

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Church filled to capacity for funeral of Robin Banks

OBAN Parish Church was filled to capacity last Friday as friends and family of the late Robin Banks paid their respects to the former solicitor and councillor.

Among the mourners were representatives of the Scottish Parliament, Argyll and Bute Council, the legal profession, An Comunn Gaidhealach and the many other organisations Mr Banks represented in a lifetime dedicated to serving his community.

The service was conducted by Rev Dugald Cameron and Rev Bill Gray. Rev Gray said the large attendance was 'an astonishing reflection' of the commitment Robin and his widow, Ishbel, had on Oban and the wider Argyll community.

Rev Cameron added: 'It was a thank you for what he did and who he was.'

Teenagers referred to Children's Reporter

THREE teenagers have been referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter by Oban police officers investigating incidents of spraypaint vandalism throughout the town.

The three boys, two aged 14 and one aged 15, have been reported in connection with 12 counts of vandalism and the theft of paint materials from a shop in Oban.

Over the past few weeks areas including Mossfield, Drummore Road and the town centre had been 'tagged' with spraypaint.

New management at Lochnell Arms

THE LOCHNELL Arms Hotel in North Connel will have new owners as of this Saturday.

MacGregor Hotels has re-let the property under the new management of former Oban High School pupil Susan Shaw and Dutchman Ruud van de hee, who take over from Joan and Colin Felgate.

MacGregor Hotels thanked the Felgates and wished them good fortune for the future.

The move is a homecoming for Susan Shaw, who has spent the past 11 years in the hospitality industry abroad.



Kim, centre left, and Finlo, centre right, were joined by Penny, held by Sennen Last, and Snowy, held by Ruari Cottier, at Dunbeg Primary School last week. Teacher Nicola Richard is pictured with the children. 15_07/dunbegps1

Dunbeg fun as fluffy friends aid learning

PUPILS at Dunbeg Primary School have been learning all about the Arctic Circle thanks to local scientists carrying out research there - and a couple of fluffy friends.

Finlo Cottier and Kim Last both work at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Dunbeg and their children, Ruari Cottier, 6, and Sennen Last, 5, both attend the village school.

So when Finlo and Kim were setting off for the Arctic to investigate how life survives in the long, dark winter months, they decided to bring along two helpers to keep their

children up to date - Penny the Penguin and Snowy the Seal.

The dotting dads were providing regular updates - but it was their cuddly companions who were the stars of the show.

Enthralled
Teacher Nicola Richard, who was relaying tales of the Arctic adventures thanks to Finlo and Kim's photographs and blogs, said the children in her primary two class were enthralled.

She said: 'We had a choice of geography projects and because Finlo and Kim were

going to the Arctic we thought we'd take full advantage. The kids have absolutely loved it and have been so excited. It has brought it to life for them and it will be far more memorable because of this.'

'They remember far more of the lessons because of what Snowy and Penny have been getting up to.'

While they have now returned to the shores of Dunstaffnage, Kim, Finlo, Snowy and Penny are likely to be making a return journey next winter - much to the pupils' delight.

Introduction of Methadone clinic 'by stealth' sparks fury

THE INTRODUCTION of a Methadone service 'by stealth' sparked fury in Campbelltown this week.

Most of the town's residents have opposed plans for a service, expressing fears that a clinic and the area's availability of cheap rented housing would attract hard drug users from outwith the town.

'The community has been cheated,' said Councillor Donald Kelly.

'We were assured by health minister Michael Mathieson and the Scottish Government in August that nothing would be imposed on us that we were not happy

with, that there would be consultation. Now, suddenly a service is up and running by stealth.'

'It is underhand and the people of Campbelltown are going to be furious. It is totally disrespectful to them.'

Prescriptions

Prescriptions for Methadone are already being given to users by a dispensing nurse - contrary to original plans to involve GPs.

MSP Jamie McGrigor, Campbelltown Community Council and others say the move goes against promises for full consultation. Nona Ruesgen, of the Kintyre Substance

Misuse Group, said: 'Procedures set down to have transparency have been bypassed completely. It's extremely underhand.'

A NHS Highland spokesman admitted this week the group, set up to oversee the setting up of a clinic, was not told about the start of the service.

He said: 'As a result of discussions between the nurse prescriber, the clients and their previous prescribers, it was agreed there was no benefit in delaying the start of the service.'

'We apologise to the group members for not informing them in advance.'

Council £8m tied up in vacant property

ON THE day Argyll's councillors meet in Kilmory to determine the coming year's budget, *The Oban Times* can reveal the council has £8million tied up in vacant properties.

Figures obtained under freedom of information show that the local authority has 34 empty buildings across the region.

Of those, 10 are either under offer, being marketed, or are to be re-listed.

Six are subject to interest from a community group or planning partner.

While the council has spent £38,707.96 maintaining the buildings, there has been concern recently that some have been neglected and not enough spent keeping them wind and watertight, causing damage and reducing their value.

Kilbowie House, in Oban, was marketed for sale for £450,000, but *The Oban Times* understands bids of less than half that were lodged by this month's closing date, due to its condition. Last

year, £1,080 was spent on maintenance there.

Rockfield School in Oban had £1,493.70 spent on it last year - but the condition of the building is so poor a buyer has not been found and moves are afoot to try and have it demolished.

Eighteen council buildings were not maintained at all last year.

The council has also spent £71,925.69 on security for its vacant buildings last year - but only for two. Rothesay Academy, which is considered uneconomical to redevelop, cost £2,167.54 to patrol, while Castle Toward in Dunoon - which has been the subject of controversy over dealings with a prospective buyer - cost £69,758.15.

A spokeswoman for the council said there was a difference between vacant and surplus properties, saying only those deemed surplus will be put on the market.

The council says surplus properties are put on the market as soon as possible, and of the 22

it currently deems surplus, seven are under offer and five available for sale.

Asked if the council felt it maintained vacant properties to a high enough standard to maintain their value, the spokeswoman said: 'Maintaining the buildings and properties we use to deliver essential services is our priority. When a particular property has been declared surplus and is to be marketed, we will do what we can in terms of maintenance, keeping the building safe, water and weather tight.'

OBAN has more vacant council properties than any other part of Argyll, with eight currently lying empty.

They are:
Kilbowie House
Rockfield Primary School
29 Lochside Street
Former Tracie's Takeaway
Former Lochside Street Public Conveniences
43 Stevenson Street
Site 2 Mill Park
Site 13 Mill Lane

'Open mic' blocks coastguard signal

MARINERS across the west coast have been warned about operating radios properly after a coastguard distress channel was blocked for two hours last week.

Lifeboat crews in Oban and Tobermory were asked to investigate the seemingly accidental jamming of VHF Channel 16 from 1pm on February 5, caused by someone leaving their microphone open.

The 'open mic' jam was traced to Oban's harbour by the Royal Navy helicopter Rescue 177.

However, before the vessel responsible could be found, the jam was removed just before 3pm.

A spokeswoman for Stornoway Coastguard said similar situations can arise 'quite regularly'.

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Man walks free from court following flawed advice from charity

WOMEN'S Aid has refused to comment after a man who faced charges following flawed advice from the charity walked free from Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Lachlan MacLachlan, 45, was granted an absolute discharge by Sheriff Douglas Small, having previously admitting two incidents involving his partner of five years.

When MacLachlan, of 3f Burnbank Terrace, Breadalbane Street, Oban, first appeared at court

last August, his lawyer Heather Shaw, said his partner did not wish charges to be pressed. She claimed she was misled into speaking to police after Women's Aid said officers could simply take a note of the incidents, if that was what she wished.

Ms Shaw said: 'She felt empowered by that advice - what she didn't know was the police have policies to follow these matters up. She feels she's been misled and let down.'

Scottish Power confirms plans to double Cruachan station output

SCOTTISH Power has this week confirmed plans to more than double the output of Cruachan Power Station, following the completion of a feasibility study.

The intention to expand the hydro power station, near Lochawe, had already been revealed in the Scottish Government's draft National Planning Framework.

The First Minister Alex Salmond said that combined with other planned developments

around Scotland, the announcement 'heralds a renaissance in hydro and pump storage energy'.

He added that this combination could see hydro power generate up to one third of Scotland's entire generating capacity in the next decade.

Merits

But he also said any application for development at Cruachan would be considered on its own merits. Cruachan Power Station currently operates a 440 MW pump storage station, which could be

increased to 1,040MW under the Scottish Power plans. Keith Anderson, chief corporate officer at Scottish Power, said: 'The feasibility study will see us speaking to, and consulting with, a wide variety of local groups and stakeholders. Any potential future upgrade to Cruachan would be a major infrastructure project that could bring significant local and national economic benefits, as well as playing a major role in supporting the growth of renewable energy.'

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Roadworks east of Taynuilt for two weeks

MOTORISTS will have to endure two weeks of delays between Taynuilt and Lochawe as £300,000 of improvements to the A85 are carried out.

A one-mile stretch of road east of the village will be resurfaced as part of the work, which will see a 10mph convoy manage traffic between 7am-7pm on weekdays, starting on February 24.

The work is scheduled to finish on March 7.

BEAR Scotland says no works will be carried out at weekends to help minimise disruption.

Outwith working hours, traffic management restrictions will be removed, with a 30mph speed limit remaining in place over the extent of the works, as traffic will be running on a temporary surface.

Eddie Ross, BEAR Scotland's north west unit representative, said: 'This maintenance scheme will help improve the road quality and structural integrity of this section of the A85, ensuring that the road continues to operate safely for motorists.'

'We are doing what we can to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum throughout the works, but we would encourage people to plan their journey in advance whenever possible and to utilise the Traffic Scotland website for up-to-date travel information.'

New chairman elected

COUNCILLOR Alasdair Macleod is the new chairman of sustainable development on Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council).

Committee members elected the Sgìre an Rubha ward councillor ahead of North Uist councillor Uisdean Robertson on a 7-6 vote. Councillor Macleod said: 'I am delighted to have been given this honour by the committee and we will continue to work together for the benefit of our communities throughout the Western Isles.'

Tributes were paid to outgoing chairman Councillor Archie Campbell, who had held the post since 2003.

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Guy Grieve of Mull's Ethical Shellfish Company is helping to promote Argyll and Scotland to the world as part of the Meet the Scots campaign.

Familiar faces win a place in new Meet the Scots tourism marketing campaign

MULL scallop diver Guy Grieve and the Duke and Duchess of Argyll have been unveiled as three of the country's new ambassadors in an international marketing campaign.

A trio of Skye ambassadors will also feature in VisitScotland's £1.7million promotion, chef Lady Claire MacDonald, ferryman Donnie MacDonald and Glenelg Inn manager, Sheila Condie.

The Meet the Scots campaign will run across Europe, as well as America, Canada and Australia.

It is hoped the campaign will lead to a boost for tourism to the area in a year when the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup come to Scotland.

Guy Grieve has been running The Ethical

Shellfish Company on Mull with wife Juliet since 2010, hand-diving king scallops off the stunning coast of the island.

The Duke and Duchess of Argyll, meanwhile, have been stalwarts for attracting tourism to the area, with the Duchess the organiser of the Best of the West Festival at Inveraray Castle.

In their new role, they will help spread the word about the year that Scotland welcomes the world across key international markets.

The campaign's new ambassadors were announced as part of the launch of the marketing campaign in Edinburgh and Inverness last week.

Running online and in print, the promotion targets millions of potential visitors in the

key European markets of Germany, France and Spain, as well as Italy, Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands.

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland's regional director, said: 'Introducing real Scots as ambassadors is a great way to reel in potential visitors. European visitors are particularly keen to engage with the locals when in Scotland and it is the type of insider knowledge delivered via the campaign that really helps them to make the most of their own adventure in Scotland.'

'Using our Scots to front the campaign allows us to provide consumers with a greater depth of information and insider tips - the kinds of things you don't find in the guide books and the real gems you discover by meeting local people.'

Corran Ferry fares rise could prompt exodus

REMOTE Lochaber communities could see an exodus of population if fares on the Corran Ferry were raised by 25 per cent.

That was the stark warning in a new report from consultants Aecom to Highland Council's TEC services committee last week. The findings were based on more than 600 responses from residents, visitors and businesses to a survey asking their views on increasing fares by either 10 or 25 per cent.

The council commissioned the study to guide a long term fares policy in order to bridge a £173,000 gap in the ferry's £1.3 million annual running costs. Key to that will be judging how much more fares can be increased without damaging revenue on the lifeline link, the second busiest ferry in Scotland.

Fares for regular users have already risen by almost 20 per cent since last year. Another four per cent increase kicks in on April 1.

In his presentation, AECOM director Tom Matthew said 55 per cent of local people and 32 per cent of visitors would make fewer trips if fares rose by 10 per cent.

Those figures jumped to 81 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively, if tickets were increased by 25 per cent.

Even with a 10 per cent

increase, almost seven in 10 locals said impacts would be 'significant or very significant' - and over 90 per cent if fares went up 25 per cent.

If that happened, haulage firms could switch to the Mull and Oban ferries and some residents would consider leaving altogether, the report found. Also, any increase would force more people on the single-track A861 to the A830 to get to Fort William. Mr Matthew stressed the importance of certainty in setting future fare levels for residents and businesses.

He said: 'I have spoken to people, businesses and freight operators. They don't understand or know the direction fares policy is moving in on the Corran Ferry. They don't know how much notice they will get on future fare increases and how much they will be.'

Committee chairman Councillor Graham Phillips said: 'There is no proposal on the table at the moment for either a 10 per cent or a 25 per cent increase. These were 'what if' questions only.'

'We will be coming back at the next committee meeting with a fully worked up business case over the next five to 10 years.'

Councillor Andrew Baxter criticised the report for being 'more akin to an opinion survey' and failing to address the impact

of more people choosing the narrow A861 instead of the ferry. He said: 'I suspect this report will do nothing to appease residents across the peninsula.'

'By going round the alternative route by road not only increases the mileage of the trip but increases the time considerably.'

'The vast majority of that route is along a single track road.'

Councillor Brian Murphy agreed: 'We are working on a Carbon Clever initiative in the Highlands. We should be looking at this issue as part of that and how much carbon emissions are reduced by having the ferry there and what might happen if we put up fares too high.'

Councillor Murphy also won backing for a move to include Argyll and Bute Council in the consultation.

He said: 'The Lochaline to Fishnish and Tobermory to Kilchoan ferries are also a viable part of the local economy with regard to tourism. Tourists like round trips - they don't like to go back by the same route.'

The study will go to Ardgour, Morvern, West Arnamurchan, Acharacle and Sunart community councils for consultation. Lochaber Area Committee will discuss the report in Fort William on February 27. The TEC services committee is expected to decide on the new fares regime on May 15.

Wind turbines to be built after six-year wait

A WESTERN Isles community will at last be able to reap the benefits from a wind turbine development - six years after winning planning permission.

Community landowner North Harris Trust was granted approval by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) for three turbines at Monan, five miles north of Tarbert, in 2008.

Funding was in place and a grid connection booked - but no turbines robust enough to withstand turbulence around the Outer Isles' highest mountain,

The Clisham, could be sourced and the project stalled.

But now the trust has set up a joint venture, Monan Wind Company Limited with specialist turbine manufacturer Windflow UK Limited to build and operate the £3.5 million scheme.

The firm's Windflow 500 has been designed to 'class 1A' standards, which means the machines can withstand 20 years of buffeting on the exposed ridge. The trust owns 10 per cent of the joint venture through its trading company and will receive rent and dividends

totalling around £1 million on behalf of the community throughout the project period.

The money will go towards community regeneration schemes within North Harris and the neighbouring island of Scalpay, which have a combined population of just over 1,000.

Calum MacKay, chairman of The North Harris Trust, said: 'We set out in 2003 to develop the Monan site. Directors have worked doggedly to find a way through the many set-backs thrown their way.'

'After more than 10 years, it looks as though this year we will see turbines on the site. This project will bring much-needed new income to the trust and the local community.'

Andy Strowbridge, Windflow UK's general manager, said: 'We are delighted to be partnering with The North Harris Trust to bring this community project to fruition.'

'We realise that the spectacular location has a flip side, with difficult access and a truly challenging wind regime.'

'Fortunately we have experience from other demanding

sites where Windflow turbines operate. We look forward to working with North Harris Trust and the local community to turn their wind into a long term legacy.'

In addition to the turbines, the project will involve civil, electrical and turbine installation works and operations and maintenance service.

Work on the 1.5 megawatt development is expected to start later this year. Windflow will shortly begin to engage locally with contractors for procurement.

Jordan jumps at chance of Navy diving career

A BUDDING sailor from Lochaber was among the successful Royal Navy recruits on parade at HMS Raleigh to mark the end of basic training.

Trainee diver Jordan Cattanach, aged 18, arrived at the Royal Navy training base in Cornwall in November for a 10-week induction course to learn skills he will rely on throughout his time in the service.

Former Lochaber High School student Jordan, from Inchree, Onich, said: 'I joined the Royal Navy for the simple reason of a stable career doing what I love and the experience of learning a new trade.'

'It feels good to have completed the training and I am looking forward to the next challenge.'

Jordan will now transfer to HMS Collingwood in Hampshire to undergo specialist training to qualify as a diver.

'Royal Navy divers' tasks



Jordan Cattanach: Royal Navy trainee diver.

include identifying and destroying mines posing a danger to a warship, disposing of Second World War weaponry dragged up in trawlers' nets and carrying our major engineering jobs on the ship's propeller or hull if needed.

Have your say on new Skye campsite plan

A NEW £600,000 campsite and events space at Broadford Community Woodland on Skye is a step closer after Broadford and Strath Community

Company (BSCC) appointed local firm Dualchas Architects to lead the design team.

BSCC will hold a drop in session at Broadford Village Hall next Thursday between 6pm and 8pm to allow residents to input their ideas.

Representatives from BSCC and the team will be on hand to discuss current plans and take on board suggestions.

Project officer Shirley Grant said: 'We want to build a

campsite that will service the needs of the community, including businesses, and one that the community will be proud of.'

The design team is being funded by a £50,000 grant from The Big Lottery Fund to work up detailed proposals and prepare a £600,000 application to the Investing in Communities Fund. BSCC chair Alistair McPherson said: 'The campsite and event space are a vital part of the woodland development and once established, will bring a good income for the community.'

New group set up to help otters on Mull and Iona

A NEW group has been set up on Mull and Iona in an effort to create greater public awareness of the conservation needs of one of Scotland's most iconic animals.

Identified as one of the 'Big Five' species of wildlife that visitors to Scotland most want to see, the otter is in danger of becoming a victim of its own popularity on the island - particularly given the increase in eco-tourism there.

This is something the recently founded Mull Otter Group (MOG) hopes to address by encouraging an ethically friendly approach to watching otters and other wildlife on the island.

Jane Stevens, chairwoman of MOG, said: 'Otters on the Isle of Mull and Iona are under greater pressure than ever from an increasing number of wildlife enthusiasts who want to see them.'

'This is something of a double-edged sword, as otters can be shy, elusive and easily disturbed. We hope to establish a code of conduct which will help to protect these marvellous creatures.'

MOG has produced a leaflet suggesting ways in which people can look for otters around the coast of the island without being a nuisance to the otters.

Jane added: 'Otters are extremely sensitive ecological barometers. Their rarity in most people's lives make them an animal that many have never seen.'

The isles of Mull and Iona have one of the highest densities of otters anywhere in the country so it is almost guaranteed that a visit to the island will reward you with a sighting.'

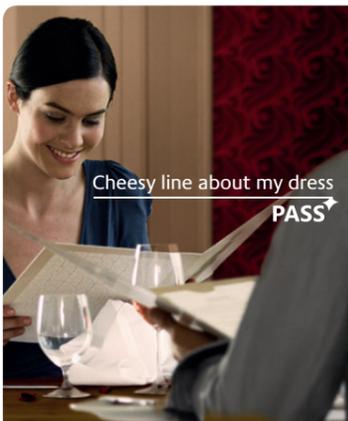
An increasing number of otters have been victims of collisions with vehicles in recent years, prompting Mull Otter Group to request the installation of 'Beware otter crossing' road signs.

The group is also setting about cleaning roadside culverts to make them a more appealing passage for the otters.

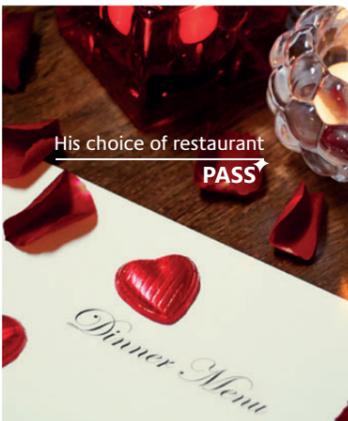
MOG member Ruth Fleming said: 'There is some evidence local otters employ these artificial tunnels to gain safe movement across the roads on Mull, but their use appears to be inconsistent.'

'The availability of clean culverts and the provision of suitable road signs alerting drivers to be aware of otters crossing may not prevent the deaths of otters on the island in future.'

'However, we believe that such action may help reduce the number of casualties on local roads each year.'



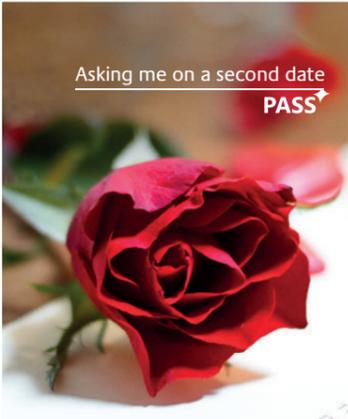
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Lorn Lines

PIPE Major Douglas Murray, of Police Scotland Fife Pipe Band, will be the guest player at the next Netherlorn Piping Society. The forthcoming recital will take place on Wednesday, February 19 at 7.30pm in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls. Mr Murray, whose grade one band almost always features in the prize list, is also a top solo player, regularly winning high profile competitions. He is also a professional reed maker, whose reeds are in great demand by many of the competing bands. He will be supported by some of Angus MacColl's talented pupils.



ROY Wood, the educational director of Oban Speakers Club, had given some challenging subjects to the main speakers he was introducing on Ladies' Night last week. Perhaps the most difficult subject was given to Tom Clegg who did an excellent short biography of Edith Cavell. The other two speakers were Archie McPhail, who entertained with his subject 'The man who is always talking', and Jim Fraser, who did his best not to upset the guests with 'Did ever woman interrupt a man'. After an enjoyable tea

break the topics chairman gave a variety of topics to Roy Wood, Peter Mills, Eamonn Arthur, Bill Leech and John Maclean. The timekeeper was Nick Maclean and a kind and humorous general evaluation was given by Alex Clark. In his closing remarks the president, Frank Walton, thanked the guests for their attendance and expressed his wish that they would all return next year. The next club meeting will be held in the Ambo Room, Church Centre, Glencruitten Road at 8pm on February 20.



ST COLUMBA'S Primary School's new under 5 parent/toddler group starts on Wednesday, February 26. Held in the spare classroom, the group is held between 1.45pm-3.15pm. Activities include toys, arts and crafts, stories, songs and games. One of the mums running the club, Helen McGuigan, said: 'We will have a little routine and themes going each week. All ideas are welcome. Spread our good news. I think I'm more excited than the kids!'



