'

Mr Cameron has also taken the Holyrood government to task over recent figures published by the independent broadband news site 'Think Broadband' which have shown that more than a fifth of properties within the Highland Council area are still unable to access superfast broadband, despite government commitments.

The data shows that only 78.2 per cent of properties across the Highland Council area have access to superfast broadband, with 17.9 per cent of properties on broadband speeds below 15 Mbps.

This, said Mr Cameron, is in stark contrast to the national average, with 93.10 per cent of Scottish households able to access superfast broadband.

'For all the bluff and bluster from the SNP government about investing in broadband, they are miles off delivering 100 per cent access to superfast broadband in the Highlands,' added Mr Cameron.

'The fact that in 2018 more than a fifth of properties are still on slow speeds, is damning. The SNP government needs to tell people across the Highlands what their plans are to give everyone the opportunity to access the type of broadband that urban Scotland has now become accustomed to.'

Clipper Ranger seen as possible freight solution

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar leader Councillor Roddie Mackay has raised the matter of ferry capacity with MSP Keith Brown, cabinet secretary for economy, jobs and fair work, in what has been described as a very positive meeting.

Speaking afterwards, Mr Mackay said: 'Ferries are not just about transport but also very much about economic impacts and I wanted to ensure Mr Brown was aware of the hugely negative economic impact on our islands as a direct result of inadequate ferry capacity.'

'I asked Mr Brown if he would look into the availability and potential of engaging

the *Clipper Ranger* as a dedicated freight vessel in time for this summer.'

'This was a very productive meeting and while the minister had reservations regarding additional spend, he did acknowledge it was a real issue and assured me he would look into the matter.'

'While the transport minister had suggested he was looking for an additional vessel, the comhairle was becoming increasingly concerned about the potential capacity challenges facing us again this year. We have carried out research ourselves and it would appear the *Clipper Ranger* may offer a meaningful solution. Therefore, we have

asked the Scottish Government to pursue this as a matter of urgency.'

'A dedicated freight vessel will go a very long way to alleviating this capacity issue and allowing the islands to enjoy significantly increased economic growth.'

'We are confident the Scottish Government and ministers have a real understanding of the issue and hope they will support an arrangement to have the *Clipper Ranger* back on the Stornoway-Ullapool route this summer.'

'I would like to thank the minister for his positive engagement on this crucial islands' issue.'

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Caol drugs man spared jail by sheriff

A CAOL man who admitted possessing cocaine at MacRae's Lane in Fort William on October 14 last year was warned by a sheriff last week he might not be treated so leniently if he is found to commit a similar offence in the future.

Craig Tolmie, 25, of Camesky Road, had previously pleaded guilty and appeared before Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald last week for sentencing at Fort William Sheriff Court.

Procurator Fiscal Robert Weir said police officers on foot patrol at 12.30am had seen Tolmie with a small bag of white powder and had detained him as a result.

The powder was subsequently identified as cocaine, weighing under a gram, and worth £50.

Defence agent Hamish Melrose said his client was a machine operator who was single and lived with his parents and that he had pleaded guilty at the outset.

The court heard Tolmie had a previous similar conviction for which he had been fined £100 by a justice of the peace court in Fort William.

'That does not seem to have deterred him because here he is back at court for having another bag of white powder,' said Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald.

'He can afford to buy cocaine, travel to court for having that cocaine and be fined again.'

Fining Tolmie £400, she warned him: 'If you come back to court in the future for any analogous offending, the court might not treat you so leniently.'

Crackdown on Mount Alexander fly tipping

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TRADESMEN in Fort William are being targeted in a crackdown by environmental investigators after years of illegal dumping at a site at Camaghael, on the outskirts of the town.

The investigators, from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), say they are responding to complaints of persistent fly tipping at the Mount Alexander site, and that they are now working with the local community to tackle the problem.

On Monday last week, officers from SEPA's Waste Crime Team led a multi-agency response involving Police Scotland and Highland Council to investigate and deal with the illegal activity.

In November last year, the *Lochaber Times* reported Kilmallie Community Council's anger and frustration that the problem of fly tipping at Mount Alexander was still going on.

Building and construction materials, as well as abandoned cookers, fridges and even old cars, are among the types of waste that have been dumped at the spot over a considerable number of years.

And SEPA says it is evident tradesmen are persistently dumping waste materials at the site to avoid paying the cost of disposal at legitimate waste management sites, which the agency believes is clearly for financial gain, with complete disregard for the law and the possible environmental consequences.

Work to clear away the dumped waste could be as much



Kath MacDowall of SEPA sorts through the untidy mess of fly-tipped rubbish at Camaghael, near Fort William, last week. Photograph Iain Ferguson, The Write Image. IF F06 SEPA FLY TIPPING 01

as £50,000 according to SEPA, depending on the types of waste involved.

To deter further fly tipping, SEPA is working with the local community to seek solutions to restrict access to the site and with Police Scotland to carry out road checks in Fort William to ensure that anyone carrying 'controlled waste' is a registered waste carrier with the appropriate permits in place.

Enforcement action will be undertaken if or as required and this can include the issue of a fixed penalty of £300 or prosecution. SEPA officers are also visit-

ing local businesses to gather information, check permits and reinforce the responsibilities and obligations that apply to anyone producing, carrying or managing waste.

Information notices will be issued to businesses unable to provide details of how they are disposing of their waste.

SEPA is working with the Highland Council and local media outlets to try to raise public awareness of the fly tipping problem and the actions that residents can take to prevent it.

SEPA's chief executive officer Terry A'Hearn said: 'It is a criminal offence to illegally dispose

of waste, with firm obligations on the waste producer to ensure their waste is managed by a SEPA-registered waste carrier at a fully-licensed site

'In addition, there are significant penalties for traders or business moving or disposing of waste illegally, as well as clean-up costs for landowners whose sites are used for illegal disposal.

'Our actions in Fort William will help to raise awareness of the issue of fly tipping and hopefully encourage the local community to help make the activity socially unacceptable.

'Communities can help us to end the selfish, criminal fly tip-

ping behaviour that blights our land. If you suspect fly tipping is being carried out, or to report illegal traders, calling the Dumb Dumpers Stoptime on 08452 304090 or complete a form on the dumbdumpers.org website.'

Sergeant Ewan Calder, of the Police Scotland Road Policing Unit based in Fort William, added: 'We will be working in partnership with SEPA to deter fly tipping and to take action against anyone found to be committing any waste management related offences.

'If anyone sees fly tipping, we would urge them to report it to us or SEPA at the time or as soon as possible, along with any descriptions of people or vehicles used, including make, model and registration if possible.'

Local councillor Allan Henderson, chairman of Highland Council's Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee, said the local authority welcomed the SEPA operation.

'There is no excuse for fly tipping anywhere in our region as Highland Council provides 21 recycling centres across the Highlands including one in Fort William at Claggan,' he said.

'It's particularly disappointing this site at Mount Alexander is being persistently targeted with illegal trade waste.'

Mr Henderson's council colleague and fellow member for Caol and Mallaig, Ben Thompson, added: 'We urge local people not to accept cheap quotes for building or construction works as often behind that cost cutting can be criminality and illegal dumping like this.'

Claggan man threatened to 'bottle' teenager

A MAN who threatened to assault a teenage car driver with a bottle and repeatedly made homophobic remarks to him was warned by a sheriff he could easily have been sent to jail given his previous record.

Alexander Watson, of Polmona, Claggan, Fort William, appeared at Fort William Sheriff Court last week for sentencing, following the compilation of a social work report.

Unemployed Watson, 34, had already pleaded guilty at an earlier court appearance to behaving in a threatening or abusive manner likely to place someone in a state of fear or alarm on November 27 last year in a Lochaber car park and had committed the offence while already on bail.

The court heard on the day in question an altercation started after Watson had asked someone to give him a lift back to Claggan.

'His request was politely declined and the accused then responded with various phrases,' said Procurator Fiscal Robert Weir, who read out an example of the abusive homophobic language Watson had used.

'Things seemed to have deteriorated from there. He was holding a small glass bottle which the accused had taken from his pocket.'

Watson then told the 17-year-old driver: 'Do you want me to bottle you?' Police had then been alerted.

Defence agent Stephen Kennedy said: 'He has very little recollection of the incident as he was under the influence of alcohol at the time. He is obtaining a level of help. You are not dealing with a man who has been sitting back and not doing anything.'

Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald said: 'He has been to jail before and this was a very unpleasant offence. I could send him to jail.'

Mr Kennedy said his client very much appreciated he was 'on the edge' of going to jail.

Sentencing Watson to 60 hours of unpaid community work and a year-long supervision order, Sheriff MacDonald warned him: 'As for your behaviour on this occasion, I hope you are ashamed. This was very unpleasant behaviour to someone who didn't deserve it. I am persuaded to deal with this by way of a community payback order but I could just as easily have sent you to jail.'

'The supervision order and unpaid work are a direct alternative to custody and if you don't comply, you will be brought back to court and imprisonment could be imposed.'

Kinlochleven man grew cannabis in polytunnel

A KINLOCHLEVEN man was ordered at Fort William Sheriff Court this week to undertake 150 hours of unpaid community work after admitting growing cannabis plants in a polytunnel in the back garden of his home.

David John, of the village's Back of Leven Road, appeared before Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald for sentencing on Tuesday.

John had pleaded guilty at a previous appearance to a charge of producing cannabis at his home on September 2 last year. He had further admitted possessing four air weapons without a certificate which were also not secured and therefore accessible to other people.

John's pleas of not guilty to charges of possession of cannabis and cannabis resin on the same date at his home had already been accepted by the Crown. John appeared at the court for sentencing following the compilation of a social work report.

Procurator Fiscal Robert Weir told the court police officers had

visited John's home with a search warrant issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. No-one was home at the time the officers called so they forced entry to the property.

Subsequent searches of the house and garden saw the officers discover a polytunnel containing around 10 cannabis plants measuring about one metre in height.

'When they searched the house, they also recovered the air weapons with cases and a quantity of ammunition,' said Mr Weir.

'As a result of these searches the accused was detained and interviewed. His general position was that he admitted possession of the cannabis plants for his own use to help joint and stomach problems. He also confirmed he was the owner of the air weapons and that he did not have a certificate as he was unaware of the need for one.'

Mr Weir added that the 10 plants had a potential value of between £250 and £900 each.

Defence agent Hamish Melrose

said his client had lived at the property for the last 13 years.

To laughs from the court, Mr Melrose said the plants were not that tall because their growth depended on how much sunlight there was and in September in Kinlochleven this would not have been much, and he added there was no other form of encouraging them to grow being used by his client.

Sheriff MacDonald remarked: 'I am sure he was aware of that, Mr Melrose, and that is why he had the polytunnel in his back garden.'

On the accused's background, Mr Melrose said his client was 51 and had brought up his four children almost single-handedly.

'His two oldest sons, aged 19 and 22, work with him in the family business as environmental contractors specialising in dry stone construction, while the youngest son and daughter are studying law and medicine at university,' said Mr Melrose.

On his client's use of cannabis, Mr Melrose said John had started using

the banned substance after prescription medication for his health issues had stopped being of any benefit.

'When he was interviewed by police he was very open with them when it came to explaining his position. As for the fairly elderly air weapons, which he described as 'pop guns', these had been used by his children when they were younger.'

On a previous similar conviction in 2000, Mr Melrose said this was for the possession of one cannabis plant for which John was fined £100.

Sentencing John, Sheriff MacDonald said these were serious charges.

'But I am persuaded by the report and the submissions made by Mr Melrose that I can deal with this by way of a community payback order and I order that you do 150 hours of unpaid work,' she told John. 'But be aware I am making this order as a direct alternative to custody.'

Sheriff MacDonald also granted a Crown motion for the air weapons, cases and ammunition to be forfeited.

Supermarket cleaner fined £400 after fracas

A SUPERMARKET cleaner from Kinlochleven was fined £400 last week after a court heard how an argument over rubbish left on the floor of a home escalated to a situation where he was challenging other people in the property to fight.

Nedyalko Manolov, 40, of Foyers Road, had pleaded guilty to the offence which took place in a property in Leven Road in Kinlochleven on November 11 of last year and he appeared before Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald at Fort William Sheriff Court.

Manolov had been charged with behaving in a threatening or abusive manner likely to place a person in a state of fear or alarm by shouting and swearing and trying to goad people to fight.

Procurator Fiscal Robert Weir said the row over the litter left on the floor escalated and Manolov had also thrown items around the home and uttered threats.

Defence agent Stephen Kennedy had told the court how Manolov, a cleaner at a local supermarket, had been under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence after drinking a bottle of vodka.

Drink driver fined £400 and banned

AN ARIVEGAIG man who was found to be more than three times over the drink drive limit has been banned from driving for a year and fined £400.

Alexander Thomson, 68, appeared at Fort William Sheriff Court last week and pleaded guilty to a charge of driving a van on September 9 last year in Arivegaig Road while he had a blood alcohol level of 172mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood. The legal limit is 50mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood.

Procurator Fiscal Robert Weir told the court police officers on mobile patrol had pulled Thomson over and found him to have slurred speech on being questioned.