A NUMBER of choristers from Oban and Lorn took part in an unforgettable choral event on Sunday (February 9) in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall. More than a dozen members of various choirs made the trip to the city's date with the Big Big Sing, a UK-wide project to get people singing as part of the celebrations for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. The Oban and Lorn contingent, including members of Fynuilt Gaelic Choir and Sequence Ladies choir, joined 850 other singers in learning four songs from

the Big Big Commonwealth Songbook under the tutelage of choirmasters Stephen Deazley and Eugene Skeef. They learned two songs from Africa, one from Jamaica and one from Samoa, mastering the different languages in the songs. The ladies of Sequence choir said it had been a 'brilliant' experience and well worth the journey. The next Big Big Sing takes place in Edinburgh's Usher Hall on February 16 2014; see www.bigbigsing.org for more details on the project.

Got a story for Lorn Lines? Phone 01631 568000 or email editor@obantimes.co.uk



Irene Hannah and Mac can be seen walking around Oban as she aims to clock up 80 miles before her 80th birthday. 16_107walk01

Great-grandmother steps out on 80-mile charity challenge

A GREAT-grandmother who suffers from a long list of ailments is encouraging others to get out and about as she takes on an 80-mile walking challenge.

Oban pensioner Irene Hannah, who turns 80 on April 20, is regularly accompanied by her faithful West Highland Terrier, Mac, as she strides pavements and paths in and around Oban. The Nant Drive resident has already covered 41 miles and is well on her way to surpassing her target before her birthday party in Glencruitten Golf Club - not bad for someone who suffers from neuropathic feet, varicose veins and asthma, among other conditions. She has also had a replacement hip and has postponed a leg operation in order to complete her fundraiser. Irene's target is to raise £1,200 for the Dementia Resource Centre and North Argyll Care Centre, services that became so important when her late husband, Samuel, became terminally ill. He died on January 5 2012. The mother of six, who doesn't hold a driving licence, said: 'I was barely able to walk to the door after Samuel died. But if he had seen me then, he would have said, 'Get on your bike'. I would be too dangerous on that now, so I prefer to walk! Now I go walking anywhere I can, whatever the weather. If it is raining, I just put on my hood. If you are feeling down and depressed, get outside and see what is around you.' Asked about her health, she replies: 'You don't get to 80 without having something wrong with you. I just do a few miles at a time. Anyway, why sit around, wasting away?' Livewire Irene drops off sponsor forms and asks for donations at houses and businesses she passes while out walking. In 2003 Irene swam 66 lengths of the Atlantis Leisure pool in an hour to raise £1,009 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Tree trouble at root of tourism woes

TREES are branching out all over Oban and Lorn - and they're causing a tourism headache.

Several of the town's popular viewpoints are either blocked or in danger of being obscured as private landowners allow their trees to grow unabated - much to the chagrin of visitors and those who enjoy the town's views. Trees growing alongside the train line into Oban from Glasgow seem to be causing as much of a problem - blocking views on a line Wanderlust three times described as the most beautiful in the country. Now the town's community council wants something done about it. Member George Berry said: 'There are walls of trees and some are so bad tourists can't see the town from some places. The railway line into Oban is supposed to be one of the most beautiful in the world, but two thirds of the railway from Glasgow into Oban there's nothing but trees. Tourists are travelling through an alley of trees and that's not good enough.' The Friends of the West Highland Lines group agrees and is currently pressing the point to bidders for the west coast line franchise, which will be renewed next year. The Friends' Norman MacNab said: 'We've been working with Network Rail and the [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs] National Park and managed to clear a small section near Lochawe. We funded that ourselves, but there are still too many trees. Network Rail isn't funded to clear views so it's something the Scottish Government is pressing with the new franchise.' Argyll and the Isles Tourism is also keen to see overly tall trees

Oban woman kicked and punched partner

A WOMAN who 'lost the plot' with her partner and ended up kicking and punching him in the middle of Oban's Esplanade has been told by Sheriff Douglas Small that she must learn to control herself.

Andrea Michelle Hendry, aged 25, of 12 Macdougall Court, Dunollie, pled guilty, when she appeared before Sheriff Small last Tuesday, to assaulting her partner, kicking him on the body and repeatedly punching him on the head to his injury. The attack, which happened on December 12 last year, left him with a minor cut on his lip. Stephen Macleod, defence agent for Hendry, said the couple had 'a difficult and turbulent relationship'. 'My client, for want of a better description, lost the plot,' he added. Hendry was fined £250.

Police station counter opening hours cut

REDUCED hours at public counters in police stations across Scotland will come into effect on March 1.

Argyll's towns remain largely unaffected; Oban, Dunoon, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead and Rothesay will continue to be open 24/7.

However, Police Scotland had already confirmed there would be no public counter provision at Bowmore, Islay, Tobermory on Mull and Garelochhead. Helensburgh Police Station is also operating at reduced public hours. Police stations can be contacted by phone on 101.

Man in court on assault charge

A MAN has been ordered to be of good behaviour after admitting assaulting a woman and behaving in a threatening manner.

Appearing from custody at Oban Sheriff Court, Waldemar Bogdan Bartczak, 55, of 33 Creag Bhan Village, pled guilty via a translator to the offences, which occurred on Friday evening.

He's accused of seizing the woman by the back of the neck, pushing her and shouting at her. He returns to the court in March.



Some of the town's most popular viewpoints, like this one on Pulpit Hill, are blocked by 'walls of trees' according to Oban Community Council. 16_107trees1

ADVERTORIAL

Cùrsaichean Goirid SMO - An t-Earrach 2014

Bidh cùrsaichean goirid a' tilleadh gu Sabhal Mòr Ostaig as t-Earrach am bliadhna le cùrsaichean aon latha is cùrsaichean còig làithean sa Ghàidhlig, dràma, ceòl is dealbhadair-achd. Bidh an t-Ionad Nàiseanta airson Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig a' ruith 15 cùrsaichean thairis air cola-deug aig toiseach a' Ghiblein. Bidh a' bhana-sheinneadair chliùiteach, Cairistiona Primrose, a' stiùireadh cùrsa ann an Òrain Ghàidhlig agus bidh am fìdhleair bhon chòmhlàn thraidiseanta Dàimh, Gabe McVarish, a' teagasg na fìdhle airson a' chùrsa shònraichte aige. Bidh Caillean MacIleathain a' ruith cùrsa do dhaoine aig a bheil ùidh ann an dealbhadair-achd agus bidh cùrsa ùr a' ruith do dhaoine aig a bheil Gàidhlig ach a tha airson na sgilean labhairt, leughaidh is sgrìobhadh aca a leasachadh. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's Short Courses will be returning this spring with a combination of 1 day and 5 day courses



at the College based in Skye. The National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture will be running a range of courses in Gaelic, drama & music. At the beginning of April our traditional 5 day residential courses at Easter will run over a 2 week period again this year. Among the 15 courses available, will be Christine Primrose's Gaelic Song course, an ideal opportunity to study with a highly respected, world class Gaelic singer. Gabe

McVarish, fiddler with renowned trad band Dàimh returns to lead his unique fiddle course and Caillean MacLean will also be at the College that week with his successful digital photography for beginners. Amongst the Gaelic courses we have available will be a new course for native Gaelic speakers who wish to improve their Gaelic be it through understanding grammar, improving their reading & writing or indeed their confidence in speaking their own language.



As usual there will be plenty of concerts and music sessions running at the College over the April fortnight which are open to all. Local arts agency SEALL will be presenting concerts each Tuesday with Christine Primrose & friends appearing on 1/4/14. More information and tickets can be accessed through SEALL's website: www.seall.co.uk

SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG

SPRING 2014 ON THE ISLE OF SKYE

SHORT COURSES

31/03 - 04/04
Gàidhlig - Gaelic Levels - 1,3,5,7,9
Cùrsa airson Fìleantaich Course for Fluent Speakers
Òrain Ghàidhlig - Gaelic Song with Christine Primrose

22/02 & 22/03
Sgilean Radio & Drama
Radio & Drama Skills

07/04 - 11/04
Gàidhlig - Gaelic Levels - 2,4,6,8,10
Cùrsa Croitreachd - Crofting in the Community
Dealbhachadh Digiteach - Digital Photography
Fìdhleall - Fiddle with Gabe McVarish

Why not spend a week on Skye at Scotland's National Centre for Gaelic language and culture?

We offer weekly language courses for all levels of students from the beginner to the fluent speaker. Some of our courses are shown here, but for a full list please visit our website.

Thigibh a chèilidh oirnn!

Tuilleadh Fios / Further info: 01471 888240
cg@smo.uhi.ac.uk www.smo.uhi.ac.uk

For more information about all the Short Courses at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, please visit the College's website: www.smo.uhi.ac.uk.

Morvern Lines

THERE was euphoria in Morvern when the news came through that Danny Alexander, MP and Chief Secretary to the Treasury, has now added the Morvern postcode (PA80) to the Treasury's bid to the European Commission to offer cut-price fuel in remote areas of the Highlands.

The scheme, if it is approved, will remove 5p a litre off petrol and diesel to make fuel in rural areas more affordable. This means that residents and visitors will no longer have to pay 152.9p a litre for both petrol and diesel at the Morvern Community Development Company owned pumps in Lochaline. Forty miles away in Fort William, diesel costs 137.9p a litre and petrol 7p less.

As the development company was funded by several government agencies for the express purpose of encouraging community regeneration, questions are being asked locally if, by applying a 22p differential, it has temporarily lost sight of its objectives.

If news of the fuel discount scheme brought a smile to the face of Morvern's motorists, the same cannot be said of its broadband users when it was announced in last week's 'Oban Times' that once again the parish has missed out on being connected to high speed fibre broadband for at least another two years.

Nearby Strontian and Ardgour are to benefit by the end of 2014. Why is Morvern always at the cow's tail?

If the village of Arnisdale and the scattered habitations along the north-west shores of Knoydart in one of the most remote places in mainland Scotland, can get it, why can't Morvern?

The answer is that instead of sitting on their hands waiting for BT to come along when it suits them, the Arnisdale community took the initiative and turned to three academics from Edinburgh University who founded the 'Tegola Project' whose objective is to deliver low-cost, reliable and high speed broadband in rural areas.

Working with 'Janet' the UK's expert in digital technology, the college of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye and the University of the Highlands and Islands, the Arnisdale team, with financial help from Marine Harvest, established a line-of-sight wireless link with the college.

This relatively simple system is now delivering speeds well above the best domestic speeds in the UK and allows people to run a business from their own home.

Parts of Morvern are within sight of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig through which the intuitive Tegola technology could be relayed to a hub in Lochaline's new, multi-million pound, all-singing, all-dancing, primary school and then transmitted round the parish.

The expertise is readily available. There is a development company in Morvern well capable of taking up the challenge.

More importantly, the Morvern Community Council and the Morvern Trust, which is receiving £300,000 from Aggregate Industries, Glensanda, by way of community benefit, are awash with money which they hold for projects of this kind.

But, as Rory Cellan-Jones, the BBC's technology correspondent said, when he wrote about Arnisdale, 'If you want fast broadband and you live in the country, you may have to get your hands dirty and do it yourself'.



The Lochaline-Fishnish ferry: never mentioned in bulletins on sailing cancellations.

LISTENING to BBC Radio Scotland's travel programme every morning during the week, anyone would think that the producer doesn't want to try pronouncing the word 'Lochaline' or he or she has some deep seated aversion to the place.

On no occasion during the past three months when gales have been forecasted, has the sailing status of the Lochaline-Fishnish ferry been mentioned. Just about every other ferry route in the Highlands and Islands is! Worse still, listeners are advised to go on-line to find out which ferries are operating. Not easy when high winds have brought the power lines down!

The results of a survey, which the Highland Council was forced to carry out (to measure the economic and social implications of raising the fares by a number of increments on the Corran Ferry), has been published.

It is available on the council's webpage and makes grim reading. In other words there is nothing in it which is likely to persuade members of the TEC Committee to leave the charges as they are. Disappointingly, there was only a 19 per cent response to the survey from Morvern. A final decision will be taken by the council in May.

Iain Thornber
iain.thornber@btinternet.com.

Brae Lochaber road repair promise

BRAE Lochaber residents have had their pleas for repairs to a local road answered.

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council called for action after 39 residents signed a petition protesting about potholes and crumbling surfaces on Inverroy Road. At a meeting with Highland councillors, chairman John Forthingham likened the road to 'what you would

expect to see in a third-world country'. But now Mark Smith from Highland Council's environmental and community services has visited the site and promised repairs would be done. John Forthingham said: 'I'm pleased that things are getting moving but I'm sceptical. People are full of promises but when it comes to getting work done experience tells me to be sceptical.'



A helping hand with ocean project

Banavie Primary School nursery children got a helping hand with their 'Commotion on the Ocean' sea life project from Marine Harvest last week. Human resources manager Vicky Ferguson dropped in to the school to donate water bottles with a leaping salmon design and provide illustrations of different fish species. 20_1076sh01

Oban man jailed for assaulting partner

SHERIFF Douglas Small heard two differing accounts of an argument between a man and his former partner during a trial at Oban Sheriff Court.

Thomas Barr, aged 53, a tenant of Kerrera Lodge, Shore Street, Oban, denied assaulting his former partner at his flat at Kerrera Lodge on September 5 last year by seizing her by the arms, pushing her onto a bed and compressing her throat with his hands, all to her injury.

The 42-year-old complainer said that Barr had returned from work and been 'verbally abusive' about the fact she had cooked pork chops instead of mince and that an argument ended with him assaulting her in his flat.

She returned to her own flat taking her possessions. She said Barr followed her into the flat and pushed her against the wall. When charged by police Barr said it was all 'a load of nonsense' and told an officer his

former partner suffered from depression and did not always take her medication. When asked about bruises on the woman's arms, Barr said she self-harmed. A defence witness told the trial, which was heard over two days last week, that he had seen the woman before the incident and that her arms were covered with bruises. Sheriff Small found Barr guilty of the assault but not of injuring her and sentenced Barr to three months' jail.

'Agitated' teenager brandished knife

POLICE had to call for back-up when they went to a home in Oban in the early hours of Sunday morning and confronted an 'agitated' teenager who had a knife, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday.

Sheriff Douglas Small told first time offender Kyle Daniel McNeill, of 34c Soroba Road, Oban: 'I want to know more about your background and what has caused you to behave like this.'

Mr McNeill, aged 16, admitted assaulting another teenager to his injury and threatening and abusive behaviour where he brandished a knife, shouted, swore and placed people in a state of fear and alarm; both incidents happened in his home.

Mother
His mother had phoned for the police after seeing McNeill in the kitchen, 'chopping' into a kitchen counter with a kitchen knife, and in an 'agitated state'.

Mr Dunbar said that when two officers arrived, McNeill continued to shout and swear and threatened to use the knife; one officer called for back up and the other drew a CS gas spray, but did not have to use it.

Edward Thornton, defence agent for McNeill said the teenager was having difficulty coming to terms with the death of his father last year.

McNeill was told on Tuesday that his sentence was deferred until March 4 for a social work report to be prepared.

Appeal to would-be Mull investors

THE SOCIAL enterprise behind Mull's £1.1million Garmony hydroelectric scheme is encouraging would-be investors to take up its share issue, which closes at the end of this month.

Green Energy Mull (GEM), has the backing of a consortium of lenders but it must raise 30 per cent of the project costs through the community share issue.

As a special incentive, there is £500 on offer to the group which secures the most investors.

Moray Finch, general manager of the Mull and Iona Trust (MICT), explained: 'Once the hydro is up and running, net profits from the scheme will

go into a Waterfall Fund, to which island based organisations can apply for funding for projects.'

'We're asking those groups who stand to benefit from the fund to help make the hydro scheme a reality by getting the word out about the share offer.'

The cost of a share is £50, and a shareholding of £250 secures voting rights in GEM. Mr Finch added: 'We anticipate that once the scheme is up and running, the hydro will generate over £100,000 a year for the Waterfall Fund which can be ploughed back into local projects on Mull and Iona.'

Hospital launches trial video link scheme

A NEW videoconferencing pilot for certain patients suffering from epilepsy has begun at Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban.

The hope is that the scheme can in future be rolled out across other community hospitals in Argyll and Bute to help cut journey times for patients who need to see consultants and free up consultants' by reducing their travel times.

NHS Highland has launched the tele-neurology clinic, linking the Oban hospital to the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow, for some new epilepsy patients in the Oban area.

Kristin Gillies, service planning manager, said: 'The patient attends an appointment in the hospital outpatient department and a videoconferencing facility is available to allow the patient

to see and speak with the consultant in Glasgow.'

'The clinic in Oban is also supported by a trained nurse who will be in attendance with the patient.'

'At this time we are just piloting this service in Oban and patients have to meet strict criteria in order to be suitable for the service.'

'Currently we are targeting epilepsy patients who have just experienced their first symptoms of the condition.'

She said that in many cases it was still necessary for patients to have a face-to-face consultation with their consultant. The project is a result of joint working between NHS Highland, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the Scottish Centre for Telehealth and Telecare.



Connell Friends of Mary's Meals held a soup lunch in Connell Church Hall. 16_106marys01

Connell group back on fundraising trail

A GROUP that raised £10,000 in 13 months to build a kitchen at a school in Malawi is back on the fundraising trail.

The Connell Friends of Mary's Meals held a soup lunch in Connell Church Hall to raise money for its sponsored school, Chiperoni, in Malawi.

Between 2008 and 2009 the group raised £10,000 to pay for the purchase and installation of a new kitchen at the school, allowing Mary's Meals to provide daily meals for the children.

The friends have been fundraising for the school ever since to support the Dalmally-based charity's efforts there.

Group member Maureen Nicol, who organised the soup lunch last Saturday, said: 'The school

has 2,000 pupils at it and it costs £13,000 a year to feed them all. We work to raise as much money as possible every year.'

'I think it helps that the volunteers know exactly what they are raising money for and I think it motivates them more. We are the sponsors of that school.'

Mary's Meals is currently providing school meals for 822,142 children throughout the developing world.

Maureen added: 'People in Argyll are so warm towards Mary's Meals and are extremely generous when it comes to fundraisers. I think people here see it as 'our charity'.'

The next Connell Friends of Mary's Meals soup lunch will take place in the church hall on Saturday March 15 from noon.

Project backers determined to deliver on town transformation

'Destination Oban' the priority

'DESTINATION Oban' is the priority for the CHORD and TIF projects set to revamp the town over the coming years.

That was the message from councillor Ellen Morton, the deputy leader of the authority and lead councillor for infrastructure and asset management, who is overseeing the projects.

The Helensburgh councillor has described Oban as Argyll's 'key town' and earmarked the next five years as 'one of the most exciting' periods for the area, with millions to be spent on essential improvements and upgrades.

'Helensburgh is big, but I think this project makes Oban the economic driver for Argyll and Bute,' she said.

'It is also very important for the whole west coast if we can deliver everything we want to.'

Work on CHORD will commence in earnest this year, with hopes high that work can start on transforming Stafford Street into a plaza this October.

CHORD, which runs until 2016, will then see the redevelopment of the Station Square to Stafford Street 'public realm'. The

£6.9million programme of work is due to conclude in 2016.

The TIF redevelopment of the Lorn Area will start this year too, with improvements to the Lorn Road/Kirk Road area the first of nine projects planned for the £18.9million loan between now and 2019.

Improvements to the 'Dunbeg Gateway' should start this year as well, improving the approach, junction and lighting there.

Significant value
Linda Houston, Oban's CHORD project manager, emphasised that nothing in CHORD is reliant on anything in TIF and vice-versa, but taken together they add 'significant value' to the whole area.

'These projects are for everyone,' she said. 'This is as much for the tourists who come to the town as the people who live here already. It's about attracting new business as well as attracting fresh investment.'

'People will want to have their five-star hotels here. People will want to have their business in Oban.'

'It's not just about the town though, it's about the growth of

the whole area. 'If Oban and Lorn grows, the potential is the islands will grow and the whole of the west coast will grow.'

The hope is that the CHORD and TIF projects will combine to create 1,000 new jobs for people in the Oban area over the next 25 years, as well as a hundreds of new homes.

Of that, it's projected 440 of those positions will come from retail, 230 from general business, and 120 from hotels - with 323 new rooms anticipated.

However, it is as yet unclear how the withdrawal of Scottish Power Renewables from the Argyll Array project will alter plans for Barcaldine marina.

Mrs Morton emphasised that each project is subject to its own independent business case, wouldn't go ahead if the numbers didn't add up.

Asked what plans there are to market the area as an investment option for businesses looking towards the town, she added: 'I don't think it's a priority to market it now.'

'The priority has to be to get the infrastructure in place.'

Council happy with TIF figures

ARGYLL and Bute Council has said it got 'everything it wanted' from its bid for Tax Incremental Funding (TIF), with the near £5million difference in sum first proposed and received the result of savings.

And while it admits there is a degree of financial risk associated with the loan, it is thought 'highly unlikely' the

planned projects will fail to result in increased non-domestic rates, from which the loan will be repaid.

A spokesman for the council said: 'The figure of £23.75million was quoted originally - once the business case was developed that figure became £18.9million. No projects were cut, this is simply a natural

evolutionary process in such projects.'

He added: 'We're confident we'll attract the rates because each project is going forward on its own business case.'

'The risk of borrowing that money is ours, but we view that as an acceptable risk - as do the economists at the Scottish Government.'

Project - TIF Funding - Timescale

Lorn Road/Kirk Road improvements - £2.75m - 2014
Dunbeg Gateway - £200,000 - 2014
Halfway House Roundabout/Dunbeg Development Road - £2m - 2015

South Oban Development Zone - £3million - 2015/16
North Pier Extension - £5.2m - 2016
North Pier Streetscape - £1m - 2016
Barcaldine Access Improve-

ments - £400,000 - 2016
Barcaldine operations and maintenance port improvements - £3.75m - 2019
Oban Airport access improvements - £590,000 - 2015-16

www.highland.gov.uk

Supply Teachers Urgently Needed for Highland Schools...

In December last year the Highland Council ran some press coverage around shortages of supply teachers to cover absences in their schools. To date, around 50 teachers have responded, and they have begun the process of registering as supply teachers in Highland. While this is a very positive response, in order to address the shortages in every part of Highland, the Highland Council would like to hear from others who may be interested in registering for supply teaching work but have not yet been in touch.

Shortages are currently being experienced in both primary and secondary schools and also in Gaelic Medium classes. Primary and secondary teachers, including those able to teach through the medium of Gaelic, are urgently needed.

Teachers who register can be asked to undertake supply teaching at both short and advance notice, and periods of supply can vary from one day to several weeks or months depending on the kind of absence to be covered. Even if teachers can only

make themselves available for one day a week, or at certain times of the year, the Highland Council would like to hear from them.

This may be of particular interest to teachers who are currently not working, and who have perhaps not worked for some years. If necessary, training will be provided for any teachers who feel that they would benefit from this. Applications are welcome from all teachers who may be available to work in Highland schools.