Thomson was unable to provide two breath tests and so a blood test was carried out at Fort William Police Station and he was found to be over the legal limit.

Defence agent Stephen Kennedy said his client lived in a fairly remote area and the automatic

disqualification from driving would have a serious impact on his life as he lived three miles from the nearest shop and bus stop.

'Mr Thompson had been out with a friend in Acharacle and had left his van at home,' Mr Kennedy told Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald.

'He had been expecting to get a lift home from a local hotel but the person involved could not drive him home as they had also drunk alcohol.'

'So he drove a car that was nearby and which he sometimes used for work purposes. My client has held a driving licence for more than 40 years and was an HGV driver also until his licence expired.'

Sheriff MacDonald banned Thomson for a year but certified him as eligible for the drink drive rehabilitation scheme which if he successfully completes, would see Thomson obtain a discount of up to three months taken off the disqualification.



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Spean Bridge

SCOTTISH Water subsidiary Business Stream has confirmed the Supply Point Identification Number (SPID) assigned to Kilmonivaig Church, near Spean Bridge, has been removed.

It follows the row, recently reported by the *Lochaber Times*, over church trustees receiving separate water bills for the church and adjoining church hall, despite the fact the 200-year-old church itself has never had a water supply. A long-running tussle with church treasurer John Fotheringham seems to have been resolved, with Business Stream confirming the church SPID had been cancelled from its listings.

Arisaig

MOBILE phone network O2 is to launch 4G high speed mobile internet in Arisaig.

Derek McManus, chief operating officer, Telefónica UK, said: 'I'm delighted O2 customers in Arisaig will soon be able to experience faster mobile internet, making everything easier when using their phone or tablet.'

'They'll be able to stream high definition TV, shop on the go and use video calling. For our business customers, using 4G means they can be more effective and flexible by working remotely, accessing cloud services and collaborating using apps.'

In addition to the launch of 4G, O2 is upgrading its 2G and 3G network in the area, with work due to start on Monday February 12.

Ardnamurchan

ARDNAMURCHAN High School's Katie MacGillivray may only be 12 years old, but she proved age is no barrier to talent when she won first place in the Springboard Future Chef competition local final at West Highland College last month.

Katie cooked a mouth-watering stuffed chicken breast with sweet potato chips and roasted tomatoes, followed by chocolate mousse with a tuile biscuit.

And today (Thursday) Kate will be competing against youngsters from all over the north of Scotland for a place at the national final in March.

There was more success for Ardnamurchan high when third year pupil Angus Dunn won the Rotary Young Chef of the Year West of Scotland District Final in East Kilbride.

Angus cooked homemade tortellini stuffed with haggis, followed by smoked haddock on a bed



Katie MacGillivray with her prizewinning dishes.

of spinach with potato dauphinoise and tiramisu to finish. Angus was presented with a silver salver and will now compete in the north of Britain stage in March. Ardnamurchan High School staff congratulated the young talented chefs: 'We are delighted with our pupils' success and wish them every success in the next stage of their competitions.'



Angus Dunn took first place in the district final of the Rotary Young Chef event.

St Bride's pupils pay homage to bard



Ramsay Stubbs with the quaiach for fiddle music of Burns.



Linnea Livingston with the quaiach for Burns arts and craft.



Head teacher Susan Kemp, piper John MacCallum and Sam Nicolson with the quaiach for Burns recitation.



Samuel Allan won the quaiach for singing of Burns.



Piper John MacCallum, right, Cameron Pongsopon and Joshua Allan address the haggis.



P4-P7 pupils reply to the Toast to the Lassies.

ST BRIDE'S Primary School, north Ballachulish, held its Burns Supper recently. Competition winners were Ramsay Stubbs for Burns music; Linnea Livingston for Burns art; Samuel Allan for Burns singing and Sam Nicolson for Burns recitation.

The piper was John MacCallum with fiddle and accordion playing from Sophie and Liam Cameron.

Highlands

NUMEROUS historic sites in the Highlands are allowing Young Scot cardholders entry for £1 to celebrate the Year of Young People 2018.

The offer is available at Glenfinnan monument, Glencoe visitor centre, Inverewe and Hugh Miller's birthplace cottage and museum in the Highlands, as well as more than 100 other sites throughout Scotland.

The offer has been created due to a recommendation from a Heritage Blueprint report by young people who claimed some historic sites were too expensive for young people and is an attempt to engage more young Scots in historic sites.

Mena Kirmani, Heritage Blueprint member, said: 'This is an incredible opportunity for young Scots in the Highlands to explore Scotland's history and celebrate the Year of Young People 2018.'

Historic Environment Scotland chief executive Alex Paterson commented: 'I'd encourage Scotland's young people to take advantage of this historic

offer and go and explore the country's rich and diverse history first hand - from the magnificent Neolithic monuments in Orkney to the beautiful Border abbeys.'

Louise MacDonald from Young Scot told us: 'Young people have told us they are keen to explore Scotland's historic treasures and heritage sites and it is wonderful to see the sector engaging with young people in this way.'

All young people aged 11-26, who live in Scotland, can get a Young Scot card free. For more information on how to get a Young Scot card visit www.young.scot/card



Caol and Mallaig

THE TIMETABLE for the election for the return of a councillor for the Caol and Mallaig ward of Highland Council has been announced.

The by-election is being held following the death of Councillor Billy MacLachlan, who was one of three councillors representing the ward.

Councillor MacLachlan was elected last May but had previously served on Highland Council and held a position on the Lochaber committee.

The other ward members are Councillors Allan Henderson (Independent) and Ben Thompson (Independent).

The Notice of Election and Nomination Form will be published on the council's website www.highland.gov.uk on Tuesday of next week.

Candidates will have until 4pm on March 1 to submit their nomination papers.

If the seat is contested, voting will take place on Thursday, April 5, with the count taking place within

the ward on Friday, April 6.

Anyone eligible to vote can vote in person on the day or apply for either a postal vote or to vote by proxy.

The latest time to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Monday March 19 and the deadline for anyone wishing to apply to vote by proxy is Monday March 26.

Taking into account this vacancy within the Caol and Mallaig ward, the current political representation of the council is:

Independent (28); Non-aligned (2); Scottish Conservative and Unionist (10); Scottish Green Party (1); Scottish Labour Party (3); Scottish Liberal Democrats (9); Scottish National Party (19); Sutherland Independent Group (1).



Kilmallie

KILMALLIE Community Council met last month for its January meeting.

Agenda items discussed included:

■ All KCC members expressed sadness in noting the recent death of Councillor Billy MacLachlan after a long illness, and acknowledged with very grateful thanks Billy's support of KCC and his work on behalf of the community.

■ Police update - Isla Campbell attended on behalf of Police Scotland due to PC Ross McCartney's unavailability. She had no immediate issues to report. Police can help with publicity about flytipping issues at Camaghael.

■ Noise at Annat and smell from Duisky - CH reported on useful meeting she and RL attended with Graeme Corner, environmental health officer, before Christmas. Ardgour CC also attended. Simon Hindson, planning enforcement officer, attended via phone link. It was agreed there should be a further meeting once GC has received BSW's noise emission information, and report on its engineering works to reduce noise emissions by improving containment at source. This is expected mid-January. GC also agreed to correspond with Boyd Bros regarding noise emissions.

Following complaints from the community, KCC also raised at the meeting the issue of smell from Duisky plant. GC said that SEPA had a stronger legal basis to deal with complaints than environmental health because it is a planning condition of the site. So all complaints should be directed to SEPA. KCC agreed to write to SEPA to register community concerns.

■ Naming of new units at Camaghael - KCC received a request from Highland Council for views about the proposed naming of a new development. It was agreed to say 'The Old Baling Plant' was simply called 'Baling Plant'.

■ Treasurer's report - report tabled. Total balance at January 1 2018 was £3,760.01.

■ JR reported arrangements being made to take down Christmas lights.

■ Disabled access over lock gates at Corpach was discussed and welcomed. KCC confirmed willingness in principle to submit application for Highland Council discretionary funding on behalf of Scottish Canals, but all design, specification, procurement and contract management would need to be responsibility of Scottish Canals. From email correspondence it did not seem that this was likely to be forthcoming in time for an

application in this financial year.

■ Councillors confirmed KCC could still apply for discretionary funding towards newsletter, even if it also applied for disabled access over lock gates.

■ Kate Forbes MSP contacted CH to check on progress with pedestrian crossings. Transport Scotland is currently preparing more design proposals.

■ A resident in Lady Margaret Drive had expressed concern that she had been unable to get her car out of the drive for a week due to poor road gritting in the recent icy weather.

AH explained there were eight main routes, and eight lorries to cover the whole of Lochaber. The main routes comprise primary and secondary school roads. Routes take approximately three hours in conditions of frost, ice or light snow.

Drivers' time is further accounted for, for example, by breaks, vehicle safety checks, loading, adjusting equipment, clearing salt blockages, down time for garage repairs, fuelling, assisting police/vehicles that have become stuck/are blocking the road, etc.

Pavements generally fit in after all this work.

■ Date and venue of next meeting - Monday February 26, at Kilmallie Community Centre at 7.15pm.

RETRO Roamer

More Memory Lane items from the Roamer columns of 30 years ago

□ An anti-smoking lobby in the council means one or two members are baling out of the chamber and into the 'lobby' during meetings to have a quiet drag. When one particular councillor got up and left his seat, Miss Maclean thought he was blowing her a kiss. In fact he was exhaling an imaginary smoke ring as he exited temporarily. He was followed by a fellow member on a similar mission (emission?). At the end of the proceedings (in the chamber) Miss Maclean remarked to the local press that their representatives looked as if they had gone to sleep. No wonder!

□ Coach driver making his first foray to the Fort. He had been advised by Midlands HQ to look out for Ballachulish Bridge on his way north. After going round by Kinlochleven he finally spotted the bridge and dutifully crossed it. It wasn't until he found himself back in Glencoe he realised that his was one tour party going round in circles.

□ Mr and Mrs James Taylor from Great Missenden went up the Ben last week. Nothing unusual in that. They had been up the Ben before, this time last year. However, on that occasion they forgot their camera to record the fact they had stood on the summit. Last week they were better organised, complete with camera. Reached the summit. Then, mission accomplished, they smiled proudly for one another. Back down to earth. Met by their daughter to whom they gave the camera for her to take a few more sea-level shots so that the spool could go in to be quickly developed. Daughter took one look at it - and roared with laughter. There was no film in the camera.

□ A quartet of characters from Invernevis House were in the Nevis Bank the other night. At 'time to go home' time one of them organised a taxi. Taxi arrived and three of the elderly gents piled into it to be taken, literally, across the road. One stalwart declined the ride, however. After many years of driving for a living, Banny MacDonald preferred a late evening stroll.

□ A first year class was hearing about the almost human attributes of dolphins and monkeys. The teacher told the pupils that dolphins are 'super intelligent'. She then asked if any of them knew the names of other clever creatures. Iain Gillies from Morar put his hand up right away. 'Please Miss, the Mallaig sheep.'

□ Hard on the heels of Dudley Moore at Letterfinlay came Aneka, aka Mary Sandeman. And just across the water was Dee Hepburn of 'Gregory's Girl' fame. Aye, the Great Glen's getting the glitter these days.

□ You'll have read that a 4,000-year-old axe head was dug up last week at Kneep, Uig, on Lewis. You are now going to read of another amazing find on the island. On Barvas Moor, a pink hub cap was picked up by the locals and returned by parcel post to its owner Annette Steel, in Claggan. The pink accessory had fallen off Annette's Toyota Tercel when she was back home on holiday. There are not many of them about, so no time was lost in dispatching it back to the mainland.

□ Cherokee chief 'Shilo' reckons his happiest hunting grounds would be in Lochaber. 'I would love to put my wigwam on top of Ben Nevis,' he is quoted as saying. But squaw 'Little Elk' isn't so sure. 'It sure must be kinda cold up there,' she mused.

□ 'I wonder where he is now?' ventured mine host on MacGregor's Gathering on Monday morning. He was talking about Ginger Wilson, following a radio recording of Ginger's exploits in escaping from behind enemy lines in WWII. Umpteen people phoned the BBC to advise that Ginger was doing fine, back home in Claggan, thank you.

□ I hear members of Fort William Community Council (FWCC) were understandably miffed at being missed off the invitation list for the opening of the Link Housing development at Maryburgh Court. It seems our city fathers - and mothers - who submitted the names of local notables, omitted the community councillors. Quite inexplicable, really, as FWCC had suggested the name 'Maryburgh' in the first place. Worse still, it was no solace to the community councillors to be advised in a letter from Link that they appear to have been forgotten by Lochaber District Council.

□ Great hilarity at the Mart at the weekend over a bull called Maurice. It seems, far from being offered as a 'going concern', Maurice was somewhat defective in that he was firing on only one cylinder. So, apparently, he went under the hammer just for his curiosity value, which gave rise to a raucous chorus by the farming fraternity of 'Maurice has only got one...'