Anyone interested in finding out more should contact the Education, Culture & Sport Service Workforce Planning Team on 01463 702735/702734 or email ECSStaffing.Teaching@highland.gov.uk Applications can be made on www.myjobscotland.gov.uk



Village marks centenary of World War 1 outbreak

A GROUP has been set up in Ballachulish to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1.

The three-day exhibition in the community hall in August will honour the service and sacrifice of enlisted men and women from the village and neighbouring Glencoe who served in the terrible conflict.

Spokesperson Peter Watt told *The Oban Times*: 'My wife and father are on the hall committee and with the 100th anniversary of the Great War coming up we wanted to do something.'

'I have been in touch with the local shinty club as undoubtedly a number of shinty players would have been involved. I have also contacted the local schools to see if they want to contribute to the exhibition.'

Mr Watt said the names of 35 men, mostly serving with the 8th Argylls, were inscribed on the Ballachulish war memorial.

He said: 'This is a commemoration not a celebration. My grandfather's brother was killed at the Somme. When I went out there it was like travelling from Onich to Ballachulish and Glencoe - only each of these little villages had massive cemeteries containing the graves of all these thousands of young men. It was a shocking waste of life.'

Moves are underway to move the war memorial from its restricted location next to the A82 to the centre of Ballachulish.



Oban opens Mandela books of remembrance

A group of Oban volunteers who have been inspired by Nelson Mandela have left books of remembrance at two locations in the town. The books will be at MacPhee's Estate Agency office and the Rowantree Hotel from Saturday, February 15 until Friday, February 28. Graeme Pagan came up with the idea for the book after hearing of the former South African president's death last December. He said: 'Oban is a place that believes in humanity and understanding. Mandela was a truly outstanding example of these qualities and we want to give people here a chance to show their appreciation.' Pictured with Graeme, far left, are supporters Rev Bill Gray, June Henderson and Rev Dugald Cameron. 16_107mandela01

Two shouts in 24 hours for Tobermory lifeboat

TOBERMORY lifeboat responded to two shouts in 24 hours just days after the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) annual statistics revealed the crew spent the equivalent of nearly 40 days at sea in 2013.

Less than 24 hours after being called on to assist with a

'medevac' from the Isle of Tiree, Tobermory RNLI's volunteer crew was tasked by Stornoway Coastguard last Wednesday to find the source of a radio signal which was jamming the maritime distress channel, VHF Channel 16.

The RNLI's annual statistics revealed that Tobermory's

volunteer crew spent 950 hours at sea during 2013, the third highest in the whole of the RNLI with only crews from Eastbourne and Kilmore Quay spending more time at sea on service.

Rescue Tobermory RNLI's 33 'shouts' included an 11-hour rescue of a

fishing boat in 60mph winds off the Isle of Coll and a 31-hour operation to refloat a cargo ship aground in the Sound of Mull.

Tobermory Coxswain Andrew McHaffie said: 'It was a quiet January after a very busy 2013 but the crew is always ready to drop everything and respond to pages 24/7.'

Appeal to end tower bus route 'stalling' tactics

Councillors want quick action on link

'STALLING' tactics are being employed by Argyll and Bute Council to slow progress on a new bus route between McCaig's Tower and Oban town centre, it was claimed.

Councillors Roddy McCuish and Fred Hall made the comments as fresh calls were made for the introduction of a service, which was previously dismissed by the council because 'stray branches' would impede the vehicles.

While Argyll and Bute Council has now said it is tendering for the route, it says there are 'practicalities' that need to be considered before it can introduce the service.

Oban Community Council first raised the matter several months ago after saying that, as one of Oban's main tourist destinations, it was difficult to access.

There were also several elderly or disabled people who lived in

the area who found it difficult to get down to the shops because of the lack of a service.

While 'there was will' in the community, there didn't seem to be 'a way' through the council, according to the two town councillors.

Community council member Duncan Elliot said: 'BID4Oban asked from a tourism point of view as well - the answer that comes back time and time again is 'overhanging branches'.

'I can't understand why they can't just cut them.'

Fellow community councillor, Neil MacIntyre, said: 'Surely a few branches aren't going to deprive us of a service? That's ridiculous.'

Councillor Hall said he had written to the council six months ago to make a request, suggesting the community council do the same. He added: 'It's classic

stalling tactics.'

Councillor McCuish added: 'This is an example of how local government sometimes struggles to do anything - there's no reason why we can't get this bus to go up there or get the branches cut.'

'Fred is quite right about the stalling. If there are trees up there causing problems - cut them.'

Argyll and Bute Council's spokeswoman said: 'We are currently tendering for the route.'

'There are a number of factors to consider including the practicalities of the route, the type of vehicle required and the potential uptake of such a service.'

'Our discussions with Oban Community Council will continue and we will keep them up to date with progress.'

Man knew alcohol had been stolen

AN INVERLOCHY man admitted obtaining two bottles of rum, knowing them to be stolen.

Jordan McPhee of 11 Dubh

MacDonald Place drank the alcohol with friends on October 24 last year knowing that they had been stolen from The Co-op, Caol, that day. Sheriff

Richard Davidson ordered the 20-year-old to carry out 50 hours of unpaid work in the community and to reimburse the store for the rum.

Scallop skipper fined £4,500 for assault

A SCALLOP boat skipper was fined £4,500 and ordered to pay one of the door staff at The Lorne, Oban, £500 compensation after being found guilty of assaulting him.

He was also told he could not enter any public houses in Oban for the next two years.

Leigh Shields, of 5 St Mary's Walk, Kirkcubright, had denied but was found guilty at Oban Sheriff Court last Wednesday of assaulting the Stevenson Street pub's employee on August 19 last year by head-butting him and seizing him by the body, to his injury.

A colleague of the injured man told the town's sheriff court on Wednesday last week that blood had been 'gushing from his nose' as the man subdued Shields until police arrived.

Shields, aged 30, had been warned earlier in the evening about his conduct in the bar. The manager refused to serve him and asked the door steward to have Shields leave the

premises. 'Straight away, without anything he put his head in my face,' the steward told the court, 'then he grabbed me in a headlock.'

Before he could get out of this headlock he was punched in the face again, though he could not tell Sheriff Douglas Small whether this was by Shields or another of his boat's three crew members who were in the bar with him.

Shields said he had been repeatedly punched while on the floor, but procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty pointed out there was no medical record produced for Shields' injuries.

The procurator fiscal said: 'He has a long history of assaulting people.'

After reading Shields' record, Sheriff Small said he was considering sending Shields to prison but decided to impose a substantial fine instead, along with a compensation order and excluding him from all public houses in Oban.

Woman sentenced for possessing recreational drugs

A CAOL woman has been ordered to carry out unpaid work in the community for possessing recreational drugs with a street value of more than £12,600.

Jenah Elder of 19 Torlundy Road, pled guilty to the charge at a previous hearing.

Procurator Fiscal Laura Ryan told Fort William Sheriff court the 663 grams of methylethathionone powder, commonly known as MCAT, was found during a police raid at the 22-year-old's former home in Claggan on February 21 2012.

MCAT is usually snorted but can also be found in pills and is known to cause

euphoria and increase alertness and confidence.

Defending, Patrick Campbell told the court the drug was legal when Elder obtained it and there had since been a change in regulations.

He added: 'The sensible thing to do would have been to dispose of it.'

'That young girl is significantly different from the lady here today.'

Elder's husband John Hutton had his not guilty plea to supplying the drug accepted by the Crown last month. Sheriff Noel McPartlin ordered Elder to carry out 180 hours of unpaid work in the community.

Man found guilty of threatening behaviour towards woman

A FORT William man has been found guilty of behaving in a threatening manner to a woman.

Mario Falcao of 5 Cameron Terrace, denied shouting, swearing and holding his hand close to the woman's face after an argument with his estranged wife on December 29, Fort William Sheriff Court

heard. The victim said during the trial that the 53-year-old had repeatedly closed a door in her face when she asked him to leave the house. Falcao denied the charge and said: '[My wife and I] were speaking normally when [she] interfered.'

Sentencing was deferred until March 4 for a social work report.

Primary pupils open new Co-op

PUPILS from Ballachulish Primary School will officially open the new Co-operative store in the village today (Thursday). Eight new jobs have been created at the Old Station Yard outlet, which replaces the company's existing shop in Loanfern. The village post office will also transfer to the new store.

Store manager Neil Cameron said: 'As a community retailer, we are delighted that Ballachulish Primary School is playing a central role in the opening.'

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KILCHOAN

THE ARCHITECT behind restoration work at Mingary Castle met with Kilchoan residents to discuss plans for inside the ruin.

As the castle has been altered numerous times since its construction in the 13th century, it will be recreated with a 1720s theme in mind as experts believe the 18th century to be around the last time the castle was converted, Francis Shaw told the audience of 30.

Owner Donald Houston set up the Mingary Castle Trust to restore the ruin to its previous grandeur and make it fit to live in once more.

Local historian Jon Haylett said: 'Mingary Castle Trust has gone to great lengths to keep people in the community involved. Everyone really enjoyed the talk and it's great that people are being told what's going on.'

Mr Shaw showed pictures at the Kilchoan Learning Centre of wood panelling to be installed in every room and a grand staircase he intends to fit as part of the £2.5m project.



Invergarry pupils look back in time

Invergarry Primary School pupils spent a morning learning about the life of a crofter during the second world war. Primary four to seven children visited Lochaber Rural Education Centre as part of their war studies and were taught how to iron and wash clothes without electricity and to churn butter. Hannah Docherty P4 and Gabriel MacCallum P5 made their own butter with the help of volunteer Mary Stafford. 20_107invergarry01

LISMORE

ISLANDERS were greatly saddened by the recent death of Euan Green a young man of great promise and a much loved member of the community.

Euan lived with his family at Clachan and, on leaving school, fulfilled his dream of joining the merchant navy.

He will be greatly missed and the sympathy of all goes to his family.

THERE was plenty of good food and entertainment at this year's Burns supper in the newly opened Liosbeag café at the heritage centre.

Kiki MacColl prepared and

served the delicious food, Ian MacDonald hosted, David Henderson addressed the haggis, Mary Walker both toasted the lassies and replied, most amusingly too, and Duncan Livingstone recited To a Mouse.

Kiki had decorated the café appropriately, provided laminated Burns poems for everyone to read in the quieter moments and provided a Burns quiz.

THE COMANN Eachdraidh's archaeological walkovers continued in January in Kilcheran, where the census showed a large number of people lived before depopulation.

With the help of cameras and GPS, the settlements of Dalimhor and Balure were surveyed with at least eight cottages or farmsteads being noted.

An unusual building on the shore appeared to have had a maritime purpose, and an isolated ruin in the woods was possibly a shepherd's cottage from the time when the area became a sheep run after the main settlement was abandoned.

There was little to be seen at the site of the dun known from archaeological records.

The next walkover will be at Millers Port and Fiart, meeting half a mile beyond Port Kilcheran, at 2pm on February 16.



Lismore pupils take part in a Tai Chi lesson.

MORAR

THE UK Government's fuel discount scheme came in for criticism at Morar Community Council last week.

Discussion followed an Oban Times report on how the Mallaig postcode PH41 was being recommended to the European Commission for a 5p cut in petrol and diesel, but not nearby Morar, PH40.

The move, if implemented, could mean the end of forecourt fuel sales in Morar.

Morar Community Council secretary Tina Heinonen said: 'There was a bit of concern about how some area postcodes got help while others were left out.'

'Should not all rural areas be looked at in the same way? What's the difference between Mallaig and Morar?'

Speaker inspires schools to focus

SPEAN Bridge and Roy Bridge Primary Schools dedicated a morning to health, enterprise and citizenship with the help of a motivational speaker.

Public speaking champion Andy McKechnie explained the values of the upcoming Commonwealth Games and how to focus on becoming a confident, well-rounded person at a 'health, harmony and citizenship' assembly in Spean Bridge Primary School.

Afterwards, Mr McKechnie focused on fitness and taught a number of aerobic moves based on Commonwealth cultures such as Highland and Indian dancing.



Spean Bridge pupils practising Scottish aerobics with motivational speaker Andy McKechnie. Back: Ryan Andrews P7 and Lyra Swabey P5. Front from left: Nina Cameron P5, Freya Balcombe P5 and Josh Campbell P6. 20_106speanbridge01



Pupils at Achaleven Primary School celebrate their fifth Green Flag last week.

Achaleven gains fifth Green Flag

ACHALEVEN Primary School pupils and staff were very last week proud to receive their fifth Green Flag from Eco-Schools Scotland.

The award follows an assessment at the end of January where Eco-Schools assessor Paula Love commended pupils and staff at the Connel school on their collaborative approach by working with local environmental organisations including the GRAB Trust and AliEnergy.

Paula also praised the work done in the community through their involvement in recycling, village litter picks, charity fundraising and promotion of

the FairTrade movement. The award is normally worked on over two years but because the school was closed in 2011-2012, the pupils only had one year to get the work done.

As they were all P1 pupils at the time this is an even more impressive achievement. Paula was delighted with the progress made in the school garden since her last visit, including the addition of the orchard, and looked forward to seeing what would develop in the next few years.

She told the school: 'Your children are truly responsible, global citizens.'

KILMORE

KILMORE 100 Club's January winner is C Boswell and the February winner is J Darby.

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COWAL

THE QUEEN'S Hall will not be closed in May this year, as originally planned, following a change to the town's CHORD plans.

At last week's area committee meeting in Dunoon, members agreed unanimously to a revised approach to the delivery of the regeneration project.

The closure of the Queens Hall was originally scheduled for May 2014, with work to begin soon after, however, the hall will not be closed until the end of 2014, with a monthly review of that date based on the progress of the project and property negotiations.

Chairman of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee, Councillor Robert E MacIntyre, said: 'Argyll and Bute Council is committed to effectively delivering this project but recognises the need for balance between short and long term goals.'

'There is little sense in closing the building, meaning it cannot be used by the local community, when we are not in a position to begin work.'

Following the meeting, the first since the new governance structures saw the area committees assuming the responsibilities of the old CHORD project boards, the council will be developing an updated project delivery plan.

A draft of this new project plan will be presented at the next meeting of the area committee for the consideration of members.

The £8.64m Queens Hall project will improve the street frontage and entrance; provide a modern, flexible events space; a new library; a new cafe; a new play area; new landscaping between the hall and the promenade; a Visit Scotland office and shop and new offices for Skills Development Scotland.

In order to deliver this modern, upgraded facility the council is currently in negotiations with property owners and occupiers around the Queens Hall.



Kinlochleven 53 pupils travelled to Edinburgh for a national business competition with teacher Mike Fairman.

High school students get down to business

KINLOCHLEVEN High School pupils took part in a Scotland-wide enterprise competition.

The third year pupils attended the national final of the Real Businesses Challenge in Edinburgh and competed against nine other schools at Murrayfield stadium.

Students were tasked with producing a video, smartphone app and a poster campaign for The StreetGames Multi-Sports Festival, held in Glasgow this October.

Kinlochleven's team was picked out of 170 schools across the country for the final but unfortunately lost out on the winner's prize of an all expenses paid trip to London for the UK final.

Business studies teacher Mike Fairman said: 'Despite a valiant effort and quality presentation it was not to be. To appear in the Scottish finals for the second year in a row is a wonderful achievement for Kinlochleven High School, maybe 2015 will prove third time lucky.'



Western Isles District Scouts and Explorers enjoyed their day at Harris Gun Club.

Western Isles youngsters on target at club visit

WESTERN Isles District Scouts and Explorers visited Harris Gun Club's Aline shooting ground on February 1 to try their hand at clay target shooting.

For many of the 20-strong group it was the first time they had participated in the sport.

Club members turned out in force to give up their Saturday by sharing their knowledge with the next generation of potential top guns.

The club's first ladies' competition had to be abandoned in December because of horrendous weather and plans are in place for the event to be re-scheduled as the first competition of the 2014/2015 calendar.

ARISAIG

ARISAIG Primary School pupils made their own props to celebrate Chinese New Year.

The children crafted paper dragons and lanterns while masks were displayed around the school.

Sweet and sour noodles and prawn crackers were handed out at assembly and pupils learned about the customs and origins of the Chinese Year of the Horse.



Left: Arisaig Primary School pupils show off their handmade Chinese lanterns and dragons.

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Traditional start to angling club season

INVERLOCHY Angling Club will open their fishing season on the River Lochy in traditional fashion at Fort William on Saturday.

Committee member Charlie Donaldson will cast a dram of local malt whisky Dew of Ben Nevis into the water in the hope of a healthy season. Honorary life member and past chairman Sandie Walker will have the honour of casting the first fly of the season on the water. A work party will then carry out an inspection to see if any hazards need to be removed to improve fishing from both banks.

Ambitious plans to transform old Skye school

AMBITIOUS plans to convert a mothballed school in northwest Skye into a £1m hostel, bar and restaurant were discussed last night.

The Glendale Trust looked at the viability of buying Borrodale Primary School, which has been empty since 2007, at its board meeting in Glendale Community Hall.

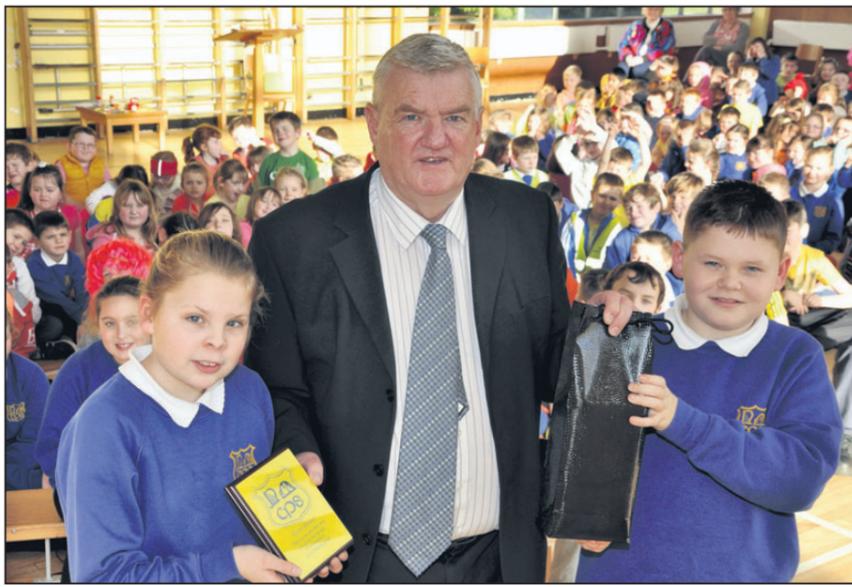
Joy Talbot, chairwoman of the board said: 'The community have said they would like us to buy the school but there's a lot of decisions to be made about how we can go forward with it. Locals are keen to see something happen but with the amount of money needed it might not be possible.'

It is hoped the potential hostel would have 16 beds, laundry services available to the public, with a bar and restaurant adjacent. It may also have a heritage centre to display a collection owned by The Glendale Trust, currently held in storage.

Budding movie makers shortlisted for competition

BUDDING movie makers at Ardnarnach High School have been shortlisted for a Gaelic short film competition.

The pupils created a period drama which is up for the best production category of FilmG, run by MG ALBA. O Mo Dhuthiach (Oh My Country) features a young woman about to be evicted from hercroft and features a live horse on set.



P7 pupils Erin Lawrie and Kale Lacey present Councillor Eddie Hunter with a plaque and a bottle of Ben Nevis malt whisky. 20_107eddie01

Councillor bids farewell to old school 60 years on

A LOCHABER councillor has bade farewell to his old primary school - almost 60 years since he first walked through its doors.

Eddie Hunter will step down as a member of Highland Council later this month after serving the Caol and Mallaig ward since his election in 2007.

And at Caol Primary School assembly on Friday morning staff and pupils thanked him for his efforts over the years.

Councillor Hunter, 62, has been a strong supporter of the school throughout his time

in office and leaves on a high note, with work on a new Caol Primary due to start this spring.

Head teacher Steven Hamilton paid tribute to the popular local politician, who was a pupil at Caol in the 1950s before returning in 1975 for a 10-year stint as teacher then deputy head teacher.

Mr Hamilton said: 'He has been very supportive of this school and quite often got money for us as well as supporting our events.'

'He has been pushing to get exactly what we need in the new school when it opens in two years time.'

P7 pupils Erin Lawrie and Kale Lacey presented Councillor Hunter with a plaque and a bottle of Ben Nevis malt whisky on behalf of Caol Primary as a token of thanks.

Councillor Hunter is moving to Renfrew to be with his wife Henrietta, affectionately known as 'Henri'. He told *The Oban Times*: 'Caol is a wonderful place - it is the centre of the earth.'

Seal spotting trips raise £2,000 for charity

A PLOCKTON skipper has raised more than £2,000 for charity from his seal-viewing boat.

Calum MacKenzie and his crew aboard Sula Mhor save their tips from customers throughout the season then split the total between three charities.

This year, Highland Hospice, Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Cancer Care were given cheques for £810 each at a presentation at Eilean Ban Lighthouse, on the water halfway along the Skye bridge.

Mr MacKenzie, who runs trips from Plockton to Loch Kishorn and Loch Carron between April and October said: 'We all know people that have been affected by cancer and my mother-in-



Charity representatives were delighted with their donations from the Sula Mhor crew. Front from left: Helen Gordon, Marie Finlayson, Audrey Sinclair and Pat Mucklow. Photograph by Robert Ware.

law received great care from Highland Hospice. They all do great work. 'I've lived in Plockton all my life and I had never been to the lighthouse.

'It was really nice to go somewhere different for the presentation and we had a wee glass of champagne to celebrate.'

Mr MacKenzie has been running trips from Plockton for 33 years and as well as saving tips, he runs charity fundraising cruises outside of his usual sailing hours.

He said: 'I'm happy to run an evening cruise for any deserving charity.'

'If any local charities want to organise a fundraiser I'm happy to donate my boat for the evening, these cruises normally raise six or seven hundred pounds.'

To arrange a fundraising trip contact Mr MacKenzie at www.calums-sealtrips.com.

Outrage at plan to kill village stag

BALLACHULISH residents are outraged after a proposition to kill a stag in the village was raised at a community council meeting.

The beast has frequented a croft at the back pier of the village for two years but some locals have suggested it poses a danger to the public and should be shot.

Fears arose after a holidaymaker suffered life-threatening injuries when she was gored in the throat by a runaway stag in Lochailort on December 30.

Dr Kate Stone, 44, from Cambridge, has only recently been discharged from hospital after undergoing windpipe surgery.

Furious Ballachulish Community Council member Lorna Scott took to a social networking website to gather views about the village stag, thought to be around 14 years old, and received over 100 comments in less than two hours.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'I pass it every day with my dogs and it's never been near us. I

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by EMMA CRICHTON

think it's been hysteria from what happened to the poor girl in Lochailort.

'It's a bit extreme to say that it should be shot just because it might attack. The children in the village could get hit by a bus but we can't stop the buses.'

She added: 'A lot of locals enjoy hunting so I take it that might have a lot to do with it rather than the safety and wellbeing of the village - its antlers would look great on someone's wall.'