□ 'It's nice to be nice,' as they say in Lochaber. And that's what happened in and around Fort William last week - twice. The Navy came up from Rosyth to the Polldubh Bothy - by minibus. They were bearing a beautiful iced cake and flowers which they presented to Achriabhach octogenarian Mary Bovill. Mrs Bovill looks after the bothy and is its keyholder till the next services group arrives. The Rosyth boys heard it was her birthday, hence the presents. Then the lady herself, feeling the cake was on the large side for one person, donated it to Belford Hospital where she had recently been a patient. Aye, it's nice to be nice.

□ Passengers on a Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong had a culinary treat which was different from the usual in-flight meal. Their food had been conjured up by Graham Newbould, chef at Inverloch Castle. Graham was one of seven of the world's top chefs chosen to create special menus for the airline and he was travelling on the flight to explain the various dishes to the passengers.

He was in good company, too. With him on the high flying haute cuisine exercise were the personal chefs of King Gustav of Sweden, President Bush and President Mitterrand.

□ Stop press: Over the past 30 years, Joan MacKintosh at Corran has amassed 14 'Wee Stinker' t-shirts by winning that difficult Glasgow Herald crossword that amazing number of times.

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Viewpoint



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

There is no doubt the loss of the Fort Con annual comic convention comes as a blow to Fort William and the wider Lochaber community.

As we report on page one this week, reaction to the news has shown a fairly widespread sense of dismay that the parade of colourful characters from the world of animation on TV, film and in print will not be returning to Fort William this year.

The organisers have blamed a 'lack of support' and sense of 'apathy' for withdrawing the event.

However, as our report also details, last September

the event attracted hundreds of people from all over the country to Lochaber to join in the fun.

Organisers estimated that Fort Con was worth £78,000 to the local economy over the past two years.

The organisers' criticism also includes 'the local press'. We assume that does not include the *Lochaber Times* as we gave Fort Con substantial coverage last year and supported the event 100 per cent. Local business also put out the welcome mat for all the many visitors.

Perhaps the organisers should look closer to home when apportioning blame.



Days gone by – 1958

An Oban Times reader kindly dropped off this great photograph of the Oban High School football team of 1958. Back row, left to right, are sports master ETF Spence, Sandy Dawson, James Binnie, Andrew (Bunnacks) MacIntyre, Roger MacDonald, Iain (Swallow) MacIntyre and an unknown man. Front row: Henrick Madej, Alistair McCalman, Tommy Campbell, Jackie MacInnes, Hugh (Toots) MacLean and Willie Jackson.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL
angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



John Maclean (1827-1895) from Balemartin, Tiree, was a fine writer of political verse and his song *Oran Manitoba*, from which the following verses are taken, is one of many of his works relating to the Highland Clearances and the resulting campaigns to give crofters security of tenure on the land they rented.

Tiree suffered less than many areas of the Highlands and in this song the bard makes reference to the further-reaching political situation of the time and to the wider and enduring weaknesses of mankind that lead to injustices like the Highland Clearances.

Gur muladach mise 's mi seo gun duin' idir
A thogas, no thuigeas, no sheinneas leam dòn.

Le dùrachd mo chridhe, soraidh slàn leis na gillean

A sheòl thar an linne gu Manitoba.

Chan fhaic mi san àm seo ach caorach air bheanntan:

Chanèil as a' ghleann ach fear Gall-da no dhà:

Am beagan a dh'fhan dhiubh air rudhaichean-mara

Gan iomann gu cladach 's gam feanadh le màl.

Tha luchd-fhearainn shaoir as an àm seo ro-ghaolach

Air stòras an t-saoghail a shlaodadh bho chàch;

G'èil innleachdan baoghail sa'

Ghàidhealtachd seo daonnan
Air fògair nan daoine 's chur chaorach nan àit.

'Se faileas nan daoine; 's nach sgarach an saoghal -

'Se 's fasan dha daonnan bhith caohladh gach là.

Nar coigrich air uachdar, cha mhaireann 's cha bhuan sinn

Is mìltean de thruaghain gam fuadach far sàil.

Cha labhair mi tuileadh mu euchd nan fear duineil

Ach ruigidh mi Rusia 's mullach Alma

Se daoiread an fhearainn chuir na Gàidheil an tainead

'S gun chuimhne air Sebastopol 's Balaclava

How sad I am here without a single companion

to raise a chorus, or understand or sing a song with me.

From the depths of my heart I send a farewell blessing

to the lads who sailed on the voyage to Manitoba.

I can see nothing but sheep on the hillsides:

there is no-one left in the glen but a stranger or two:

the few of them who are left are on headlands by the sea,

driven to the shore and flayed with rents.

The land-owning proprietors at this time are all too eager

to grab for themselves the worldly possessions of all the rest;

cunning schemes are always being

used here in the land of the Gaels to drive the people out and make room for sheep.

The people are but shadows; how fickle the world is

it is ever its nature to change day by day.

We are strangers upon its face, we are fleeing and impermanent,

with thousands of poor wretches being driven overseas.

I shall say nothing more of the deeds of the brave men

But I will mention Russia and the Heights of Alma.

It is the weight of the rent that has led the Gaels few in numbers:

Forgotten are Sebastopol and Balaclava.

There were many varying contexts in different places and at different times that led to the massive depopulation of vast geographic areas that became known as the Highland Clearances.

Among the complex economic and political climate of the time, there is no doubt there was systematic brutal injustice wielded on one part of society by another.

We are lucky that by the strength of bardic tradition that existed in the Highlands and Islands, these sad and cruel events were recorded at the time and are sung of frequently to this day.

If anyone is in any doubt as to whether the Highland Clearances occurred or not, delve into Gaelic songs written in the 1800s.

The evidence is stark and overwhelming.

Mikey. Hope you get an award for your awesome actions. Well done.'

Tricia McMenemy: 'Well deserved Mikey, well done.'

Sandra Douglas: 'Wow! Well done you and so well deserved!'

Vonnie Pearce: 'Well we can't all be wrong Mikey. You deserve it.'

Babs-kaz Wakeham: 'Very well deserved.'



Social media

Dozens of people have been nominating Oban resident Mikey McManus for a Pride of Britain award for his part in the search for a dog which was abandoned near Glen Creran during blizzard conditions. Angie DiMatteo: 'You are a great inspiration. I hope for others to follow the example you set for being a fabulous humanitarian. Kudos.'

Emma Welsby: 'Well done! You never cease to surprise me!'

Karen Theresa Daly: 'Anyone who does this for an animal, deserves an award. Well done Mikey.'

Karina Devlin: 'Well deserved. If you ever came into Aldi, I'd give you a hug.'

Liz Smith: 'Wow! Don't know you but good on you! Well done!'

Christine Murdoch: 'You deserve it

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.