Ballachulish villagers expressed anger online about the proposal to shoot the deer.

Susan Birrell said: 'How could anyone shoot such a beautiful animal when it has done no harm... do not understand!'

Jaqueline Macintyre added: 'The stag has been happily grazing in the top croft, what's the problem?'

'No one is feeding it, no one should be approaching it and certainly not trying to corner it.'

Leave it in peace, it isn't doing any harm.'

Meanwhile, some residents expressed concerns about the stag roaming so close to a residential area.

Michael Chisholm said: 'I agree it's a beautiful animal but also a wild animal which has the potential in an environment such as a village to cause bodily harm. Although this magnificent beast has caused no issue, the potential is a live issue, particularly if approached by someone wishing to get closer to him without realising his natural instinct.'

Fergus MacNeill from Scottish Natural Heritage said: 'We understand there may be some concerns regarding public safety and this well known stag.'

'We would be happy to provide advice and guidance with regard to deer management regarding any issues of concern.'

'The law on live capture of deer in Scotland allows only the landowner or occupier to capture male deer at this time of the year to prevent damage to woodland or agricultural interests.'

Ballachulish Community Council chairman acknowledges concerns

BALLACHULISH community council chairman Kevin Smith said: 'Police attended the meeting when the concern was raised and they are taking it on as a matter of public safety.'

'We have also spoken to someone from Scottish Natural Heritage to see what the best way to deal with it is, no decision has been made yet.'

'I myself would hate for the animal to be shot for no reason but it is a concern. The best outcome would be to get him out of the village but how you do that

I don't know, it could just appear back or another one could take its place.'

'I definitely don't think chasing it up the hill with a stick and a tin lid is a viable option.'

Acknowledging local concerns he added: 'A lot of people don't want it to be shot or moved but

if their child or their sister or someone got hurt would they be saying something different?'

'As a community councillor if I didn't raise it as a concern then someone was injured or killed, which doesn't bear thinking about, people would be asking why nothing was done.'

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Teenage voters lack information in independence debate

REPORT by EMMA STORR

WITH seven months to go before the independence referendum, the majority of senior pupils at Oban High School are still unsure of how they will vote.

Sixteen year olds are allowed to vote in the upcoming election and, while most Oban pupils of voting age are undecided, those intending to vote no outnumber the yes votes by three to one.

In a poll of 98 senior pupils at the school asking if they would vote for an independent Scotland, 59 were unsure, 11 were for independence and 28 preferred to stay within the union.

Pupils who were undecided claimed a lack of information was the reason for the large proportion of undecided voters, rather than a lack of interest in the referendum.

Sixth year pupils Rebecca Simcox and Hannah Duncan are on either side of the debate.

Rebecca, who is against independence, said: 'Independence is ludicrous and absurd. There is not a necessity for change in our country. A union provides financial safety which aids our country in political, social and economical progression. Why change that? Our country is most definitely better together.'

Hannah said: 'I think Scotland should be independent so that the people of Scotland have the right to decide their own future, not have it decided for us in Westminster.'

'The future of Scotland may be uncertain but I'd rather choose my own. Freedom is something everyone should be entitled to. We shouldn't have to fight to have our voices heard.'

S5 pupil Michael Mackinnon, 16, who is undecided, said: 'I don't know much about it, there isn't enough information on the debate to decide.'

When Liberal Democrat MP for Argyll and Bute, Alan Reid, was asked his opinion on the poll, he said: 'What I find is that young people are very much of an international outlook on life. I think that's being reflected in their support in staying part of the UK.'

His SNP MSP counterpart, Michael Russell, said: 'When I started taking part in school debates on this there was a substantial majority for 'no', but that's now moving and this poll is more indicative of what's happening across Scotland.'

'Now there's people on either side and a lots of people in the middle.'

On the issue of informing voters, he added: 'That's what the White Paper is for.'

Independence debate for all

HUNDREDS of people gathered in Oban's Argyllshire Gathering Halls on Friday to tackle the area's political heavyweights on the independence question.

Lining up in the Yes corner was Argyll and Bute's MSP, Michael Russell of the SNP, alongside his former party colleague and now independent Oban councillor, Roddy McCuish.

In the No camp was the county's Liberal Democrat MP Alan Reid and the area's prospective Labour candidate for the 2015 general election, Mary Galbraith.

They were joined on the panel by Oban High School pupils Matthew Hall and

James Kane. Hosted by Argyll Voluntary Action (AVA), the debate was the first in a series organised by the organisation, which encouraged an 'intergenerational' audience, made up of Oban High School pupils as well those of a working age and retired local residents.

While some chose to take to their feet to press their case for either the Yes or the No vote, the panel faced questions on university fees, tax increases, the EU, recent revelations about the SNP's plans to share the pound and the future of the Barnett Formula used to determine the Scottish Government's capital block grant.

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Alan Reid MP
Alan Reid will hold a surgery in Oban on Wednesday 19 February 2014 at the Corran Halls, Oban between 3.30pm - 4.30pm
To make an appointment, please phone Alan Reid's office (01369-704840)

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BUILDBASE

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

WHEN councillors meet at Kilmory today to discuss the budget and the inevitable cuts it will have to consider, one imagines the subject of vacant properties will arise.

A freedom of information request lodged by *The Oban Times* has revealed Argyll and Bute Council currently has approximately £8million tied up in buildings it does not use.

To put that into context, James Robb's budget last year - described as the 'Valentine's Day Massacre' - set a target of making £40.7million of cuts over the coming seven years. Based on that, selling off the vacant buildings would reduce the council's budget shortfall by a fifth.

It should be noted that an alternative budget put forward by Dick Walsh at the time calculated a £27.5million shortfall.

Ongoing costs associated with keeping the buildings are mounting, but negligence has meant some buildings have become unattractive for buyers.

For example, Kilbowie House in Oban has been suffering from water ingress over the past three years due to a leaky roof - resulting in bids for the building some £200,000 beneath the asking price.

These buildings don't just represent numbers on a balance sheet; they represent jobs, families staying in the area, the quality of services we receive and the potential for economic growth.

The council has been meticulous when looking for savings by making cuts to our services - one hopes they will as thorough when considering what assets it can sell to the benefit of all in Argyll and Bute.

GLASGOW LETTER

Festival celebrates

CELTIC Connections is celebrating its most successful year to date with more than 110,000 attending and gross ticket sales topping £1.15m as 2,000 artistes came from all over the globe.

For the first time the festival used the SSE Hydro with by far the biggest festival attendance being at the Del Amitri concert.

Within 48 hours of the middle weekend 25,000 attended Celtic Connections events, an exceptional statistic for a festival which was started to bring some light to the dark month of January 21 years ago.

The problem for festival goers and the question posed by most is what they would do once the festival came to an end - apart from looking forward to next year of course.

Cottier's concert

FOR THOSE suffering from withdrawal symptoms post Celtic Connections, an immediate remedy is being provided by Acoustic Affair.

They have organised a concert featuring Mike McGoldrick, John McCusker and John Doyle, three stalwarts of Transatlantic Sessions and three of the best traditional musicians on the scene.

This will take place this coming Sunday, February 16, in Cottier's Theatre at 7.30pm. As part of its Spring Series, Acoustic Affair has also organised the following concerts: Sunday February 16, Stereo, Renfield Lane - Ruairi Joseph with Jasmine and Wednesday February 19, CCA - Calum Ingram.

Reminder

TOMORROW evening (Friday) Mull and Iona Association will be holding its annual gathering in the Piping Centre at 7.30pm with the format of a shortened ceilidh, as in 2013, being followed by the dance to the music of Deoch'n Dorus.

Those performing will be singers Robert Robertson and Ainslie Hamill, fiddler Kirsten Hendry, the 'Twa Dugs' from Tobermory and the association pipers. Tickets cost £10 for adults and £5 for children.

Piping centre

A NEW Spring Recital Series will be taking place in the National Piping Centre with the first of these a Ladies' Night on Friday February 21 when those taking part will be Margaret Dunn, Clare Lynas, Caitlin MacDonald and Sarah Muir, some of the world's top female pipers.

Tickets cost £10 adult, £8 concession.

Metro Cup

THE NATIONAL Piping Centre is continuing its live internet coverage of piping events starting with the Metro Cup Piping Competition in Newark, New Jersey, on Saturday February 14 live from 1pm, European time.

The pipers competing will be Alex Gandy, Bruce Gandy, Andrew Hayes, Dan Lyden, Derek Midgley, Alex Carlisle, Gordon Walker, Roderick MacLeod, Willie MacCallum, Angus MacColl, John Patrick, Alastair Dunn, Margaret Dunn, Glenn Brown, Callum Beaumont, Chris Armstrong and Jamie Troy.

For more information visit clearing.thepipingcentre.co.uk

Stirling ceilidh

ARTISTES performing at the Stirling ceilidh this coming Saturday will be singers Ceitidh Smith, Iain Begg and Gillebride MacMillan together with the Cluaran Dancers and a piper.

Diary dates

Friday February 14: Mull and Iona Association Annual Gathering - see above. Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 7.30pm.

Saturday February 15: An Comunn Stirling Ceilidh, Lesser Albert Hall, 7.30pm. Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, Perth Concert Hall, 7.30pm.

Sunday February 16: Mike McGoldrick, John McCusker and John Doyle - see above.

Tuesday February 18: Gaelic Society Meeting, Sgoil Ghaidhlig Glaschu, 7.30pm-Robert Dunbar. Live at the Star, Admiral Bar, 72a, Waterloo Street, 8pm-Dan MacKinnon.

Friday February 21: Ladies' Night, Piping Centre - see above.

Saturday February 22: Glasgow Skye Association Buntata's Sgadan, Crawford Hall, 7.30pm. Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association buffet ceilidh, Partick Bowling Club, 7.45pm. Gaelic Day - see above.

Pub scene

Black Velvet will play in the Islay Inn on Friday with Parting Glass on Saturday. In the Park Bar Robert Robertson will provide the music on both Saturday and Sunday while it will be Nicky McMichan on Friday.

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

YOUR LETTERS

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

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

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

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The views expressed in The Oban Times are not necessarily those of this newspaper.



Pipers play at RAF funerals at Oban's Pennyfuir Cemetery

This week's flashback photograph was submitted by Mrs J Darling of Oban. It shows Pipe Major Hugh McFarlane, piper Alister MacRae and piper Alister MacFarlane piping at Pennyfuir Cemetery, Oban, at the RAF funerals of an officer and corporal in July 1941. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Concern over increased Lorn Arc Oban traffic

Sir,
The news Argyll and Bute Council has been given the go-ahead to borrow £18.9m to kick-start development of the Oban-Dunstaffnage/Dunbeg-Connel-Barcaldine area - the Lorn Arc - is welcome and gives hope of economic uplift, an increase in local employment, a reversal of population decline and, through these, a clear rationale for maintenance of community services.

Worrying, however, is that most of the development is planned north of Oban whilst provision of everyday services - shopping, secondary school, ferry terminal, hospital, industrial area - all lie south.

The extra traffic that comes with economic expansion will further swell the often unending stream of vehicles squeezing through George Street en route for schools, supermarkets, ferries and hospital.

Because it is a bottle-neck, Oban will choke even more than it already does, so reducing the amenity of residents and the pleasure of visiting tourists.

Surprisingly, there is no analysis of the increased traffic burden in the case made for Tax Incremental Financing of £18.9m submitted to the Scottish Government by Argyll and Bute Council.

Yet, the document is built around multiple cases for traffic access and flows to Dunbeg, Dunstaffnage, Oban Airport and the Barcaldine industrial park.

Given that there appear to be no plans for a supermarket at Dunbeg, the development of 800 residential units here guarantees, by itself, longer and more persistent traffic queues in Oban's George Street.

Our elected representatives and our council planners need urgently to think through the knock-ons of Lorn Arc development and formulate ways and means of mitigating the inevitable exacerbation of Oban's traffic problem.

Revisit the idea of a ring road; promote retail development at Dunbeg; and/or make provision for park-and-ride. Don't wait and have to take action to alleviate the bigger traffic jams; take action now and, so, better ensure we reap the economic rewards of Lorn Arc.

Ian Reid, Oban.

Quality hospital care in Oban

Sir,
I read with interest the article in *The Oban Times* of Thursday January 23 headed 'Family's anguish over cancer care'.

First and foremost, my sympathies are with the Braidwood family. I am sorry to read the ordeal they went through. It must not have been easy.

I lost my partner to cancer in December 2013. She was also a cancer patient at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, Ward I from December 6.

My experience through this very hard time has been totally different to the one lived by the Braidwoods.

I can not but be grateful to all doctors, nursing staff the Macmillan nurses - especially Hilary - and everyone else that we came in contact with.

Not only was the quality of care extraordinary, but the way care was provided was of the highest humane quality too.

It is important to point out when things, in particular public services, don't work as they should. It is one way of making sure improvements are made to ensure proper delivery of those public services. More so when we are dealing with such delicate issues as terminal illness.

I also believe credit should be given when it is due. Once again, I (we) could not have asked or received better care.

It is possible that the ordeal the Braidwood family went through had an impact on high quality of services the hospital provided us with. If so, I am so very grateful to them.

It is also important to have a balanced view of an institution like the NHS and in particular our local hospital.

I write this to share my experience of the care provided by our highly trained and empathic hospital doctors, nurses, staff and Macmillan

nurses. Marcos Nicolás Ortiz Cué, via email.

Don't blame tobacco for every ailment

Sir,
I enjoyed Alan Cochrane's relaxed and amusing take on the smoking ban.

It always amuses me when people sniff with disapproval at my roll-up while they stand by a bus that's had its engine idling for five minutes or more.

I've smoked for 60 years and am not about to stop. Passive smoking may or may not be harmful.

However if you are in a restaurant and the waiter lights the tea light, to see the atmosphere you are breathing in, simply hold your menu above the flame. That black deposit is pure carbon, far more deadly than a few whiffs of tobacco smoke.

The same applies ladies if you light candles all round your bath. It may do you no harm but that lazy dreamy feeling is more likely to be a slight touch of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Be for or against smoking if you want but don't blame tobacco for every ailment in the book.

When we all stop smoking and the diseases are still there, which I believe they will be, what other pleasure will be attacked. George Doyle, 41 Ellenabeich, Easdale.

Times Diary

SOMETIMES at a serious meeting or occasion, the smallest thing can make you laugh. Usually, the more inappropriate the occasion, the louder the chuckle when something does take you by surprise.

So spare a thought for the observer of a lengthy planning meeting at the Corran Halls who let out a stifled giggle when one individual, during his presentation, told the room 'you cannot see the application site when you are moving away from it'.

Much like most things, then.

DIARY doesn't often feel sorry for people.

It could be argued the very nature of Diary means it never can.

But recently, one musician performing at Oban High School caused all that to change.

Quite why the smallest member of the Black Watch band was picked to play the biggest instrument, one can only guess, but Diary suggests cruel motives were in mind when it spotted the band's diminutive drummer.

It goes without saying that he



looked slightly concerned as he marched out onto the stage - unable to see where he or his comrades were going. The only logical conclusion? He's the tank driver. 16_104diary1

Readers' views on police stop and search powers

LAST week, we asked on our Facebook page what people's thoughts were on Police Scotland using stop and search powers more in an effort to tackle crime.

The force says the tactic is working, but some officers say they're 'exaggerating' success figures as they feel under pressure to meet targets.

John Lamont: They're stopping teenagers constantly, alienating themselves to younger innocent members of the community.

Kevin Irvine: Harrassing teenagers on

a daily basis. Following them around the street. They need to find something to do with their time other than look for trouble

Hugh Donnelly: The obsession with targets is hindering people in all areas. Get management out on the front lines and get to know and understand the jobs their employees do.

Jim MacKay: Been there and done that, it doesn't work. Hugh is right, Scotpol's bosses need to get off their collective [seats] and put more cops on the beat permanently. I could fix the problem in a

matter of weeks, but there is not enough money to get me to come back!

Frank McCulloch: Heard there's a new tactic in Glasgow where the traffic cops wait at the entrance of new housing estates and stop drivers leaving to see if they have changed the address details on their driving licence. Also know a few policemen who are desperate to retire because the job is now so target driven. Most of the rank and file members of Police Scotland have no faith in Chief Constable Sir Stephen House's methods but I suppose only time will tell.



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

THA AN deasbad mun reifreann airson neo-eisimeileachd Alba a' dùsgadh mu dheireadh thall, agus tha an làn-uir ann 's gun ach beagan is seachd mìosan air fhàgail chun am bi sinn air chothrom co-dhùnadh air leth cudromach a dhèanamh a thaobh inbhe na dùthcha.

Gu mi-fhortanach, tha argamaidean leibideach fhathast gan tilgeil dhan deasbad agus luchd-poileataigs a th' air an dàrna làimh ag èigheach gur e co-dhùnadh a tha seo dha muinntir Alba, aig an aon àm a' feuchainn ri buaidh a thoirt air na thachras. Tha mi daonnan ag iarraidh buill Parlamaid fhaicinn ag obair còmhla.

Chunnacas sin bho chionn seachdain anns an deasbad aig Parlamaid na h-Alba air cead-pòsaidh aon ghnè, agus chan eil teagamh agam nach robh mòran a rinn toileachas a' faicinn co-obrachadh eadar-phartaigh den t-seòrsa.

Ged a tha mi a' tuigsinn cuid de na h-argamaidean a tha Daibhidh Camshron air a thogail, tha mi cuideachd ag aontachadh le Ailig Salmund gun bheil còir aig Prìomhaire na Rìoghachd Aonaichte a chuid bheachdan a dheasbad an seo cho math ri ceann a deas Shasainn.

Chan eil mise air m' inntinn a dhèanamh suas fhathast air ciamar a bhòtas mi ach tha mi cinnteach gun cuir mi bhòt ma bhios an t-slàinte agam gus sin a dhèanamh. Tha fiosam cuideachd gum feum mi gabhail ri co-dhùnadh an tomhas bheachd a thig tron reifreann seo co-dhùitheid cùisean le mo bheachd neo nam aghaidh.

Bha mi ag èisteachd ri deasbad air telebhisean bho chionn ghoidir am measg Bhuill Parlamaid is eile is iad a' beachdachadh air am bu chòir cead stailc àicheadh dhan fheadhainn a tha ag cosnadh ann an seirbheisean deatamach. Gun teagamh, tha argamaidean làidir agus reusanta a ghabhas cur gach taobh air leth seo, a bharrachd air aontachadh de na seirbheisean is còir an ainmeachadh mar sheirbheisean deatamach. Bha an deasbad ris an robh mise ag èisteachd air fàs a stailc luchd-obrach nan trèanaichean fo thalamh ann an Lunnainn agus bha mòran ga dhèanamh a fiosrachadh nach robh ach trian den luchd-obrach a bha air bhòtadh airson na stailc. Cha robh leithid sin deamocratach bha cuid ag ràdh.

Ach 's ann a bhuail e orm gum bheil mòran de na Buill Parlamaid a tha 'a' riaghladh' oirne nan dreuchdan cumhachdach, cudromach, le gu math nas lugha de thaic na bha iad a' cronachadh san stailc seo. Dè an obair eile is aithne dhuibhse far am bheil daoine a' faotainn cumhnant-cosnadh còig bliadhna 's gun ach 's dòcha trian den luchd-taghaidh a' cur taic riutha? Agus chan iadsan is coireach, ach sinne!

IN A TV discussion on whether essential service workers should be forbidden strike action I heard some commentators condemn the 'undemocratic' London underground strike which was not supported by a majority of union members.

It occurred to me that a substantial number of MPs are employed through the support of very small percentages of the eligible 'selection panel!' Undemocratic, some might say!

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

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Across

1 Type of tight pants (7)

5 Bay of Naples isle (5)

8 Quick to anger (13)

9 Ladies' partners (3)

10 Exalting (9)

12 High ground (6)

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Down

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2 Shiny shoe material (6,7)

3 To that place (9)

4 Gnawing animal... (6)

5 ...something to chew (3)

6 Being able to elaborate (6,7)

7 Perception (7)

11 Method of identification (9)

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14 Reproductive organ of a flower (6)

17 Ordinary (5)

19 Final letter (3)

LAST week's SOLUTION

M	P	O	N	E	L	F					
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Nevis Range 'snowed under'

NEVIS Range near Fort William has recorded the most snow since it opened in 1989, according to the ski resort's founder.

Prolonged wet weather in the West Highlands has fallen as snow on the mountain, reaching depths of around 60ft in some areas. Iain Sykes experienced unprecedented conditions first hand at the weekend.

He said: 'This is the best day's skiing I've ever had in Scotland. All the fences have vanished, I reckon it's 60ft deep in the Goose Gully which has completely flattened the run out. I've never seen it looking like it is today, I genuinely haven't. It's just magic.'

The blizzards have not come without problems, according to managing director Marian Austin. She said: 'The team on the hill has been working extremely hard in incredibly difficult conditions to prepare for our customers each day.'

'We've been battered by south-westerly winds which are not particularly good for our operations and have damaged our towls and there have been days when it has been too windy to operate.'

The snow bonanza means Nevis Range plans to offer ski-ing well into the spring.

Woman denies reversing car at partner

A FORT William woman has denied repeatedly reversing her car at her partner.

Anna Rybacka, of 9 Angus Crescent, appeared from custody to plead not guilty to dangerous driving and behaving in a threatening and abusive manner on February 5.

The 35-year-old was bailed and ordered to appear back at Fort William Sheriff Court on March 4.

Trio take stage in concert

A CLASSICAL music group will be performing in Lochaber High School on Saturday night.

Jacquin Trio will combine clarinet, viola and piano during a concert in the school's dance studio at 7.30pm.

The event is the fourth concert of the season for local music group, Lochaber Music For All.



The old Scottish Automobile Club sign pictured in Mr Pirie's Edinburgh antique shop before its return to Glencoe.

Massacre signpost returns to rightful Glencoe owners

AN OLD signpost marking the site of the Glencoe Massacre is being returned to its rightful home today at the annual gathering to commemorate the bloody episode.

Edinburgh antiques dealer George Pirie will hand over the cast-iron sign to event organisers Glencoe Heritage Trust just before an 11am service in St Mary's Episcopal Church in Glencoe village.

The sign was put up by the old Scottish Automobile Club next to the A82 near Glencoe village but disappeared in mysterious circumstances around 40 years ago.

Mr Pirie purchased the antique privately in Edinburgh last year and only realised its significance when city resident Morag MacDonald noticed it in his shop.

By remarkable coincidence, Ms MacDonald had her photo taken underneath the sign as a little girl with her family in Glencoe in 1969 and recognised it as the original.

Mr Pirie immediately withdrew it from sale and contacted the trust, who invited to him to today's ceremony.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It is the original sign and we have identified it as such.'

'There was a huge interest from people wanting to buy it but I decided the right thing to do was to take it back to Glencoe where it belongs.'

'It is one of the wonderful perks of this job when things like this happen.'

Trust secretary Ros MacDonald said finding the right spot for the valuable artefact would be vital to guard against theft, especially after the attempted robbery of a brass interpretation panel fixed just last year onto the Celtic cross memorial to the massacre.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a wonderful gesture but we have to decide where the sign goes. It has to be in a place where it is looked after.'

'It is metal so if we are not careful sure as anything it will be stolen.'

'We have already had to take a brass plaque off the monument because somebody tried to steal it.'

The church service will be followed by the traditional march at 12pm from the old bridge over the River Coe to the memorial at Upper Carnoch, where an outdoor service will be held and wreaths laid by the trust, the National Trust for Scotland and the Highlands and Islands Clan Donald Society.

Around 50 MacDonalds from Invergarry, Skye, Fort William and Fife are among those expected to attend - snow permitting.

The Rev Adrian Fallows, Rector of St Mary's will lead both services.

The Littrell family from Chatham, Illinois, USA, are sponsoring the trust's wreath.

On February 13, 1692, 38 Glencoe MacDonalds were murdered by government troops led by Robert Campbell of Glenlyon under the orders of King William III.

Pair found not guilty of assault

TWO LOCHABER men have been found not guilty of assault after an early morning altercation in Mallaig.

Lewis MacDonald of Camanach Crescent, Fort William, had been accused of repeatedly kicking Gregor MacIntyre resulting in a broken jaw and bruised ribs in the early hours of September 9 2012.

But at Fort William Sheriff Court procurator fiscal Laura Ryan said she was no longer seeking a conviction against the 21-year-old.

Donnie Dempster, 19, of 10 Blaven View, Mallaig, was also found not guilty of assaulting Ewan MacIntyre, brother of Gregor, after the Crown dropped the case against him.

Co-accused Samuel Robertson of 11 Gordon Brown Place, denies assaulting Gregor by repeatedly kicking him on the head and body, all to his severe injury, on the same morning.

The trial involves a series of assaults alleged to have taken place after complainants Gregor, Ewan, their father Hugh

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by EMMA CRICHTON

MacIntyre and the accused had been drinking in the Clachan Inn.

During evidence, Ewan, 18, said he had been walking with Dempster shortly after an alleged attack on Gregor when he was punched.

'I had my arm round him telling him to calm down and I got hit on the right side of my head,' he added.

Miss Ryan asked Ewan: 'What would you say to the suggestion that Gregor pulled Donnie's hood over his head and punched him just before you were hit?'

Ewan replied: 'Gregor was nowhere to be seen.'

Hugh MacIntyre took to the stand to give evidence against Robertson, 20, who denies a further charge of assaulting Mr MacIntyre by repeatedly punching him to the head at East Bay, Mallaig.

Mr MacIntyre told the court

he had gone to pick up his sons when he was punched by Robertson.

He said: 'Sammy Sean was coming towards us clenching his fist, I put my hand on his chest to stop him coming towards me in self defence, I turned around and the next minute I got punched on the nose. Then I got punched on the chin and knocked down to the ground.'

Robertson has lodged a special plea of self defence that Mr MacIntyre assaulted him.

Defending, Patrick Campbell said to Mr MacIntyre: 'If I were to suggest to you that you said 'I'm going to kill you' and hit him on the chest causing him to go back 10 steps or so, what would you say?'

'No, not at all,' Mr MacIntyre replied.

A fourth man, Oban butcher Sean Grant, 24, earlier admitted punching Gregor MacIntyre, his cousin, on the head at East Bay on the same date.

The case was continued to March 14. Sentence was deferred on Grant until then.

Mallaig man's death threat claims

A MALLAIG man claimed another man from the village threatened to kill him on two separate occasions.

Allan Morrison told Fort William Sheriff Court that William Grant said 'I'm going to kill you when I get you on your own' at Station Road on August 6 last year.

Mr Morrison also accused the 61-year-old of driving his car onto the pavement, blocking his path and again threatening to kill him at Davies Brae on August

20. He said: 'He drove up to tell me what he was going to do to me, next thing I know he's drove right in so I was boxed in.'

When asked by procurator fiscal Laura Ryan what the threats were Mr Morrison, 37, said 'kill me, bash my head in and kick me about.'

Mr Morrison, 37, admitted he and Grant 'had never been friends' but the threats were unprovoked.

Defending, Hamish Melrose suggested there had been a

long-running feud between the men. He said: 'I'll put it to you that you are not telling the truth today. You're just making up a pack of lies.'

Witness Angus Fraser, a colleague of Mr Morrison, told the court he heard Grant making the threats on August 6.

Grant, of 22 Lovat Terrace, denies both charges of behaving in a threatening and abusive manner.

The trial continues on March 3.

Mixed news for Lochaber community councils

THERE was mixed news for two Lochaber community councils last week in interim elections held by Highland Council.

Inverloch and Torlund Community Council is back up to its full complement of eight after Mel Davenport, Archie Jeffrey, Flora McKee and Florence MacNicol stepped forward to fill the four vacancies.

However, Caol Community Council, which has been in abeyance for several years, failed to form.

Meanwhile, an election for Sunart Community Council will be held on March 6 after six people were nominated for the five available places.

The candidates are Denise Anderson, Sally Cameron, Brian Evans, James Hilder, Michael Laybourne and John MacDonald.

Greylag geese cull business boost

A BENBECULA food business is among local outlets set to take advantage of pilot project for a major cull of greylag geese on the Uists.

Maclean's Bakery will sell wild goose meat under a licence scheme operated by Scottish Natural Heritage as part of a management plan to reduce the greylag population.

The birds are normally migratory but thanks to a ready all year-round supply of grass and crops, they have taken up permanent residence on the Uists.

That led to their numbers rocketing, leading to calls from crofters for control measures to be introduced to reduce agricultural damage.

Now it is hoped selling geese shot under the project will generate income for the local community while helping to pay for some of the management work.

Maclean's Bakery butcher David MacInnes told *The Oban Times*: 'They are doing a big cull in March. There are hundreds of breeding pairs on the island.'

'I run a small croft myself at Baleshare on North Uist and the birds are just a disaster. Even in the winter they are grazing on the grass. We'll be selling goose burgers, sausages and breast filets.'

Lochbiodale butcher Lawrence Beaton was unsure whether he would apply for a licence. He said: 'We would have to look into it to see if it would pay us - it might be more bother than it's worth.'

Licences will be provided to enable the sale of goose meat for a trial period from February 2014 to March 2015. Local crofters are among those expected to apply. Johanne Ferguson, SNH operations manager for the Outer Hebrides and secretary to the local goose group said: 'Sales of geese shot under the pilot should provide the means to make goose management self-funding in future. Although the goose population is still very high, bag limits are reviewed annually through the local group and agreed with national advisors to ensure geese are managed sustainably.'

ADVERTORIAL

JDP supporting local farmers and builders in the West Scotland

OVER the last 40 years, JDP has grown to become one of the leading stockists of civil and drainage products for agriculture, building and groundwork, servicing house builders, ground workers, civil engineering contractors, local builders and farmers.

'Since its opening last year, the Oban branch has supported local farmers, builders, ground workers, and contractors, with a comprehensive range of

products available locally, close to the project, and with expert advice on all aspects of drainage and water management,' commented Paul McIntyre, area manager of JDP Scotland.

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MORE than a merchant

what's on

THE OBAN TIMES
FREE EVENT LISTING

- FRIDAY - February 14**
10.30am, Valentine's craft workshop, Atlantis Leisure, Oban
- SATURDAY - February 15**
12pm-2pm, Sequence Soup and Song, Glencruitten Parish Church.
2pm-4pm, Valentine's Afternoon Tea, Oban Masonic Hall.
2.30pm, Appin Historical Society, Port Appin Hall.
3pm, Oban Music Society, St John's Cathedral, Oban.
7.30pm, Annual Skye Ceilidh, West End Hotel, Fort William.
7.45pm, An Comunn Gaidhealach Ceilidh, Taynuilt Village Hall.
- SUNDAY - February 16**
6pm, Jim Jam Ceilidh Band, Crear, Killybeggy.
- WEDNESDAY - February 19**
7.30pm, Netherform Piping Society, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban.
- SATURDAY - February 22**
2pm, Friends of St Conan's Kirk inauguration, St Conan's Kirk.
- THURSDAY - February 27**
7.30pm, Scottish Opera, Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern.

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Malt of the Month
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Springbank 12 Year Old Cask Strength 58.5% ABV

Produced in Campbeltown, Springbank 12 is a hefty dram, but one which is awash with class and culture to keep you coming back.

A lush and luxurious dram, the Cask Strength has been one of the Kintyre distillery's most popular malts, with the annual limited run quickly snapped up.

This year's Cask Strength has been matured in a mix of sherry hogsheads and refill sherry butts, producing a powerful dram that is sure to leave long legs on your glass.

Refreshing gold in colour, its appearance is a reminder of caramel bars - something we'll return to later.

Take in a deep breath and the whisky will fill your nostrils, with hints of cinnamon and smoke lingering in amongst a sweet sherry and vanilla aroma.

Mildly peaty, the Springbank delivers a healthy oomph of sweetness, bringing back reminders of those caramel bars from earlier, coupled with a warm spice and the subtlest hints of citrus.

Rich with an oily texture, it slips down the throat with a long, satisfying finish. A smoky aftertaste is coupled with one more hit of sweetness and slightly salted caramel - all the more surprisingly delightful on the palate given the strength of the drink.

This isn't a bottle you'll want to get through in a hurry as it is a drink you'll love to savour and show off to guests.

This is an accomplished, fulfilling and indulgent tittle and one which I'll keep coming back to and a cert to be pulled out of the cabinet again and again.

JR Fergusson

Alexander MacPhail




Eye to eye with John Wallace

Winter Fun

I have just been looking at the snow reports for the major European ski resorts. Amazingly, Glencoe has more snow than many top European resorts. With the school mid-term holidays upon us many of us will be taking our families for a ski holiday. No doubt you have been doing your ski exercises and organised all your equipment in preparation for your trip. But did you remember about your eyes?

Skiing places many challenges on your eyes. One minute you can be skiing in brilliant sunlight and the next the weather has closed in and the light has gone flat. This huge change in light levels makes it very difficult to find appropriate eye protection. The temptation is not to wear sunglasses in poor light conditions. The problem with that is there can still very high levels of ultra violet (UV) light present even in cloud. Prolonged exposure to high UV levels can result in "snow blindness" which can be extremely painful for up to 48 hours. If you do have the misfortune to suffer from snow blindness the only treatment is to stay in a darkened room and take appropriate painkillers.

You can prevent snow blindness by wearing appropriate sunglasses or ski goggles. Just as you would wear different layers of clothes for different weather conditions it is important to have different levels of eye protection. Sunglasses are dangerous in low light conditions and contrast enhancing goggles are not dark enough in bright sunlight.

If you wear glasses then it can be even more problematical. Perhaps contact lenses would give you the freedom to enjoy your sport to the maximum. Why not ask your optometrist if you would be a suitable candidate for contact lenses. With the huge variety of contact lenses available you probably could easily wear them.

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Young dyslexia group start film project

A GROUP of youngsters all with some form of dyslexia, which meets one Saturday a month, has decided to follow in the footsteps of an A-list film star's son.

Inspired by James Redford, the son of Robert Redford, who made the documentary *The Big Picture*: Rethinking Dyslexia, the group of a dozen or so primary and high school children have embarked on the making their own film.

With help from parents and Argyll and Bute's community development and learning department, the youngsters are putting together a film of what it is like to have dyslexia, how it affects them and their parents and hope, in the process, to dispel some of the myths surrounding the learning disability.

They are also hoping to film people in Oban and Lorn who have dyslexia but have managed to be successful in their chosen career be it sport, music or some other profession and would like to hear

from anyone willing to tell their story.

James Redford's *Big Picture* interviews parents and children, education professionals and high achievers including top entrepreneur Richard Branson talking about their experiences.

The Oban and Lorn group hopes the film can be shown to other youngsters, parents and even teachers in the area to give a better understanding of the condition.

Dyslexia can involve varying degrees of difficulty in learning to read, interpreting words, letters or numbers, writing and spelling but does not affect general intelligence.

The 'weekenders' club, which was set up in 2006 but fell away before being resurrected again in autumn last year, meets every second Saturday of the month between 12 noon and 2pm at Dunbeg Primary School.

Maureen Evans, community learning and development officer, explained: 'The original idea of it was to provide a

place for young people to meet others with dyslexia and do fun things which didn't involve reading and writing and while they are doing that it gives the parents a chance to speak to each other and provide mutual support.'

The newly resurrected group has already had a trip to Oban Phoenix Cinema and is planning a skiing trip.

Anyone with dyslexia willing to be interviewed can contact the group via email at maureen.evans@argyll-bute.gov.uk.



Some of the members of the 'weekenders' club who meet at Dunbeg Primary School. t07dyslexia01

Leading classical pianist will play special concert in Oban this Sunday

WILLIAM Howard, one of Britain's leading classical pianists, will play a special concert in Oban this weekend.

Visiting St John's Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday, the renowned musician comes to the town thanks to Oban Music Society.

Having enjoyed a career that has taken him to more than 40 countries, his performing life consists of solo recitals, concerto performances, guest appearances with chamber ensembles and instrumentalists, and regular touring with the Schubert Ensemble of London, Britain's leading group for piano and strings and winners of the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Best Chamber Ensemble.

He can be heard on more than 30 CDs.

His concert at St John's Cathedral includes works by Schumann, Schubert, Chopin and David Matthews.

This will be his last concert in Argyll following performances in Rothesay and Ardrishaig on Friday and Saturday evenings.



William Howard, who visits Oban this weekend for a special concert at St John's Cathedral.

Oban Burns Club shares appreciation of The Bard with local primary school pupils

MORE than 100 primary school children last week took part in the second Primary School Burns Day competition.

The Burns Club of Oban sponsored the event in the town's Corran Halls, which included singing, instrumentalists, writing in Scots, art work and projects about Burns.

It was organised by a committee of pupils from primary schools in Oban and Lorn, under the supervision of teacher Berni MacMillan.

The Burns Club of Oban said it was pleased to be involved in an event which encourages young people to get to know and appreciate the work of Robert Burns and thanked everyone who took part, adding it hoped to sponsor a similar event again next year.



Members of Oban Burns Club, the organising group, including pupils and members of the theatre group which performed a Burns play.

Potential recognised as west coast hotels come under new management

THREE struggling west coast hotels have been given a new lease of life after coming under the management of Crieff Hydro Ltd.

The Isles of Glencoe Hotel and Leisure Centre, The Ballachulish Hotel and the Oban Caledonian Hotel will now operate as part of a joint venture with the hotels' owner, Freedom Hotels.

The deal was brokered by Crieff Hydro managing director John Jennett, who lives in North Argyll and built up the hotels in the 90s before they were sold.

Mr Jennett, former chairman of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Lochaber, said: 'I'm so pleased to bring a local and Scottish angle back to the management of these businesses which seem to have somewhat lost their way.'

'I know they have huge potential to bring more visitors to the area and provide a better service to the local area.'

'There are nearly 100 less people working in these businesses than there were eight years ago.'

'There is a big opportunity there that is about helping these businesses deliver a better service and perform better.'

Freedom Hotels owner, Belfast-based businessman Colin Johnston said: 'Having been through the hands of a few operators, it will take time for these businesses to stabilise but I know they have great potential.'

'This is about the long-term for me and for Crieff Hydro. In time, I am sure that the teams in the hotels, the customers, Crieff Hydro and myself will all feel really proud to be part of this story.'

Chris Taylor, HIE head of tourism, food and drink, said: 'We are delighted that a business with Crieff Hydro's reputation is choosing to invest in the region.'



British Heart Foundation Fort William shop staff and volunteers did their bit to raise extra funds for research into heart disease in the charity's 'Ramp Up the Red' day on Friday. Above, red is the colour for shop manager Katie MacMillan, Tracy MacLean, Patrick McGrail and Andrea Haigh. 20_107heart01

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The Lochaber High School party enjoyed their trip to Alpe d'Huez.

Lochaber High School pupils encounter fabulous conditions in the French Alps

THIRTY-two pupils and four staff from Lochaber High School travelled to the French Alpine resort of Alpe d'Huez to enjoy fabulous snow conditions and excellent weather. From beginners to more advanced skiers, pupils took part in daily ski lessons with Ecole Ski du Français ensuring that their snowsports skills and techniques steadily improved

throughout the week. The instructors complimented each of the pupils on their motivation, ability and obvious enjoyment of skiing. In addition, each evening a range of après-ski activities from ice skating, laser quest and a high ropes challenge was organised.

Mr Bill MacKenzie, who organised the trip, said: 'It was a thoroughly enjoyable week of non-stop action with the pupils of Lochaber High School once again excelling in an outdoor environment. Arrangements are currently being finalised for a similar trip in January 2015.'



Club members made their own entertainment at the annual dinner dance. From left: Fiona Cameron, Dougie Beck, Deirdre Beck and Clare Delaney (seated).

Fine form at Fort accordion and fiddle club's annual dance

FORT WILLIAM Accordion and Fiddle Club were entertained by former Mod gold medalist Alasdair Whyte from Mull at their annual dinner dance in the Railway Club on Friday night. A great turnout of 76 members and supporters heard guest artist Alasdair, from Mull, sing a selection of Gaelic songs while the club band comprising Fiona Cameron, Dougie Beck, Deirdre Beck and Clare Delaney

Glen Garry tapestry appeal

THE RICH history of Glen Garry is set to be woven into tapestry - if enough local volunteers can be found. Fort Augustus woman Elizabeth Grey had been 'disappointed' that two panels dedicated to Glegarry and Fort Augustus in the Prestonpans Tapestry were not embroidered locally. The 104-metre work, completed in 2010, deals with the campaign of Bonnie Prince Charlie before, during and after the Battle of Prestonpans on September 21, 1745. Mrs Grey, formerly of Garry Gualach in upper Glen Garry, said: 'I lived for all my married life in the Glen and all my children were born here where their ancestors lived.' Anyone wishing to help can contact Mrs Grey on 01329366261 or at libby@garrygualach.com.

Robert Nairn Trio gets toes tapping



The Robert Nairn Trio from Acharacle were a hit with those attending Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club on Saturday night, with the Argyllshire Gathering Halls' dancefloor getting plenty of use. Robert Nairn is pictured on the accordion, his brother Allan on the drums and Connel man Ross MacPherson is on the piano. 07_107accf1d1



The Cast Ewe Ceilidh Band performed for the Fort William Accordion and Fiddle Club. From left, Murdo Cameron on guitar, Hugh MacCallum on drums, Iain Cameron on accordion and Ross MacPherson playing keyboard.

Oban Phoenix Cinema	Mr. Peabody & Sherman	Fri 14th	15.00 3D
		Sat 15th	13.00 2D, 15.30 3D
		Sun 16th	13.30 3D
		Mon 17th	13.30 3D
		Tues 18th	13.30 2D
	Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit	Thurs 13th	18.00
	I, Frankenstein	Thurs 13th	20.30 3D
	Nebraska	Thurs 13th	15.30
	August: Osage County	Fri 14th	18.00
		Sat 15th	20.30
		Sun 16th	19.00
		Mon 17th	18.00
		Tues 18th	20.30
	That Awkward Moment	Fri 14th	21.00
		Sat 15th	18.00
		Sun 16th	16.00
		Mon 17th	21.00
		Tues 18th	18.00

Mr. Peabody & Sherman (U)
Using his most ingenious invention, the WABAC machine, Mr. Peabody and his adopted boy Sherman turtle back in time to experience world-changing events first-hand and interact with some of the greatest characters of all time. They find themselves in a race to repair history and save the future.

Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (12A)
Jack Ryan, as a young covert CIA analyst, uncovers a Russian plot to crash the U.S. economy with a terrorist attack. While working as a junior analyst for the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, Jack Ryan inadvertently uncovers evidence of an imminent terrorist attack. With no intelligence to verify his discovery, Ryan is promoted to field agent and sent to Moscow to continue his investigation, where he soon encounters Viktor Cherevin, an enigmatic businessman at the centre of a plot to cripple the global economy.

I, Frankenstein (12A)
200 years after his shocking creation, Dr Frankenstein's creature, Adam, still walks the Earth. But when he finds himself in the middle of a war over the fate of humanity, Adam discovers he holds the key that could destroy humankind. With a cast that includes Aaron Eckhart and Bill Nighy, this is a thriller that is not to be missed!

Nebraska (15)
"NEBRASKA" is a father and son road trip, from Billings, Montana to Lincoln, Nebraska that gets waylaid at a small town in central Nebraska, where the father grew up and has scores to settle. Told with deadpan humour and a unique visual style, it's ultimately the story of a son trying to get through to a father he doesn't understand.

August: Osage County (15)
A look at the lives of the strong-willed women of the Weston family, whose paths have diverged until a family crisis brings them back to the Oklahoma house they grew up in, and to the dysfunctional woman who raised them.

That Awkward Moment (15)
Zac Efron, Miles Teller and Michael B. Jordan star in "That Awkward Moment", a romantic comedy with a twist. The film centres around three best friends who find themselves where we've all been - at that confusing "moment" in every dating relationship when you have to decide "So...where is this going?"

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

FRIENDS OF ST CONAN'S KIRK Open invitation to inaugural meeting Sat 22nd February 14:00 At St Conan's Kirk, Loch Awe	Soup and a Song with Sequence Ladies Choir Glencruitten Church of Scotland Centre, Oban Saturday February 15 12-2pm	APPIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Worm's Eye View of the Crimea - Letters Home from the Trenches, Part One Saturday 15 February 2.30pm Port Appin Hall www.appinhistoricalsociety.co.uk
Netherorn Piping Society Guest Player Pipe Major Douglas Murray (supported by Angus MacColl's pupils) Wednesday 19th February In the Argyllshire Gathering Halls at 7.30pm Adults £3; Children Free	CREAR CEILIDH The Jim Jam Ceilidh Band Sunday 16 February from 6pm at Crear, Kilberry All welcome, free entry T 01880 770 369	MARIE CURIE CANCER CARE Valentine's Afternoon Tea Masonic Hall, Albany Street, Oban Saturday 15th February 2014 2pm - 4pm Adults £3 Children £2 Various Stalls including Raffle, Baking, Preserves, Books etc Chairlift available
An Comunn Gaidhealach MEUR CHRUAICHAIN (Cruchain Branch) CEILIDH IN TAYNUILT VILLAGE HALL SATURDAY, 15th February 2014 at 7.45 p.m. Freddie MacKenzie (Traditional Mod Gold Medallist) 'Fuaimeach' May Brown, Gilliain MacDonald, Peter MacIntosh & Brian Owen. 'Eua' Kim Carnie, Eric Linklater & Innis Whyte Jake MacKay-Mouthorgan, Agnes Liddell - Keyboard Grant Cooper - Piper, The Eilidh MacInnes Dancers, Fear an Taighe - Eric Smith Admission £4.00, Members £3.00, Children £2.00	31st Highlands & Islands Music & Dance Festival (2-4 May, 2014) Syllabus/Entry Forms from 'Oban Music' or Tel: 01631 710302 www.obanfestival.org Closing date: March 17, 2014	

To advertise in our community noticeboard call 01631 568000

Lucky climber's talk and film trailer to be shown next week

A CLIMBER almost killed in a fall three years ago will tell his inspirational story of survival and recovery at the Fort William Mountain Festival next week. Joe Beaumont will also show a trailer of his film, produced and filmed with fellow climber Dom Bush, about his experiences with mountain rescue teams and the debt he owes to them. Joe, from Bowness on Windermere in Lancashire, shattered the right side of his body in a 140-foot plunge at Eskdale Quarry in the Lake District in March 2011. Thanks to the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team he was airlifted to hospital where he began a painstaking rehabilitation. Joe will give his talk in the Ben Nevis Inn at Achintee on Wednesday at 7pm. All profits from the event will go to Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

Classical music group to perform at Lochaber High

A CLASSICAL music group will be performing in Lochaber High School on Saturday night. Jacquin Trio will combine clarinet, viola and piano during a concert in the school's dance studio at 7.30pm. The event is the fourth concert of the season for local music group, Lochaber Music For All.