Disappointed at Oban Phoenix Cinema AGM

Sir,

As an occasional user of social media and avid reader of *The Oban Times*, having attended the AGM of the Oban Phoenix Cinema group on January 22, which I did gladly on the night, and read your subsequent report, I felt I should voice my observations.

Prior to attending I sent a request asking if there was an agenda. There was not but I was told questions and answers could be exchanged with board members on the night. This was not properly facilitated and, bearing in mind the agenda and statement of accounts were only available on the night, proper questions were difficult to generate.

I appreciate that some of the board members were unable to attend, and I wish them well. There was an abundance of information provided by those in attendance but I do feel much could have been gained through a healthy, well-chaired, open question and answer session. I left disappointed.

Kenny McLennan,
by email.

Grateful for hospital treatment after fall

Sir,

On Monday January 22, after my wife and I had enjoyed a lunch in the Food from Argyll café, I had a fall.

The young man, Martin, serving in the café came to my immediate aid before the ambulance arrived and I received further attention on the way to A&E in Lorn and Islands Hospital, where I had several tests.

I'd like to place on public record my grateful thanks for the attention and treatment I received from all those people: Martin (the young man in the café), the ambulance personnel and the staff in A&E. Without highlighting anyone in particular, it is nice to be able to report, at a time when the NHS and A&E departments in hospitals are held up as being unable to cope, just how well I was treated there.

Fred Pole,
Benderloch.

Salmon farms are unhealthy for fish

Sir,

Michael C Smith suggested fish farm sea lice are responsible for the destruction of our native wild salmon stock (Letters, *The Oban Times*, January 18).

There are other negative consequences of intensive fish farming that also need to be addressed.

These are:

1. The sheer number of them. The visual impact of sea farm cages cluttering up so many of our most beautiful remote bays and lochs, making these places no-go areas for us and many other creatures.

2. The ethics of caging these wild creatures in the first place. Salmon are top predators. Can we put thousands of them in a crowded cage and expect them to be healthy and well? It is cruel to say the least. The stress alone is enough to

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
ailean@obantimes.co.uk



THIG FÌOR À FANAID their an se-anfhacal, agus nach minig a chithear rudan an-diugh a bha sinne nar cloinn a' leughadh mar uirsgeulan ann an comaig!

Ged nach biodh ann ach an comas a th' againn bruidhinn ri chèile air fònaichean-làimhe, agus 's tric a bhios mi a' smaoinichadh air dè shaoileadh ginealach mo sheanar mu leithid sin de ghnoireas. Faisg air ceathrad is ochd bliadhna bho choisich Niall Armstrong air a' ghealach tha sinn a-nise a' faicinn chàraichean is làraidhean a' suibhal fo smachd choimpiutairean.

Ach 's dòcha gur e an gluasad as intinniche, neo as iargalta, an t-adhartas a th' air tighinn le siol planntais gin-atharraichte agus mar a tha sin air gluasad tro rannsachadh ainmhidheach gu obair ginteil daonna. Leis na bheil ann de dhearbhadh air sgeulachdan ficseanail a' tighinn gu fìorachd, cha leigeamaid a leas iongnadh a ghabhail a aithrisean a tha a-nise a' nochdadh gum bi tomhas mhòr de dh'obraichean an t-saoghail

make them diseased. The food they are fed is very different to what they would naturally eat in the wild.

3. The product produced at the end of the day may not be fit to eat. Ethoxyquin remains in the flesh of the salmon and we eat it too. The drugs azamethiphos, cypermethrin, deltamethrin and emamectin benzoate are used regularly on the salmon to kill sea lice. These are fast-acting neurotoxins and are toxic to mammals, birds, fish, other sea creatures and humans.

4. The negative long-term effect of salmon farms on our sea, shore and everything that lives in, on or near them has not been properly assessed. We don't know for how long the ground below fish farms remains void of life, toxic and harmful to the environment and us.

Who is accountable? The companies that cause the harm, the environmental agencies that allow it to go on or we as consumers for hiding our heads in the sand on this very emotive subject?

Eva Tombs,
Isle of Lismore.

Road is scarier than theme-park rides

Sir,

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

If he does drive that route, 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 carry on replacing road surfaces without investigating the failures of some of the not so old surfacing work seems a total waste of money.

Is it narrow carriageways or lack of foundations that is the reason 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 mountainous areas of France, a much bigger country than Scotland, it has the kind of severe winters we experience, but their road surfaces are far superior when compared with the A82. If the specifications are right and the workmanship is acceptable, will the government make the urgent decision and start spending our money wisely instead of seeing year after year resurfacing over poor infrastructure?

Alan Robinson,
by email.

Numerous complaints about state of roads

Sir,

I attended the latest Argyll and Bute Council administration meeting with my fellow Conservative councillors.

I had the opportunity to discuss with our administration members the recent unacceptable lengthy disruptions to our internet service. I also made my views clear on the importance of keeping our public toilets on Islay open - all the more so if we are to keep and encourage growth in our important tourist industry. I have raised the numerous and justifiable complaints about our local

roads that I have been receiving. With our roads getting worse, a long-term solution is needed and that means large-scale investment instead of piecemeal patchwork.

Councillor Alastair Redman,
Islay.

Councillors are here to serve the public

Sir,

On February 22, the Argyll and Bute Council administration, which consists of Liberals, Conservatives and some Independent councillors, will reveal its budget for 2018-19. It has already considered 32 proposed savings, some of which appear sensible while others look (and are) ridiculous, and if carried out would be extremely damaging to the local population.

It is now evident the Scottish Government will hand the council the best financial settlement it has had in years, perhaps the best ever.

As a result, the council should immediately announce the cancellation of three wrong-headed proposals, namely: 1. to close 36 of the 57 public toilets - a crazy suggestion that would do irreparable damage to our tourist industry; 2. the suggestion to remove janitors, who provide a vital security role in our schools; and 3. cuts to the Citizens' Advice Bureau, an excellent organisation which saves the council approximately £3 million per year and whose support should be increased.

The council administration should recognise the needs of the local community when finalising the budget and remember they are here to serve the people of Argyll and Bute.

Robert Macintyre,
Serpentine Road, Rothesay.

Support for buy-out of Ulva was democratic

Sir,

In letters (*The Oban Times*, January 25) on the subject of the Ulva buy-out, Iain Thornber refers to 'Mull's democratically elected community council'. While I accept the validity of the community council's role and admire the public service of its members, in fact, as its seats were not contested in 2015, there was no election. The Ulva community buy-out ballot provided a more democratic result than the Mull Community Council's decision to reject it.

N Somerville,
Isle of Mull.

What research was done by professor?

Sir,

I was intrigued to read Professor Emeritus Ian Reid has been able to establish the current road damage between here and Fort William has been caused by timber haulage vehicles.