Opera Highlights

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To claim this offer, complete the below application form and, along with an up to date passport sized photograph, take it along to the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Oban, at any time in February 2014. You can also post your application, complete with a stamped self addressed envelope, photo and a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to Merlin Entertainments, to Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE.

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Strong house building to drive construction recovery in Scotland

House building across Scotland continued its revival towards the end of 2013 with the private sector leading the way. However, the current increase in activity is being met with some shortages of skills, according to the latest RICS Construction Market Survey.

Despite the fact that the recovery in the construction industry is only just getting underway, skills shortages are already being identified as a constraint on activity. Twenty six percent of respondents claim that a lack of quantity surveyors is restricting building. Skills shortages are increasing across all of the trades in Scotland, with the highest percentage of respondents for five years now reporting problems sourcing relevant skills.

Significantly, infrastructure construction, a core priority of the Scottish government's economic plan, is showing signs of picking up speed with a net balance of 17 percent of respondents reporting a growth in activity.

The improving picture in the construction sector is also visible across the UK with workloads rising for the second



consecutive quarter in all parts of the country. Looking ahead, expectations for future construction activity were upbeat with 56 percent more chartered surveyors expecting workloads in Scotland to increase rather than decrease during 2014. Furthermore, predictions for employment levels and company profits were also very positive, suggesting that the construction sector may at long last be beginning to pick up.

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Fiddler hopes to be on song

AN OBAN fiddler could be in line to pick up a gong double when he travels to London next week for the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

Aiden O'Rourke, 38 could be named the musician of the year at the Royal Albert Hall next Wednesday, while his band Lau could win their second band of the year title in a row and their fifth of all time.

Aiden, who was born in Oban and moved to Seil before settling in Edinburgh, isn't getting ahead of himself with the nomination, but admits he's pleased to be on the receiving end of yet more praise.

He said: 'It's shaping up to be a good night but it's not going to ruin my night if I don't win.'

'Given all the other names there I'm quite proud.'

Perform

Aiden will also perform at the event, which will be broadcast live on Radio 2 as well as on the TV via the BBC red button.

He will be playing with American singer-songwriter Anais Mitchell and Lau bandmate, accordion player Martin Green.

The other Scottish band shortlisted in the band of the year award is Breabach, whose fiddler Megan Henderson is from Fort William.

It's Always Argyll for weathergirl Judith

THE DREARY, damp and dark days of an Argyll winter will be more than familiar to weather presenter Judith Ralston, who has the task of delivering many bleak forecasts for the area.

But having spent her childhood holidays sailing around the county's coastal waters and more recently returning to visit friends on a regular basis, her image of the area could not be more different.

'I've been coming here since the late 1970s and the weather is always fantastic,' said Judith, as she reels off a list of Argyll locations visited. 'My uncle had a boat and we would drive through from East Lothian to sail around the coastline.'

'The boat was moored at Dunstaffnage and we would usually go to places like Seil, Mull, Iona and Kintyre.'

'In Oban I have vivid memories of fish and chips and watching the fishing boats and the ferries

coming in. 'Kintyre was such a big discovery and I love Mull, which is so underrated. I think people tend to focus on Skye because it is so striking but Mull has just as much to offer.'

A glint of mischief appears through her famous specs when she recalls a school trip to Iona. 'I remember Iona for its blue seas and white sands. I got a fantastic tan on that trip!'

Since hitting our screens as the face of BBC Scotland's television weather bulletins, the mother of three has become a household name.

But, were it not for her presenting career, Judith may have become a west Highlander.

'Don't get me wrong, I love the east coast but the west always seemed more magical to me and I loved its stories,' she adds.

Judith's own story, from singer to weathergirl, is well documented.

Having studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, she had been touted as a promising opera singer.

But, at the age of 29, she suffered a vocal collapse, ending her career in an instant.

'When I lost my voice I hit the wall with depression. My whole livelihood and a promising career was gone,' said Judith.

'I was the archetypal opera singer. I was big. After a show I would go for a curry and a few pints.'

'And for about a year after losing my voice I would eat and drink to excess until one day I woke up and said, 'I don't want to be this fat!'

She joined a slimming club and took up swimming and running. When a friend then suggested she could use her voice in a different way, she contacted the BBC's continuity department and began reading the travel news, before eventually joining

the weather team. Living in Glasgow, her striking looks and natural screen presence make her instantly recognisable with the public.

'I tend to be approached by women, who might ask about the dress I wore on the telly the previous night, but men tend to avoid me,' she admits. 'They seem to think I'm some kind of man-eater!'

'Nowadays, we have blogs, Twitter accounts and Facebook and people tend to say some really nice things. I do get some comments from men, nothing negative. I'm in my mid-forties now so I actually find that quite flattering.'

'There is one woman who complains that I speak too quickly during the forecast - I can get excited about the weather. I like to get in as much detail as I can because people like to hear what the weather is doing in their area.'

However, on other occasions chats with viewers can be less convenient.

'I remember when I went into labour with the twins, they had come early and my husband was working in Aberdeen.'

'I had to get a taxi to the hospital and the driver instantly recognised me - I think it was the glasses - and he started chatting about the weather! I laugh about it now but there I was talking about the forecast in between contractions.'

Weather presenter Judith Ralston.



The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies competition 2014



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How the competition works

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies competition is back! Our 2014 winner will receive a whopping £500 worth of vouchers to spend at The Co-operative! Plus, this year we will have £150

of vouchers for a second place winner and £100 vouchers for third place. The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest mutual business owned by nearly eight million members. It is

the UK's fifth largest food retailer operating across the country with almost 2,800 local, convenience and medium sized stores. Visit www.co-operative.coop.

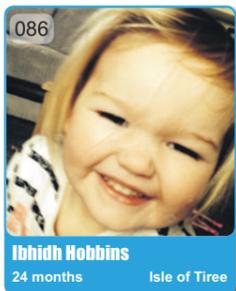
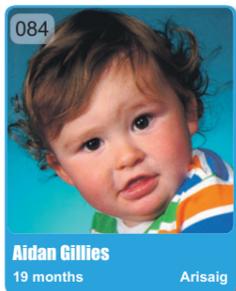
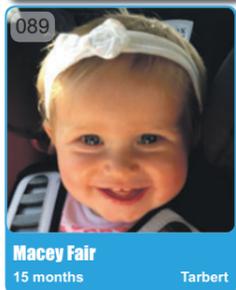
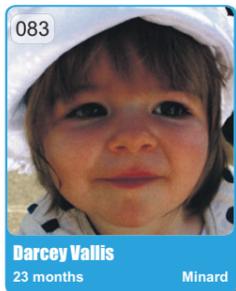
The competition is taking place in weekly groups where readers are asked to vote for that week's bonniest baby. For example, if your child is in group one and gets the most votes out

of all the entries in that issue they will be entered into the grand finale. The baby who has the most votes from the grand finale, held early 2014, will be crowned the Bonniest Baby of 2014.

It doesn't matter which round your baby appears in, you can keep voting until Wednesday, February 19, 2014. Coupons must be received by 5pm. Text lines close midnight. We won't

count the votes to decide who goes into the grand finale until the voting deadline has been reached. Full details online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

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Vote for Group Six's finalist!

This is the last round of entries before the Grand Finale

How to vote

Readers can vote for their favourite baby by text or by post, using the coupon provided on this page. You can vote for as many babies as many times as you like until the voting deadline. Just make sure you quote the number stated on the child's photograph when voting.

By text:

To vote by text, text the word **BABY** followed by a space then the three digit number stated on the top left hand side of the child's photograph to **88010**.

Text messages cost **£1** plus one message at standard network rate. Text votes must be received by midnight, February 19, 2014.

By coupon:

Complete the voting form provided on this page and send it to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted. Coupons must be received by 5pm, February 19, 2014



Example text. DON'T FORGET TO PUT IN A SPACE.

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I would like to vote for:

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Baby's name:

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*Baby number must be supplied.

Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted.

You can still vote for babies in previous groups. See terms & conditions.

You may send in multiple voting coupons in one envelope.

Coupon votes must be received by 5pm, February 19, 2014.



Terms & conditions: The winner must be willing to take part in publicity. Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted. Text messages cost £1 plus one message at standard network rate. The deadline to receive votes by is February 19, 2014 (coupon votes by 5pm, text votes by midnight). One text counts as one vote. One coupon counts as one vote. The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. Voters must be aged 16 or over and must have the bill payer's permission. Full terms and conditions at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies. Customer services: 01631 568000.

time to think green



Half of UK householders think it's cheaper to leave the home heating on all day at low temperature

Half (50 per cent) of all UK householders think it's cheaper to leave their home heating on all day than turning the heating on or off and up or down when required.

This finding is part of an energy saving mythbusting survey commis-

sioned by the Energy Saving Trust as part of the recent Big Energy Saving Week, which highlights the perceptions of the UK public and how they don't always match the reality of the energy saving action or statement.

The survey was carried out to a sample of 2,067 online adults in the UK aged 16-75 last month.

Other findings from the Ipsos MORI survey include:

30 per cent that think screensavers on computers save energy.

Almost half (45 per cent) think switched-off electrical appliances don't use electricity when they're plugged in at the mains.

Nearly half (48 per cent) agreed that it's a hassle to change energy suppliers.

Two thirds (66 per cent) of people think that more heat is lost through the roof of their home than the walls – however for the majority of properties the walls will actually lose more heat.

However, there were other findings which highlighted a level of awareness from the UK public regarding the correct energy saving actions to take in the home. These include:

Just 27 per cent incorrectly said turning up their thermostat to a high setting heats the home faster, compared to 54 per cent that correctly said the statement was false.

Three quarters (75 per cent) know that energy saving light bulbs are compatible with traditional light bulb fittings.

And, 69 per cent know that solar panels will work during daylight hours regardless of whether the sun is shining or not, with only ten per cent disagreeing.

Energy Saving Trust chief executive Phillip Sellwood said:

"We commissioned this survey to bust some of the top energy saving myths we encounter on a daily basis. While for certain actions a portion of the UK public think they are saving energy when they're not, it's heartening to see that a lot of people are doing the right thing in the home to save energy.

"We know it's important for the UK public to stay warm and cosy in their homes. But for the majority the most cost-effective way to do this is to turn the heating on and off or up and down when required rather than leaving it on all day at a lower temperature. This ensures that heat is not wasted and that your home will be at a comfortable temperature."

According to figures from the Energy Saving Trust, the UK could collectively save nearly £4.4 billion on energy bills if householders took three energy saving actions in the home.

These are:

Turn it off – Make sure you turn your lights, appliances and chargers off when you're not using them. Virtually all electrical and electronic appliances can safely be turned off at the plug without upsetting their systems.

Turn it down – Many households have their central heating set higher than they need, without even realising it. If it's too warm inside, try turning your room thermostat down by one degree and see if you are still at a comfortable temperature. Every degree that you turn it down will make additional savings to your heating bill.

Let there be light – Households can now get LED spotlights that are bright enough to replace halogens, as well as regular energy saving bulbs ('compact fluorescent lamps' or CFLs) for pretty much everything else. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes and fittings and can save households money on their energy bills.

For more free, impartial advice call Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282. Home Energy Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Energy Saving Trust.



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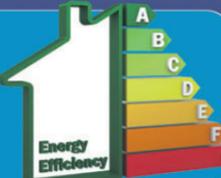
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This scheme is funded by the Scottish Government, Scottish and Southern Energy and Energy With Limited and is operated by ALIenergy for Argyll and Bute Council. All measures are totally free to the householder, up to a maximum amount.

Air source heat pumps

Heat your home with energy absorbed from the air around you.

Air source heat pumps absorb heat from the outside air. This heat can then be used to heat radiators, underfloor heating systems, or warm air convectors and hot water in your home.

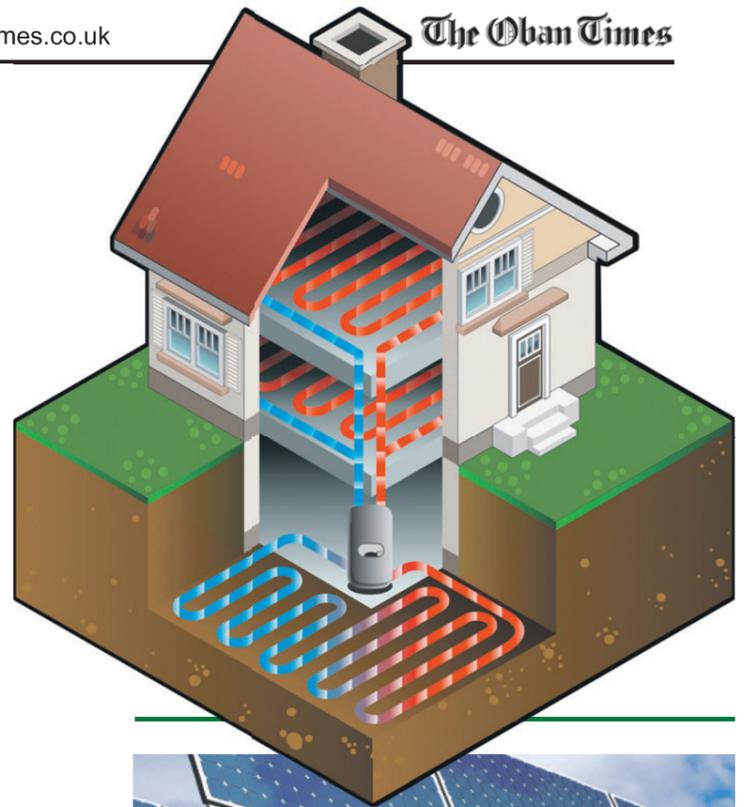
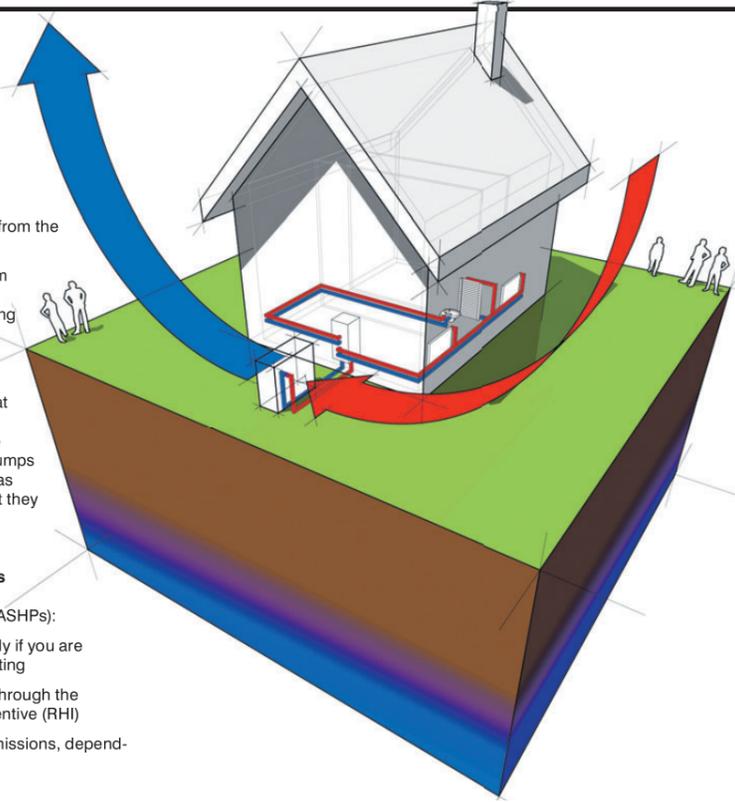
An air source heat pump extracts heat from the outside air in the same way that a fridge extracts heat from its inside. It can get heat from the air even when the temperature is as low as -15° C. Heat pumps have some impact on the environment as they need electricity to run, but the heat they extract from the ground, air, or water is constantly being renewed naturally.

The benefits of air source heat pumps

Air source heat pumps (also known as ASHPs):

- could lower your fuel bills, especially if you are replacing conventional electric heating
- could provide you with an income through the government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)
- could lower your home's carbon emissions, depending on which fuel you are replacing
- don't need fuel deliveries
- can heat your home and provide hot water
- need little maintenance - they're called 'fit and forget' technology
- can be easier to install than a ground source heat pump, though efficiencies may be lower.

Unlike gas and oil boilers, heat pumps deliver heat at lower temperatures over much longer periods. During the winter they may need to be on constantly to heat your home efficiently. You will also notice that radiators won't feel as hot to the touch as they might do when you are using a gas or oil boiler. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk



How do air source heat pumps work?

Heat from the air is absorbed at low temperature into a fluid. This fluid then passes through a compressor where its temperature is increased, and transfers its higher temperature heat to the heating and hot water circuits of the house. There are two main types of air source heat pump system:

An air-to-water system distributes heat via your wet central heating system. Heat pumps work much more efficiently at a lower temperature than a standard boiler system would. So they are more suitable for underfloor heating systems or larger radiators, which give out heat at lower temperatures over longer periods of time.

An air-to-air system produces warm air which is circulated by fans to heat your home. They are unlikely to provide you with hot water as well. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk





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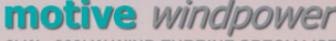


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Ground source heat pumps

Heat your home with energy from the ground.

Ground source heat pumps use pipes which are buried in the garden to extract heat from the ground. This heat can then be used to heat radiators, underfloor or warm air heating systems and hot water in your home.

A ground source heat pump circulates a mixture of water and antifreeze around a loop of pipe – called a ground loop – which is buried in your garden. Heat from the ground is absorbed into the fluid and then passes through a heat exchanger into the heat pump. The ground stays at a fairly constant temperature under the surface, so the heat pump can be used throughout the year – even in the middle of winter.

The length of the ground loop depends on the size of your home and the amount of heat you need. Longer loops can draw more heat from the ground, but need more space to be buried in. If space is limited, a vertical borehole can be drilled instead.

The benefits of ground source heat pumps

A ground source heat pump (also known as GSHP):

- could lower your fuel bills, especially if you replace conventional electric heating
- could provide you with an income through the government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)
- could lower your home's carbon emissions, depending on which fuel you are replacing
- doesn't need fuel deliveries
- can heat your home and provide hot water
- needs little maintenance – they're called 'fit and forget' technology.

Unlike gas and oil boilers, heat pumps deliver heat at lower temperatures over much longer periods. During the winter they may need to be on constantly to heat your home efficiently. You will also notice that radiators won't feel as hot to the touch as they might do when you are using a gas or oil boiler.

Air source heat pumps are usually easier to install than ground source as they don't need any trenches or drilling, but they are often less efficient than GSHPs. Water source heat pumps can be used to provide heating in homes near to rivers, streams and lakes.
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Hydroelectricity

Hydroelectricity from a waterfall

Use running water to generate electricity, whether it's a small stream or a larger river.

Small or micro hydroelectricity systems, also called hydropower systems or just hydro systems, can produce enough electricity for lighting and electrical appliances in an average home.

How do hydropower systems work?

All streams and rivers flow downhill. Before the water flows down the hill, it has potential energy because of its height. Hydro power systems convert this potential energy into kinetic energy in a turbine, which drives a generator to produce electricity. The greater the height and the more water there is flowing through the turbine, the more electricity can be generated.

The amount of electricity a system actually generates also depends on how efficiently it converts the power of the moving water into electrical power.

Solar panels (PV)

Generate cheap, green electricity from sunlight

Solar panel electricity systems, also known as solar photovoltaics (PV), capture the sun's energy using photovoltaic cells. These cells don't need direct sunlight to work – they can still generate some electricity on a cloudy day. The cells convert the sunlight into electricity, which can be used to run household appliances and lighting.

The benefits of solar electricity

- Cut your electricity bills: sunlight is free, so once you've paid for the initial installation your electricity costs will be reduced.
- Get paid for the electricity you generate: the government's Feed-In Tariffs pay you for the electricity you generate, even if you use it.
- Sell electricity back to the grid: if your system is producing more electricity than you need, or when you can't use it, you can sell the surplus back to the grid.
- Cut your carbon footprint: solar electricity is green, renewables energy and doesn't release any harmful carbon dioxide or other pollutants. A typical home solar PV system could save over a tonne of carbon dioxide per year – that's more than 30 tonnes over its lifetime. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Wind turbines

Generate electricity at home with small-scale wind turbines. Wind turbines harness the power of the wind and use it to generate electricity. Forty percent of all the wind energy in Europe blows over the UK, making

it an ideal country for domestic turbines (known as 'microwind' or 'small-wind' turbines). A typical system in an exposed site could easily generate more power than your lights and electrical appliances use.

The benefits of wind turbines

- Cut your electricity bills
- Wind is free, so once you've paid for the initial installation your electricity costs will be reduced.
- Get paid for what you generate
- Through Feed-in-Tariffs, you get paid for the electricity you generate even if you use it. What you don't use, you can export to the local grid - and get paid for that too.
- Cut your carbon footprint
- Wind electricity is green, renewable energy and doesn't release any harmful carbon dioxide or other pollutants.
- Store electricity for a calm day
- If your home isn't connected to the national grid you can store excess electricity in batteries and use it when there is no wind.

How do wind turbines work?

Wind turbines use large blades to catch the wind. When the wind blows, the blades are forced round, driving a turbine which generates electricity. The stronger the wind, the more electricity produced.

There are two types of domestic-sized wind turbine:

Pole mounted: these are free standing and are erected in a suitably exposed position, often around 5kW to 6kW

Building mounted: these are smaller than mast mounted systems and can be installed on the roof of a home where there is a suitable wind resource. Often these are around 1kW to 2kW in size.
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Wood-fuelled heating

Wood-fuelled heating systems, also called biomass systems, burn wood pellets, chips or logs to provide warmth in a single room or to power central heating and hot water boilers.

A stove burns logs or pellets to heat a single room - and may be fitted with a back boiler to provide water heating as well.

A boiler burns logs, pellets or chips, and is connected to a central heating and hot water system. A wood-fuelled boiler could save you nearly £600 a year compared to electric heating.

The benefits of wood-fuelled heating

- Affordable heating fuel: although the price of wood fuel varies considerably, it is often cheaper than other heating options.
- Financial support: wood fuel boiler systems could benefit from the Renewable Heat Premium Payment and the Renewable Heat Incentive.
- A low-carbon option: the carbon dioxide emitted when wood is burned is the same amount that was absorbed over the months and years that the plant was growing. The process is sustainable as long as new plants continue to grow in place of those used for fuel. There are some carbon emissions caused by the cultivation, manufacture and transportation of the fuel, but as long as the fuel is sourced locally, these are much lower than the emissions from fossil fuels.
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IMPROVED QUALITY AND REFINEMENT FOR 2014 SUBARU XV

The Subaru XV compact crossover has received a number of upgrades for 2014 that bring improvements to refinement, ride, handling, safety and cabin quality. The 2014 Subaru XV goes on sale across Subaru UK's nationwide dealer network from this month.

The most significant improvements to the XV are found in petrol-engine models, with 2.0 litre models receiving suspension modifications to improve ride quality and a range of new valve-train components that reduce engine noise. NVH is also improved across the XV range - including 2.0-litre diesel models - with additional sound-proofing in the bulkhead to further insulate the cabin from engine noise.

The electronic power steering system in has been revised to improve stability and feel. A new inflating dynamic damper system reduces steering wheel and column vibration, while engineers have fine-tuned the system to provide more weight, greater straight-line steering feel and a more linear steering response.

Safety has been improved with the addition of a thicker, reshaped front suspension lower-arm and reinforcements around the base of the A-pillar, which yield further improvements in the XV's five-star Euro NCAP crash



safety performance. With a score of 90%, the XV already has one of the highest Euro NCAP scores in the industry for child protection. Inside, the cabin has received a number of changes to improve the overall look and feel, with the addition of the traditional blue Subaru logo on the steering wheel, higher-quality silver surrounds housing the steering wheel buttons and heater controls, and new gloss-black switches to control the car's air-conditioning system.

Two new features have been added to enhance safety and driver convenience - a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) and instrument cluster Gear Shift Indicator, both now fitted as standard to every model in the range.

UK model range
As part of the range rationalisation, the 1.6i petrol engine will no longer be offered in the UK market. Two Boxer engines are now available, a 2.0i petrol and 2.0 diesel, in either

SE or SE Premium trim. Customers buying petrol models can choose between a six-speed manual or Subaru's Lineartronic CVT transmission, while diesel versions are available only with a manual transmission. The XV is among the best in class for fuel efficiency, with the 2.0-litre diesel recording 50.4mpg and CO2 emissions of 146g/km (combined cycle).

Two new colours will be available on the 2014 model range, Venetian

Red Pearl and Quartz Blue Pearl, alongside the existing range of five exterior paint finishes.

The high level of specification on the Subaru XV SE models remains unchanged, and includes such items as auto lights and wipers, 17inch alloy wheels, xenon headlamps with pop-up wash, Hill Start Assist, dual-zone air conditioning, knee airbags, rear vision camera and Bluetooth. The new SE Premium trim level replaces the previous Lux Premium model, adding satellite navigation and leather interior to an already long list of features.

In spite of the upgrades, prices for the 2.0 litre Subaru XV are unchanged, starting at £21,995 on-the-road. Prices were reduced by £2,300 last July, making the XV one of the best value All-Wheel Drive crossovers on the market.

As with every model in the Subaru range, the XV is sold as standard with a five-year, 100,000 mile warranty.

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THE NEW ŠKODA OCTAVIA SCOUT: REAL ADVENTURES FOR FAMILY AND LEISURE

ŠKODA is pressing ahead with its model campaign. The new ŠKODA Octavia Scout will be celebrating its world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show. The robust all-rounder sports a distinctive off-road look, innovative all-wheel drive, the best driving performance - even on rough roads - and high versatility on and off the road.

"The new ŠKODA Octavia Scout really is a smart offroader in every way - a name that has to be earned at ŠKODA," says Dr. Frank Welsch, ŠKODA Member of the Board of Management for Technical Development. "Our new model is a scout in the best sense and offers customers a unique package, comprising a striking off-road look, impressive all-wheel characteristics, plenty of space and modern safety, comfort and engine technologies. The new Octavia Scout sets new standards in the crossover-

vehicle segment."

The new ŠKODA Octavia Scout is based on the Octavia Combi and is characterised by a powerful, Scout-specific appearance. Both the front and rear feature powerful, black bumpers with silver-coloured off-road attachments. The front features a wide air intake and sharply-embossed fog lights. The door sills and wheel arches are also in black panelling, in addition to the black protective side mouldings. The ground clearance has increased by 33 millimetres compared to the standard Octavia. 17-inch alloy wheels are fitted as series standard. In the interior there is a 3-spoke multi-function leather steering wheel and attractive features, designed especially for the Scout.

State-of-the-art all-wheel drive technology, based on the Haldex-5 coupling, and new technological features make the new model the best



Octavia Scout ever. The traction has increased by 25% to up to two tonnes. In addition, the start-up performance and climbing power of the all-rounder has significantly improved. Thanks to the larger approach/departure angles, the Czech car

masters even steeper, more challenging terrain. It comes with a choice of two diesel engines and one petrol. The powertrains are 20% more economical, compared to the vehicle's predecessor.

To summarise, the new ŠKODA Octavia Scout has

all of the excellent values featured in the new ŠKODA Octavia - just that 'bit more of a car': Outstanding space, maximum functionality, practical 'Simply Clever' solutions, cutting-edge safety and comfort technology and the best value for money.

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West coast fare in centenary spotlight

FOOD from the west coast featured highly at the NFU Scotland centenary celebrations on Monday, with more than 500 farmers and friends settling down to enjoy cheese from Kintyre and Arran.

The finishing course at the celebration in St Andrew's, left the west coast producers on the tip of the delegates' tongues, with cheeses from Taste of Arran, Isle of Mull Cheese and Kintyre Creamery, served with a hot beetroot chutney.

NFU Scotland chief executive Scott Walker said: 'As our centenary draws to a close, the fantastic menu prepared for our annual dinner will provide a fitting tribute to the end of what has been a very special year. 'More than ever, Scotland's farmers rightly see themselves at the heart of Scotland's successful food and drink sector and this event continues to provide them with a fantastic opportunity to showcase the work that goes in from the farm all the way to the plate.'

Access forum members sought

MEMBERS are being sought for the Argyll and Bute Local Access Forum, with an emphasis on recruiting people from the farming and crofting sector.

The independent body of volunteers advises on access issues such as public rights of way, core path planning, signage and a host of other topics associated with outdoor access management. The group is also keen to attract female volunteers and those under 50 years of age. If you are interested in becoming a member, or would like to receive some more information, contact Douglas Grierson on 01546 604228 or douglas.grierson@argyll-bute.gov.uk.



Participants crowded the ringside at Lochaber Shepherds' annual stockjudging competition. 20_1075stock01

Lochaber Shepherds' stockjudging competition a great success

THE LOCHABER Shepherds' annual stockjudging competition at Lochaber Rural Complex on Friday night was a great success as 90 competitors took part.

The open competition was won by Robbie Campbell, Inverloch, who was also awarded the cup for highest placed local.

Euan Cameron of Kinloch Rannoch won the top lamb competition while Colin Cameron, Glenborrodale and Kevin Hunter, Milton of Aberarder, came top in the team competition. Results: Open competition - 1 Robbie Camp-

bell 387 points; 2 Rhona Cameron 385 points; 3 Archie Slimon 384 points; 4 Gemma Macintosh 380 points; 5 Kevin Hunter 374 points.

Ladies competition - 1 Rhona Cameron 385 points.

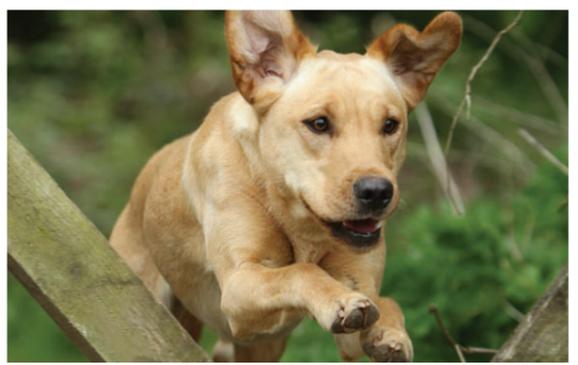
Children's competition 1 Katie Cameron and Cheyenne Cameron both 334 points; 2 Iona Cameron 326 points; 3 Karen Lawrie 325 points; 4 Carla Baradelli 3230 points. Team competition - 1 Colin Cameron, Kevin Hunter 746 points; 2 Archie Slimon, Cathy Slimon equal with Robbie Campbell, Euan Cameron, 730 points.

Highest placed local - Robbie Campbell 387 points.

Top lamb competition - 1 Euan Cameron; 2 Kenny MacCallum.

Organisers expressed thanks to the ladies who provided a delicious tea following the competition and to everyone who donated prizes for the raffle.

Around £780 was raised for charity on the night which will be split between Lochaber Action on Disability and Invernevis House care home in Fort William.



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public notices

Proposed assignment of a grazing shares

Robert Kirchwehn is applying to the crofting commission for consent to assign the grazig shares pertaining to the croft at Uisken, ardtun and Bremenvoir.

to Caroline Macphail of 1A Bentalla crescent, Salen, Isle of Mull PA27 6JH.
If you have an interest in this application, you may submit comments on the proposal in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW (email info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk) within 28 days please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. your comments would also be released under a freedom of information enquiry.

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

T Barbour Ltd trading as T Barbour Ltd of Railway Pier, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4LW is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To add an Operating Centre to keep 2 vehicles and 0 trailers at Pierhead, Scarinish, Isle of Tiree, Argyll, PA77 6UH. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

www.highland.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>
Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
14/00253/FUL	Shoreline between Ferry Cottage and 4 North Corran, Ardgour	Construction of Pumping Station & Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), associated underground chambers & construction of a vehicle lay-by & construction of outfall pipe blow MHW'S into Loch Linne adjacent to the proposed Pumping Station
14/00314/FUL	58 High Street, Fort William	New shop front
14/00320/FUL	Land West of 3 Leven View Kinlochleven	Erection of house (renewal of permission 07/00548/FULLO)
14/00332/S42	Land 20m North East of Erraid Strontian	Section 42 application to modify condition 1 of planning permission LO-1992-0216 to allow not more than 4 of the 6 properties to be used as permanent residences
14/00340/FUL	Land 100m North West of Torness, Gairloch Spean Bridge	Formation of four serviced house plots & associated accesses
14/00372/FUL	Land 250m North of Howlin House, Isle of Eigg	Erection of house with septic tank

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

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Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING
These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

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

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location Of Plans
13/00244/PP	Erection of garage/ancillary accommodation	12 Benvuillin Gardens Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5DL	Oban Area Office
14/00003/PP	Change of use of Class 4 business unit to landscaping centre (sui generis) - retrospective	Unit 1 Lochavullin Drive Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4BW	Oban Area Office
14/00005/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and garden shed	Land At Dervaig Motors Achadh An Broma Dervaig Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Dervaig
14/00218/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land East Of Lerags Farm Lerags Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location Of Plans
14/00324/PP	Erection of shed and fence and formation of hardstanding area (retrospective)	The Old Inn Ellenabeich Isle Of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4RF	Sub Post Office Balvicar

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrossan PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

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

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location Of Plans
14/00238/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 10/01140/PPP (Site for the erection of a dwellinghouse and formation of new access)	Land South Of Shelling (Garden Ground Of Pier House) Craighouse Isle Of Jura Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location Of Plans
14/00161/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and formation of new vehicular access	Land Between 17 and 19 Shore Street Port Wemyss Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Portmahaven
14/00204/LIB	Installation of replacement doors	An Tigh Beag 65 Main Street Port Charlotte Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA48 7TL	Sub Post Office Port Charlotte

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>
The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Whitegates Office Whitegates Road Lochgilphead PA31 8SY.
A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.
Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

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Marine Scotland invites fishermen to a series of events to discuss how fishing activity may be managed in the future, should Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) be designated later this year. These events will give you a chance to share your local knowledge, help us design appropriate management measures, and help ensure that we can properly assess the potential effects of displacement. The following events are taking place during February;

Date	Port	Venue	Time
5th February	Troon	Marine Hotel	7:30pm
6th February	Castlebay	Learning Centre	7:30pm
10th February	Kyle of Lochalsh	Kyle Hotel	7:30pm
11th February	Ullapool	MacPhail Centre	7:30pm
12th February	Stornoway	Cabarfeidh Hotel	7:30pm
19th February	Oban	Royal Hotel	7:30pm
20th February	Tarbert	Anchor Hotel	7:30pm
24th February	Campbeltown	Ardshiel Hotel	7:30pm
28th February	Mallaig	Community Centre	2:30pm

Further information about the events, the displacement study, and development of possible management measures can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/Displacement>
If you cannot attend an event and would like to participate please send your views and comments to Marine_Conservation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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Hiring is an aspect of life that has blossomed over the last thirty years to the point where it has become very big business indeed. Both in the domestic and commercial spheres, it has reached the point where it is no longer a 'last resort' or 'emergency' decision. Hiring these days is the automatic move taken whenever a special job needs doing, special equipment is required or temporary transport needed. In the complex world we live in it does in fact, make economic good sense.

All facets of human activity are catered for by hiring firms. Hiring can be done by the hour, the day, the week, month, year or indeed for much longer periods. Generally speaking it can be divided

into domestic and commercial areas, though by its very nature it does allow either side to 'cross the line', which is an even greater advantage in many cases.

For the private, domestic client, High Street hiring shops can provide all the DIY requisites necessary to keep even the busiest amateur painter, decorator, carpenter, plumber, electrician or car mechanic, tool up. There too can be found all the mechanised aids that render gardening less of a backbreaking job.

In all these activities, the hiring of equipment and tools can mean a job becomes an economically viable activity. It means the average, hard-pressed householder can afford to improve his home or garden without having to buy expensive tools and equipment which may only ever be used once or twice. Jobs can be safely executed simply because hired tools and equipment are in first class order, well maintained and safe.

Not that DIY is the only area where hiring is useful. Car hire can become necessary if the family car is off the road or a journey is contemplated that it patently cannot cope with. Car hire is also useful at holiday times, as are tent and caravan hire, trailer hire, and perhaps the hire of a boat.



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PERSONAL
I am keen to have contact with anyone who may have knowledge of a family by the name of McLeod, who resided at 2, Longsdale, Oban in the late 1800's/early 1900's. Charles McLeod and Mary Leitch were married in the parish of Kilmore and Kilbride on 4/7/1894 and the last child, the one in whom I have a particular interest, Mary Black McLeod was born on 29/8/1906. Please telephone 01236 729956

PERSONAL NOTICES

Layna Henderson
Born 27th January, 2014
James and Caroline Henderson are delighted to welcome with love the arrival of our beautiful daughter Layna Emma Henderson

Kenneth and Sandra
got engaged 3rd February, 2014
Kenneth Carmichael and Sandra Muir are delighted to announce their engagement on 3rd February 2014.

Valentines
To Sweet Cheeks.
Love your smile.
Always,
Miss Hottie.

Sanna Rose MacKay
Born 2nd February, 2014
Laura and Diyel MacKay are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Sanna Rose on February 2, 2014 at Simpsons Maternity Unit, Edinburgh. Thanks to all for love and support.

THANK YOU
Willie Campbell (Taynuilt) would like to thank family and friends for cards and gifts on his 80th Birthday.

Happy Birthday
To my brother Brian who does the papers and magazines in Tesco.
60 on February 14th!
- Colin

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Happy Birthday
Happy 50th Birthday
ANDREW
14.2.64
With love from Mum, Dad, Carol and all the family.

Oban Times PERSONALS

Oban Times PERSONALS

BIRTHS

MACNEILL - Russell and Donalda are delighted to announce the birth of their son, Rory Angus on February 5, 2014 at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. A wee brother for Mia.

DEATHS

BOWLES - Katherine (Kathy) Bowles aged 59 on February 6, 2014, peacefully at home on Seil Island with her family around her. Wife, best friend and travelling companion through life of her husband Nick for 40 years, a wonderful mother to Adam and Jeff and the proud granny of Abigail and Jack. Words can never express our grief, but the joy of our incredible life together will shine through. The funeral will be at 1pm Friday 14 February at Kilbrandon Church, Isle of Seil.

BURGIN - Peacefully at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley on February 5, 2014, aged 61 years, David Robert Burgin, beloved husband to Lynda, a dear step-father and friend to many.

CAMERON - Peacefully at Belford Hospital, Fort William on February 7, 2014. Duncan, much loved husband of Flora (née Kennedy), dad of Carol and Irene, grandad of Calum, Rory, Liam and Lewis. The funeral service will be held at 12 noon on Friday February 14 at Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church, Fort William and thereafter to Glen Nevis Cemetery. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, to Haematology Department, Raigmore Hospital.

COTTERILL - On January 30, 2014, peacefully at home in Derbyshire, Grahame, aged 75 years, formerly of Poltalloch and Tighnabruich, husband of the late Sheila. A private cremation has taken place. Donations in Grahame's memory may be sent for Marie Curie Cancer Care to G. Wathall & Son Ltd, 101 Macklin Street, Derby, DE1 1LG, Telephone 01332 345268.

COUGHTRIE - Peacefully at Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock on February 4, 2014, Morag Coughtrie (née Mackay) aged 82 years, niece of Angie Mackay, Iona. Sadly missed by family and friends.

HASTIE - Peacefully on February 8, 2014 at The Queen Margaret Hospital Dunfermline, Flora (née McCulloch) aged 87 years, formerly of 27 Glencairn Drive, Oban. Beloved wife of the late John (Jack), much loved mum to John, Gordon and Norma and a devoted granny to all the grandchildren. Flora will be sadly missed by all family and friends. The funeral service will take place on Tuesday February 18, 2014 at 2.00pm at St. Ninian's Parish Church Abbeyview. Thereafter to Dunfermline Crematorium at 2.45pm to which all family and friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu of flowers if so desired for St. Ninian's Parish Church Co-operative Funeralcare Dunfermline 01383 723556.

GILL - Mary Ann née Maclean, after a long illness bravely borne on Sunday February 9, 2014, in Dunbar Hospital, Thurso. Beloved wife of Dugald, loving mother to Louise and Eunice, and a much loved grandmother to her four grandchildren. Funeral service within Thurso Baptist Church, today, Thursday February 13, 2014.

MACLEAN - Peacefully in Mull and Iona Community Hospital on February 8, 2014. John aged 77 years, 11 Bowman Court, Craignure (formerly Barvas Isle of Lewis). Beloved husband of Molly, dear dad to Lorna and father-in-law of Grant, much loved brother, uncle and great-uncle. Sadly missed. Donations if desired for Macmillan Cancer Support and Bowman Court.

PARKER - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on February 9, 2014, Jean, beloved wife of James and loving mum of James, Mary and son-in-law Iain.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DUNNINGS - The family of the late Flora Dunnings would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for all their expressions of sympathy and support since their sad loss.

Our heartfelt gratitude to Rev R Corbett for his comforting service, to Mike McFall and his team, MacDonald Bros and the B.A. Club for their help with funeral arrangements and to Astie Cameron for his beautiful piping. We will always be grateful for the care given to Mum by Dr. Shirley and all at the Craig Nevis Surgery over the years, and to the staff of the Belford Hospital and Invermevis House who looked after her so well over her last few months. We would like to acknowledge the comfort given to the family from those who paid their respects at the church and graveside and who so generously donated to the Belford Hospital Ward 1 and Invermevis House.

PORTER - Moyra and family of George J N Porter (Hamish) would like to thank all relatives and friends, for all their expressions of sympathy shown to them following their sudden and sad loss of Hamish. Special thanks to Dr Gibson, Dr Taylor and Dr MacGregor, all the staff at Islay Hospital, ambulance, air ambulance staff, doctors & nurses at the Southern General and finally The Victoria Infirmary Intensive Care Unit for all their attentive care and support. Special thanks to Rev Dr Rob Barlow for coming back to Islay on special request to conduct the heartfelt service. We would like to thank Sandy Reid for his fitting Eulogy to Hamish. To Jean MacAffer and colleagues for their support and advice throughout the funeral arrangements and organising the beautiful flowers. Thanks to Alistair Currie for piping throughout the morning. Thank you to all who attended the church and graveside to pay their last respects and the generous donations given which will be gratefully received by the Islay Hospital and The Victoria Infirmary Intensive Care Unit.

MEMORIAMS

BARIE - In ever loving memory of our dear father Matthew who passed away February 14, 1984. Another Valentine's Day to remind us Of a father still sadly missed Always there to help us. - Wendy and Matthew.

COOPER - In loving memory of Billy dear husband, dad and granddad who died February 17, 2009. Sadly missed by Kathryn, Andrew, Douglas, Pauline, Zoe and Abby.

CURRIE - Cherished memories of Lily who died February 15, 1989 and Archie who died June 1, 1998. Silent thoughts of times together. - Margaret, Donald and family. Loved and remembered always. - Mike, London.

ELLIS - In loving memory of Frank who died February 12, 2012 also remembering loved ones gone before and after. Dear are the memories Precious they stay No passing of time Can take them away. - Emily

KNOWLES - Treasured memories of our dear friend Sarah, who died February 12, 2013. Sadly missed. - Morag and Alaine.

LAIRD - In loving memory of Susan (Oozie) who died February 14, 2003. A much loved mum and nana, and wife of the late Davie. Loved and remembered always. - The Laird family.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of a dear husband and father, Johnnie who passed away on February 14, 2008. We do not need a special day To bring you to our mind For days without a thought of you Are very hard to find. - Forever in my thoughts, Ina Love and miss you every day. - Hazel & Liam xxx.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of our dear parents and grandparents, Thomas Freeland passed away February 12, 1986 and Jessie MacKenzie, passed away February 7, 1994. Forever in our thoughts. - Inserted by Donald, Neil, Isobel and family.

MACGREGOR - In loving memory of my darling wife Rhoda, who died on February 15, 2013.

We walked together through the years Such happy sweet years now lost Today I walk alone and smile But, oh, how great the cost. - Your loving husband Alasdair (Cherry)

MACGREGOR - In loving memory of our dear mum & gran Rhoda who died on February 15, 2013. No tears, No Verse can ever say How much we love and miss you every day. - Linda, Denis, Jordan & Eilidh. Love and kisses great-gran. - Millie xx.

MACGREGOR - In loving memory of a dear mum and mother-in-law Rhoda, who died on February 15, 2013. Always in our thoughts. - Ken and Flo.

MACGREGOR - In loving memory of Rhoda MacGregor mum and gran who passed away February 15, 2013. Never more than a thought away Loved and remembered every day. - John and Catherine Anne Miss you gran. - Erin and Laura xx.

MACGREGOR - In loving memory of Rhoda. A dear sister-in-law and aunt who passed away on February 15, 2013. Memories are forever. - Alastair, Isobel and Family.

MACLEAN - Cherished memories of Mary Campbell MacLean (née MacDonald), a darling wife, mother, granny and mother-in-law, who died February 8, 2005. We miss your smile, your cheery ways We miss the things you used to say And when old times we do recall It's then we miss you most of all. - Alistair, Dugald, Arlene, Maria, Karma, Alistair, Susan and Martin.