He must have done a tremendous amount of research to be able to state this as fact. I think it would be wonderful if he could share the results and methodology of this research with your readership.

Iain Moody,
Meadow Road, Dunbeg.

Ailean Caimbeul

gan coileanadh le ròbot taobh a-staigh uine nach bi fada.

Dha mòran luchd-fastaidh 's e fìor dheagh naidheachd a bhios an seo le dealbh a' nochdadh de sgioba-obrach a dh'fhaodar a chumail an sàs gun lasachadh, na tràillean as fheàrr a chunnacas riamh! Agus leis gum bi iad gun bheatha chan fheumar tuarastalan neo cisean de sheòrsa sam bith a phàigheadh às an leth, am feum? Uill, 's neònach mura cruthaich riaghaltasan cisean ùra air an leithid, oir saoilidh mi gun lean feumalachd air an ionmhas a tha ga thogail a' cosnadh mar a tha iad an-dràsta.

Air aon sealladh, tha dòchas air leasachadh mòr eaconamach a' leithid seo de dh'adhartas, far am biodh cruthachadh bathair mòran na bu shaoire às aonais chosgaisean thuarastalan chosnaich agus nan cisean a bhiodh nan lùib sin.

'S dòcha, ri linn an fhàis anns an eaconomaidh gum biodh teachd-a-steach air riaghaltas tro chisean gnìomhachais cho buannachdail is nach biodh buaidh mhòr sam bith aig an luchdachadh a thigeadh air cothroman cosnadh dhan mhòr-shluagh, agus gum faodadh daoine a bhith a' dol air chluaineas sa mheadhan-aois!

Gun teagamh tuigear nach dèan ròbot a h-uile cil. Neo an dèan? Tha fhios nach eil a' cuingealachadh chomasan nan innealan sin ach iresgilean nam feadhna a tha gan cruthachadh, agus le aire air na th' air tachairt gu ruige seo fhèin cò aige tha fios càite am faodadh cùisean ruigheachd. Leis nach bi iad a' faireachadh pian neo tàmailt, an tig latha far am bi sinn fo riaghailth ròbotan nach bi air chomas ach math a dhèanamh?

An e sin an aon sliغه gus cur às do bhochdainn agus aimhreit an t-saoghail?

CONSIDERING mankind's extraordinary scientific and technological advances in the past century, the concept of a substantial proportion of all labour being undertaken by robots is credible.

Extremely attractive prospects for employers whose 'workers' would require neither wage nor rest. Will it take emotionless robots, capable of only doing good, to eradicate poverty and establish world peace?

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

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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Supporting Fort William Football Club



David Jarzab with his Scottish intermediate title medal.
Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Unanimous decision sees Jarzab clinch Scottish title

Boxing

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club's welterweight boxer Dawid Jarzab clinched the Scottish intermediate title with a ferocious performance last Saturday at Scotland's High Performance Centre in Glasgow.

His opponent was Kirkintilloch's Andrew Carr, a slick southpaw who won his semifinal by stoppage the previous weekend.

Jarzab came out the blocks quickly at the opening bell and forced Carr to the ropes with powerful punches from both hands. Whilst Carr was moving back with his head in the air Jarzab showed a marked improvement defensively on recent displays by moving his head after punching and thus evading the majority of the Kirkintilloch man's punches. This was a strong showing by Dawid and the Lochaber boxer was superior in what was a physical round.

Round two was the closest of the contest as Carr knew he had to turn things around and tried to stand his ground. Dawid showed his grit and the two boxers stood toe to toe for the round but Jarzab again landed the cleaner punches.

Dawid was now in the zone as the third round started and, if anything, raised his punch output. Carr had seemingly used up most of his reserves of energy in the previous stanza and found it difficult to keep up with the energy levels of Dawid.

As Carr started to wilt, Dawid pinned him on the ropes and unleashed a vicious volley of punches which resulted in an eight count against the Kirkintilloch boxer. Carr showed a lot of courage to see himself through the final round but Jarzab clearly took the round.

Jarzab celebrated winning the national title after a unanimous decision from the judges.

Fort William dig deep to earn a point

Fort William	1
Clachnacuddin	1
Highland League	

FORT William picked up their second point of the league campaign on Saturday after earning a draw with Clachnacuddin, despite playing almost 20 minutes with 10 men.

An early Darren Quigg penalty helped earn the Lochaber side their second draw of the season as they fought hard to resist a second-half Clach resurgence.

The result follows the news last week that the entire board at Fort William Football Club will be stepping down at the end of the season.

The off-field developments didn't seem to distract the players, however, as they put in a fine performance which possibly deserved more than the solitary point they picked up.

The Fort began the match with intensity and looked to put pressure on the visitors.

Their bright start paid off and after just five minutes, the Fort were awarded a penalty after a clear foul in the area.

Darren Quigg stepped up to the spot and slotted the ball home, netting his first goal since his return to the squad.

The Fort continued to take the game to Clach in the opening exchanges and grew in confidence as the first half went on, with confidence continuing to build.

The half-time whistle blew with the score still at 1-0 and the home dressing room was buoyant after a solid first half performance.

As expected, Clachnacuddin came out in the second half determined to make amends and pushed Fort William back.

They finally got a breakthrough after Kevin Ferguson brought down his man inside the area. Judged to be a foul, the referee blew for a penalty - a decision that was met with doubts in the home support.

Contention
Michael Finnis converted the spot-kick in the 64th minute and put Clach back in contention.

As players tired and tension mounted, the match became fraught with both sets of players giving their all. After a scrappy passage of play and a few tough tackles, Michael Gillespie went in hard on his man.

The strong challenge caught the attention of the referee and Gillespie was soon shown a red card and given his marching orders for the foul. With just 76

minutes on the clock, the Fort had to see out the remaining time with just 10 men.

The Lochaber men dug deep, however, and resisted the Clach pressure. Seventeen-year-old goalkeeper Martin MacKinnon put in a fine performance on his return from a lengthy injury absence and was solid between the posts. The Fort remained resolute in the closing exchanges and managed to see out the draw and secure their second point of the season.

Co-manager Paul MacLellan was pleased with the point: 'The result was very pleasing. It was especially pleasing to have a good squad to choose from on Saturday as we've been hit by a lot of injuries and absences recently.'

'We've brought some ex-players into the squad again who have been a big help, especially for the younger players. Their experience was very valuable in a physical match like that.'

Although MacLellan had reservations about the sending off, he was happy with the way his team responded: 'There were three or four heavy challenges going in right before the foul and so I thought that Michael was a bit hard done by. 'The boys did well to play



John Treasurer battles for the ball. Photo: Abrightside Photography.

almost 20 minutes with a man down though.

'Having Martin MacKinnon back in goals was a huge bonus, he gives the whole team a great boost in confidence.'

'I also thought John Treasurer did a great job leading the line up front on his own, especially after a number of weeks out through injury.'

Football

Fort William play Fraserburgh away in the Breeding Aggregates Highland League Cup this Saturday, February 10. The side returns to league action next Wednesday, February 14, against Nairn County at Claggan Park.

Free scoring Lochaber leapfrog Cowal after impressive victory

Lochaber	58
Cowal	7
BT West Division 3	

LOCHABER secured a comprehensive victory in their first home game of 2018 with a free scoring performance against Cowal.

It was also the first time the two clubs had met in the league, with the Argyll side coming into the match three points and one place above Lochaber in the league.

Lochaber started the game well putting Cowal under real



Conor Taylor made his presence felt on his return to the side. Photo: Abrightside Photography.

pressure across the park. The home side's lineout was performing well and was proving a good source of turnover ball with man of the match James Lucas regularly managing to get up in front of Cowal's jumper to steal the ball.

Lochaber's early pressure was rewarded by tries from Jonathan McCook and Christopher Simpson, both getting their first tries of the afternoon. Towards the end of the first half Cowal were starting to come back into the game but then an interception from Simpson ended a promising attack. A foot race followed over the following 60 metres but Simpson crossed the line for his second try before the Cowal defence could get back.

In the second half lots of errors were creeping into the game from both sides. Lochaber lost possession in the middle of the park and Cowal were able to get quick ball out wide to their full back who flew down the wing and scored right behind the posts allowing for an easy conversion. This was possibly the wake-up call Lochaber needed.

Rugby

Conor Taylor made his return to the club after travelling overseas and it didn't take long for him to make his presence known. Taylor picked the ball from the back of a scrum and went for a run, managing to evade four Cowal players before crossing the line.

Lochaber were back on the attack again but five metres from Cowal's line they gave away possession. From the resulting scrum they went for a risky option feeding the ball out quickly for their fullback hoping to make some territory but the Lochaber defence were able to get there and make the tackle. In the tackle Scottie Diack ripped the ball clean from the fullback's hands and with no defenders between him and Cowal's line it was an easy try for Lochaber's fly-half.

McCook got his second try of the afternoon from a well-worked backs' move he was able to break the tackle putting him through to score again. McCook also converted four out of six conversions as Lochaber finished the game with a comfortable margin.

The win moved Lochaber above Cowal to fifth in the league. This Saturday Lochaber travel to Glasgow University Medics at Colquhoun Park, Bearsden for a 3pm kick off.



Inverlochly were winners of the P6-7 section of the Lochaber area First Shinty qualifiers. Photos: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



Inverlochly did the double also winning the P4-5 section.

Inverlochly teams dominate

PRIMARY shinty teams from around Lochaber gathered at the Nevis Centre recently to take part in a full day of competition.

Almost 100 children battled it out for a place in the finals at the Lochaber area qualifiers as part of the National First Shinty competition.

Inverlochly Primary School won the P6/7 competition after

School shinty

beating Caol in the final.

In the semi-finals of the P4/5, Inverlochly beat Ardnamurchan and Caol beat BSGLA. The final was a hard-fought game between the two Fort William schools, but it was Inverlochly who came out on top, completing the double and winning their place in the finals.

Lochaber 10-pin bowling results

10-pin bowling

AFTER week 10 of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William Alleycats still lead the scratch division with 44 points followed by The Empire on 40 points and Council in third place on 36 points. Alleycats are also in the lead of the handicap division with 40 points followed by Council on 33 points, whilst British Legion Fort William move into third place with 32 points after beating second place Council 5-0.

Individually the best scratch game of the week came from Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with a 179. He also had the top two-game scratch series of 336. Jim Bell (British Legion Fort William) had the week's top handicap game of 243 and the top two-game handicap series of 464.

The best team scores of the week all came from British Legion Fort William, who swept the board with the top scratch game of 611, the top handicap game of 885, the top two-game scratch series of 1,180 and the top two-game handicap series of 1,728.

The top scratch average is held by Ben Weller (The Empire) with 161 followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 158 and Tony Whitelocke on 151.

Lochaber club lotteries

Lottery numbers

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 3, 10 and 11. There was no winner so the jackpot for the draw today, Thursday February 8, will be £300.

Caol Community Centre's bingo lotto numbers for this week were 1, 8 and 18. There were no winners so next week's jackpot will be £200.

Balachulish Shinty Club's lottery numbers for this week were 4, 11 and 15.

One lucky winner, Stephen Cairns in Ballachulish won the £400 on offer.

Next week's draw will have a prize of £200

Yells wins figure-of-eight race

Athletics

LOCHABER hill runners enjoyed stunning conditions for the latest round of the winter series in the figure-of-eight race.

Forty-nine competitors took part with the first runner over the finish line being John Yells of Lochaber AC, in a time of 1:07:02. Yells was followed in second-place by vet 40 runner Tom Smith, also of Lochaber AC, in 1:09:19. Denis Prikulis of Vegan Runners finished third in a time of 1:11:05. For the women, it was first place for Lisette Walter of Lochaber AC in a time of 1:22:20, with vet 40 runner Vikki MacKinnon of Lochaber AC finishing second in 1:27:57. Keri Wallace took third place with a time of 1:28:08.

The next race will be the Cow Hill Race on February 25.

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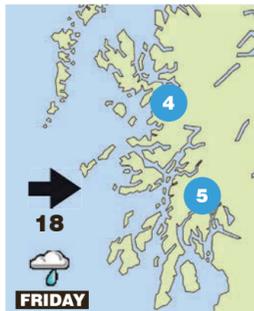
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Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

WEATHER

Thursday	Light rain Winds moderate West South Westerly Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.
Friday	Cloudy with light rain showers Winds strong Westerly Temperatures 2°C to 5°C.
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain showers on Saturday Sleet showers on Sunday Winds strong South South Westerly Temperatures 1°C to 5°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 8, 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	05.11	1.5	10.55	3.0	18.01	1.8	23.51	2.9
Fri	06.09	1.7	12.21	2.8	19.14	1.9	**.**	**
Sat	01.37	2.9	07.19	1.9	14.37	2.8	20.50	1.9
Sun	02.51	3.0	08.56	1.8	15.40	3.0	21.53	1.7
Mon	03.43	3.2	10.09	1.7	16.11	3.2	22.36	1.5
Tues	04.25	3.4	10.53	1.5	16.45	3.4	23.12	1.3
Wed	05.04	3.7	11.28	1.3	17.21	3.6	23.44	1.1

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