MACLEAN - In fond memory of a dear mother, granny and great-granny Isabella MacLean who died February 6, 1984. Also a dear father and grandpa Dugald MacGregor MacLean who died August 27, 1963. Both fondly remembered. - Alistair, Elizabeth and families.

McCLOUNNAN - Precious memories of our dear husband and dad David, who passed away on February 17, 2006. Time slips by and times moves on But from our hearts you are never gone Missing you always - Your loving wife Nan, Christine, Kenny and families.

POULTON - In loving memory of our precious baby son and brother, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992. - Mum and Hannah, Bunessan

POULTON - In loving memory of my grandson and our nephew, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992. Always in our hearts. - Freena and family.

SMALLEY - Sally. In memory of a loving mum, mother-in-law and granny who went to sleep February 14, 2013. An empty space no one can fill I miss you and I always will A prayer, a tear are all I can give These you will have as long as I live I miss you so much mum. - Love forever Honey, Russell and Kiera.

SMALLEY - Treasured memories of Sally, our mum, mum-in-law and granny, who died February 14, 2013. Long are the days without you here But we know that you are near You're never more than a thought away Very sorely missed. - Angus-John, Paula, Ruairidh-John and Ella.

SUTHERLAND - Precious memories of our dearly loved son, Innes, taken from us on February 14, 1999, aged 21 years.

There is a place in our hearts that is yours alone A part of our lives no one can own Deep in our memories you are with us yet To love, cherish and never forget Loved and remembered everyday. - Mum and Dad xx. Innes, a much loved brother, brother-in-law and uncle. We miss your smile, your joking ways We miss the things you used to say When old times we do recall It's then we miss you most of all. Forever in our thoughts and hearts. - Your big sisters, Keri, Iona and Catherine xxx.

CHURCH NOTICES

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 16 February 2014
Septuagesima
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion 08:00
Sung Eucharist 10:15
Children's Corner
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Nicki McNelly, Provost
(01631) 562323
St James, Ardbreckin, Cladich
Holy Eucharist 15:00
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Communion 11:00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist 09:30

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GRADUATIONS



Catriona Davies graduated with a PhD in Forensic Anthropology from the University of Dundee in November 2013. Catriona is the younger daughter of Allison and Andrew Davies of Connel and is a former pupil of Achaleven Primary and Oban High Schools. In May Catriona will start a post as Lecturer in Anatomy at Leeds University.



Jennifer Pawson graduated in Bachelor of Nursing from Glasgow Caledonian University. Jennifer is the daughter of Jeanne and Jim Pawson and grand-daughter of Margaret and the late Bobby MacKay of Ellenabeich and Isle of Mull. Jennifer is a former pupil of Oban High School. Jennifer is currently working as a staff nurse in Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow.

Thought for the week

Our Father...

For all of us who have known, trusted and loved an earthly father, a close family member, a husband or friend, the beginning of our Lord's Prayer links us in them to God. Prayed trustingly, the words will be a daily solace and comfort. Pause on them... "Our Father"... He is our Father. He created each of us uniquely. For Him, there is no other you! No one else will walk the same path with Him that you do. Your joys and sorrows, your pleasures and pains, your triumphs and disasters, your hopes, doubts and fears: all are His concern and you can bring them to Him as His much-loved child. He is our Father. So each of us who prays is brother or sister to all others in this world and the next, who have these words on their lips. When we say the words, we are in communion at prayer with those who have been, and are and are to come.

And He is in Heaven. We lift our souls to Him. He is eternal, infinite, almighty. He made the stars: He is creator of all and yet our Father! As a light conquers darkness, His love and compassion are unquenchable and unchanging. We, as his children, are bathed in their radiance. What a glorious mystery! "Our Father who art in Heaven..."

JMM

Jamie supports imPRESS media competition

REPORTING Scotland correspondent and former Campbelltown Grammar pupil Jamie McIvor is adding his support to a competition to find budding journalists, photographers and publishers.

High schools across Scotland can submit entries for the Scottish School Media Awards, run by imPRESS, before the April 30 deadline. The Oban Times, which as part of Wyvex Media is sponsoring the best newspaper category, is encouraging schools across the Highlands and Islands to take up the challenge.

And Jamie McIvor, who began his journalism career at our sister paper, the *Campbelltown Courier*, said his grounding in Argyll was key to his career progression.

The imPRESS awards aim to encourage young people into careers in publishing and the creative industries, and are of particular interest to pupils who have an interest in writing, photography, design and business.

Organised by Menzies Distribution the awards also aim to support the Curriculum for Excellence by building confidence and showing how different school subjects can come together as part of a wider learning experience. Jamie told *The Oban Times*:

"I used to write for the *Courier* while I was at school which I thoroughly enjoyed. I always particularly enjoyed writing and was interested in people, stories and events. "The big decision for me was whether to do a journalism course or do an arts degree at university. In the end I went for the arts degree but I did various bits and bobs of freelance work and work experience while I was at university. "I did a journalism course after I'd done that and once I'd done that I went back to Campbelltown to work for the *Courier*."

"One of the most important qualities any journalist should have is an ability to talk to absolutely anyone, listen to their stories or opinions. Nearly all the best stories are ultimately about people - even if you get into some very difficult or complicated issues. At a local paper you get the chance to develop that skill. "Another brilliant thing at a local paper is that you get to know your readers. People soon tell you if you've made a mistake or if they don't like something you've done, so you soon learn! "But it also teaches you that all good journalism - newspapers, television and radio - is a monologue. It's a conversation with the audience."

Encouraging schools across the Highlands and Islands to enter the Scottish School Media Awards, Jamie added: "Some students might fancy a career in journalism and it's a great opportunity for them. "But newspapers and broadcasters are such important parts of society, it's great to give as many people as possible the chance to understand what it is they really do and why. "The more people have an understanding of all this, the better."

For more information and to register, visit impressscotland.co.uk.



Jamie McIvor.

Give a pint instead of 'necking' one

Atlantis Leisure staff give blood instead of downing a pint as part of internet craze - and nominate others to do the same

A DARE to down a pint of lager then pull a stunt for the internet craze 'Neknominate' has seen two Oban Samaritans donate a pint of blood. Kyle Dods and Kathryn MacIntyre insisted they wouldn't take part in the bandwagon if nominated, which has drawn some controversy in other parts of the country after people died as a result of trying to 'out-stunt' their friends when downing a pint of beer. But when Claire Hutchison, their colleague at Atlantis Leisure, suggested they use the nomination to donate a pint of blood instead - and

they go on the Anthony Nolan register after being inspired by a storyline on her favourite soap, *Home and Away*. Kyle, who previously hadn't donated blood for 20 years, added he was delighted to put a positive spin on the Neknominate phenomenon, which has attracted criticism elsewhere. "It's all supposed to be a bit of a laugh but it's easy to take it too far," he said. "I thought this was a great way to do it."

Kathryn, who hadn't given blood for five years, added: "It was perfect timing. We were nominated and two days later the blood donor service was here."

Better still, one of their nominees has already given blood and registered with Anthony Nolan.

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service said: "Kathryn and Kyle are highlighting the importance of giving blood as a life saving activity. We applaud young people who have decided to reject negative activities and turn them into something positive and life affirming by encouraging others to give blood." You have to be at least 17 to give blood and can register to do so at scotblood.co.uk. The blood donation van is next in Oban on May 21-22.



Atlantis Leisure's Claire Hutchison, centre, who inspired Kyle Dods and Kathryn MacIntyre to give blood. 15_107atlantis1

WEDDING



Kirsty Waltho, Oban, married Bradley Bell, New York State, in Franklin, NY State. The couple then had a wedding blessing in St Oran's Church, Connel followed by a reception in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls. Two very happy days to remember.

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THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL

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Action-packed week in Oban Pool League

TWO WHITEWASH victories, teams playing two games simultaneously and live on air cup draws - just another week in The Oban Pool League.

The Outreach may be propping up the rest of the league but last week they became the first team ever to play two games in the same evening.

With Lancaster 'B' having players away to represent Scotland in a couple of weeks and their fixture facing postponement, The Outreach offered to play the match alongside their scheduled fixture against Markie Dans 'A'.

Unfortunately for the bottom side neither result went in their favour with both The Lancaster 'B' and Markie Dans 'A' picking up comfortable victories.

Markie Dans 'A' will be hugely disappointed they didn't manage to secure a whitewash with game difference now at a premium and boasting a vastly inferior games column than that of both The Lancaster 'A' and The Cellar - despite all three sitting

FOOTBALL

level on points. The Lancaster 'A' still have the edge on their rivals thanks to a full-house victory over The Gluepot, who were helpless to prevent what can only be described as a master-class in clinical finishing.

The Gluepot have already taken massive strides forward this campaign after re-entering the league last season, but their lack of composure and table nous were brutally exposed by a rampant Lancaster.

Defending champions The Cellar also ran riot whilst hosting The Claredon but fell short of the perfect 10, allowing their main rivals a two game cushion, although it would be premature to raise the alarm bells with many weeks still to go.

The second clean sweep victory of the week rather surprisingly was delivered by Foley's Bar who up until last week had occupied second bottom spot.

Fresh on the back of the previous week's two points, Foley's welcomed The Lochavullin, who have struggled to field a full strength side due to work commitments in recent weeks.

However, nothing should detract from Foley's performance, coinciding with a massive leap up into seventh spot in the current standings and ultimately transforming their season.

The concluding match saw the top-six clash between The Lochnell and Markie Dans 'B', with the latter on this occasion taking the victory by the narrowest of margins and drawing themselves level with The Lochnell in the process.

To round of the week the draw for The Oban Filling Station Cup took place on Saturday night pairing off the top four sides in the semi-finals.

Current holders Markie Dans 'A' square off against league leaders The Lancaster 'A' and current league champions The Cellar face The Lancaster 'B' with both ties being refereed by independent players.

Results, February 6: The Outreach 2-8 Markie Dans A; The Cellar 9-1 The Claredon; Foleys Bar 10-0 The Lochavullin; Lancaster A 10-0 The Gluepot; The Lochnell 4-6 Markie Dans B; The Outreach 2-8 Lancaster B.

Tonight's fixtures: Lancaster B v Markie Dans A, The Lochavullin v The Cellar, The Gluepot v Foleys Bar, The Lochnell v Lancaster A, The Outreach v Markie Dans B.

Oban Pool League - sponsored by The Creagan Inn									
	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
1 Lancaster A	13	12	0	1	102	28	+74	24	
2 The Cellar	13	12	0	1	100	30	+70	24	
3 Markie Dans A	13	12	0	1	92	38	+54	24	
4 Lancaster B	13	8	1	4	77	53	+24	17	
5 The Lochnell	13	6	2	5	67	63	+4	14	
6 Markie Dans B	13	6	2	5	67	63	+4	14	
7 Foleys Bar	13	4	0	9	58	72	-14	8	
8 The Claredon	13	3	2	8	55	75	-20	8	
9 The Gluepot	13	4	0	9	55	75	-20	8	
10 The Lochavullin	13	4	0	9	46	84	-38	8	
11 The Creagan Inn	11	2	1	8	24	86	-62	5	
12 The Outreach	13	0	0	13	29	101	-72	0	



John MacDonald: in running to represent Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. 20_07john01

West Highland top guns aim to reach Commonwealth Games

TWO WEST Highland sharpshooters will compete against each other in Qatar this weekend as they aim for two spots in Scotland's Commonwealth Games team.

Acharacle marksman John MacDonald and Jonathon Reid from Tarbert, Loch Fyne, will launch their respective bids to represent Scotland in the clay target Olympic trap event this summer.

The rifle men, will jet off to Qatar where

they will compete against some of the world's top shooters at the Qatar Middle East Grand Prix.

Andrew Addison from Lanark will also shoot in the elite competition.

The trio all attained the very high Commonwealth qualifying score of 120 breaks from 125 targets at European and World cup venues while representing Great Britain at 2013. Now, in the second stage of a rigorous

selection procedure, they must shoot against each other at five top level events over the next three months.

Their scores will decide who claims the available places in the Scottish Olympic trap team at the Games. Whoever comes third will be the reserve.

The SportScotland Commonwealth Games selection committee will announce their decision during the first week in May.

New season - new league structure

SHINTY

THE new league structure includes introduction of the Marine Harvest National League.

All leagues comprise eight teams except Marine Harvest North Division Three which has only six teams but will include a third round of fixtures based on the finishing position after the second round - the top three play each other home and away and the bottom three play each other home and away.

The introduction of four Plate Competitions, MacTavish Plate Competition - for teams knocked out in first round of MacTavish Cup Competition.

South of Scotland Senior Plate Competition - for teams knocked out in first round of AJP Parcels Celtic Society Cup Competition.

Strathdearn Plate Competition - for teams knocked out in 1st round of Strathdearn Cup Competition.

Bullough Plate Competition - for teams knocked out in 1st round of Bullough Cup Competition.

Fixture Highlights Include: Orion Group Premiership Derby Day Saturday May 3; Marine Harvest National League Derby Day Saturday May 10; Friday August 1 - Orion Group Premiership fixture Kingussie v Newtonmore.

Oban Lorne look to reel in leaders

RUGBY

OBAN Lorne return to league action this Saturday as they welcome fourth-placed Cambslang to Glencruitten.

The two sides both sit on 55 points with Oban gaining an advantage with two games in hand.

The Green Machine trailed 21-0 away to their visitors at the start of the season but, with a dominating second half performance, managed to win the game 29-26.

Oban should have a strong squad available for coach Corrie Louw to select from as the Argyll side look to keep up the pressure on Garmock and Carrick, who occupy first and second place in the league.

Whatever happens, the race for promotion from the league should come down to the last game of the season.

Oban Lorne's game against Cambslang kicks off at 3pm at Glencruitten.

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Winner John Hynd presents the trophy to team captain Harry Fairgrieve. 20_07pool01

Ben is coming on leaps and bounds

Teenage hurdler eyes up age group title after securing schoolboy gold

AN ARGYLL athlete has added another national title to his growing list of accolades.

Ben Coates, from Kilmore, won the Scottish Secondary Schools Indoor Athletics Championships at the Emirates arena in Glasgow last Thursday.

He was representing Oban High School and competed in both the 60metres and 60metres hurdles in the under-16 age group.

The teenager reached the semi finals in the 60metres but his main event is the hurdles and he easily qualified for the final and then went on to win gold in the final, recording a time of 8.74seconds.

Tobermory

Thirteen year old Molly Reade was representing Tobermory High School at the same competition and contested the high jump in the under-16 age

group. Molly set a new personal best of 1.50metres which was outside the medals but placed her in the top nine out of an entry of 46 girls.

The Tobermory youngster will still be in the same age group for this national competition in 2015 and 2016.

Next up for both Ben and Molly is the Scottish Age Group Championships this Sunday at the Emirates Arena.



Ben Coates.

Inverlochty pool enthusiasts battle all day in tournament

MEMBERS of the Railway Social Club in Inverlochty finally defeated visitors from Roy Bridge in an eight-hour pool challenge.

The contest kicked off with a singles competition which players from Roy Bridge Hotel won with five and a half points to the Railway Club's four and a half.

Fight

But the hosts didn't give up without a fight and the teams were neck and neck throughout

most of the doubles tournament. After five rounds the league went to a best-of-three play off, eventually won by John Hynd and Ewan Paterson of the Railway Club.

The winning team's captain Harry Fairgrieve said: 'We've all had a smashing day and I'm absolutely thrilled that we won in the end.'

Organisers expressed thanks to the Roy Bridge players for attending and to the ladies for organising food and a raffle.

Mini invasion - Lochaber youngsters tackle first rugby session of the year



Lochaber Rugby Club held its first junior session of the year on Saturday morning. Around 25 children from primary three to S2 arrived at King George V Park in Fort William for training and games. 20_07juniorrugby01

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL COMPETITION

WIN £1150

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

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.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

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LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

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A Gibb, Soroba Road, Oban

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Thorn grab last gasp equaliser to deny Saints victory

'We played well in the first half and should have gone in at the interval two or three goals to the good'

Foster Scottish Amateur Cup
6th Round
**Oban Saints 1
Thorn Athletic 1**

OBAN Saints took on old rivals Thorn Athletic last Saturday for a place in the last 16 of the Scottish Amateur Cup but, with only seconds remaining of the 90 minutes, the Johnstone side netted an equaliser when the ball took a wicked deflection off Dene Cassells and ended up in the back of the net much to the despair of the large band of Saints' supporters who turned up in the pouring rain to watch the game.

The match was due to be played at Glencruitten but the heavy rain which had fallen all morning made the pitch unplayable so it was switched to the 3G at Oban High School.

Saints have never beaten Thorn in Oban so a tough game was expected. After a bright start

from the visitors it was the home team who started to dictate the play and they took the lead in the 17th minute when Donnie Campbell fed a great ball through for Craig MacEwan who despatched a well taken goal past Thorn goalkeeper Liam McWilliams.

The Athletic keeper was going to prove a thorn in the flesh of the Oban side all afternoon with a string of excellent saves, the first coming when Donnie Campbell fed Paul Kerr through on the left but McWilliams made a fine save as he did minutes later pushing a net bound effort round the post.

The home side were well on top and should have increased their lead when Donnie Campbell fired over a great cross for Myles McAuley but he fluffed his header from six yards and a great opportunity was missed.

Thorn regrouped after the interval and had a lot more pos-

session, but the Saints defence, well marshalled by skipper Marc MacCallum were standing firm.

Although the visitors had a lot of the ball they never threatened Daniel Cassells between the sticks for Saints all that much although the big keeper was forced into a great save low down at his right hand post.

Saints always looked dangerous on the break and Allan MacKay had a good chance but he cut back inside when perhaps a first time shot might have been the better option.

Donnie Campbell was unlucky to see a fine effort fly inches past the post then Liam McWilliams made a good save at his near post from an Allan MacKay effort.

The Oban side had another good chance when a clever flick over the Thorn defence from Donnie Campbell allowed Lewis Cameron a chance but again that man McWilliams was on hand to

make a fine save.

Saints were lying deeper and deeper as the clock ran down and you could sense that something was going to happen and it certainly did.

With the referee looking at his watch John McLister ran across the Saints defenders before firing a shot on target which was probably going to be saved, but the ball took a wicked deflection off Dene Cassells and spun past his brother Daniel and into the net much to the delight of the travelling Thorn contingent.

Referee Tom Gilchrist, who had a good game, played three minutes of added on time and when he blew for full time it was a gutted Oban Saints outfit that trudged off the field in a game they felt they should have won. There was a wee bit of



Saints' Donnie Campbell battles for the ball in midfield. 07_107saints1

Oban High School runs ski club at Kilbowie Outdoor Centre

SKIING

FOR THE second winter season in succession Oban High School and Kilbowie Outdoor Centre have joined forces to run a ski club.

The club takes beginners on a half-day taster session at Kilbowie's artificial slope and if the pupils maintain an interest in the sport they can progress onto a day's skiing at Glencoe.

As a result of last winter's efforts around 10 students who had never skied before are heading to Val de Fiemme in the Italian Alps for a week's skiing, out of a group of 33 students.

The high school and Kilbowie can now offer skiing experiences for beginners, intermediate and proficient skiers and have just started performance classes with a ski race coach to improve the school's already competent skiers.

Rugby boys are Warriors for the day

RUGBY

YOUNG rugby players from Oban and Lorn had a day to remember at Scotstoun, as they cheered on Glasgow Warriors and played a match of their own.

Oban High School S1 and S2 pupils, along with a primary six mini rugby team made up of players from Oban and Taymilt's Eive Vikings, were invited to attend Glasgow Warriors' fixture against Connacht on Sunday.

The youngsters were invited to be part of the Warriors match day community activity and a healthy party of around 50 players, coaches and parents made the trip to Glasgow for the day.

Strathaven provided the opposition for the S1/2 game with the Oban team running out convincing 43-5 winners. This game was played on the 3G artificial surface alongside the main Scotstoun pitch.

The P6 minis team formed a guard of honour at the start of the Warriors and Connacht match, before they took on Annan at halftime on the main pitch.

Despite the cold and wind the minis ran out 3-0 winners. An 8-6 win for Glasgow Warriors over their Irish rivals capped off an enjoyable day for everyone who took part.

Saints youths

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints youth results for last weekend: Dumbarton Riverside 2, Saints Under 13s 7; Under 14s game off; Dumbarton Riverside 2, Saints Under 15s 4; Under 17s game off.

Islay Golf Club

GOLF

FEBRUARY Medal played on Sunday at Islay Golf Club. I.A. MacLean 91 - 15 = 76; 2 A.Blair 101 - 12 = 89. CSS 72

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Eastenders drama as Athletic play out 10-goal thriller

West of Scotland Amateur Football League
**Dennistoun 5
Oban Athletic 5**

A TEN-goal thriller took place in Glasgow's east end as Oban Athletic travelled on Saturday to take on second-placed Dennistoun.

Athletic started strong and went one goal up after five minutes, with Stephen Fox stealing the ball in midfield and slipping in Kris Gillies, who cut the ball back for Dean Smith to thump home.

The lead did not last long as Dennistoun equalised when Craig Maitland's throw was intercepted and David Lowe ran in to slot past the young keeper.

Back came Athletic, who countered well and Paul Carmichael's running power allowed him to latch on to a Scott Maitland cross and steer the ball into the corner.

However the story of Athletic's season is losing sloppy goals and they did so twice before half time to find themselves again behind at half time, despite being the better side.

The second half got worse as Athletic missed a chance to equalise when Scott Maitland put his penalty wide and from the goal kick Dennistoun made it 4-2, followed by a fifth goal five minutes later from a short corner.

Athletic refused to give up and the midfield of Ford, Fox and Carmichael were starting to look the fresher and more composed as they started to feed the front three of Gillies, Smith and Maitland.

With 15 minutes to go, Maitland terrorised the Dennistoun



Sean Ford - scored equaliser

left back before firing in a low cross, which was turned into the net by a Dennistoun player.

The ascendancy was with the visitors who were mounting waves of attacks and set up a grand stand finish when Martin Bonar headed in from close range.

The comeback was complete with five minutes to go when Sean Ford's free kick found the bottom corner.

After such a determined fight-back, it was Athletic that were more disappointed to hear the final whistle.

'The lads were terrific,' said manager Calum Fox. 'Our only gripe was that we let them score a couple of easy goals, while we had to work hard for ours.'

'Dennistoun were there for the taking in the end but our lads showed character and set a benchmark for the remainder of the season.'

'We go to Crown Park this weekend on the back of two solid performances and if we maintain this form then we can be confident of winning every game.'

Argyll fighters are a knockout in Glasgow

ARGYLL fighters were joined by competitors from six different countries at the Scottish Open Knockdown Karate tournament - and they came away with plenty of silverware.

The full-contact, bare knuckle open tournament, organised by Oban's Iain Rodger, was held in Glasgow last Saturday.

A number of fighters from the Ky-

MARTIAL ARTS

okushinkai Karate and Senses Do Kickboxing clubs in Oban and Lochgilphead won national titles and medals.

Oban girl Amy Campbell successfully defended her ladies' novice lightweight title, while Lochgilphead's Katie MacDonald won the heavyweight equivalent.



The victorious Argyll fighters.

Weather

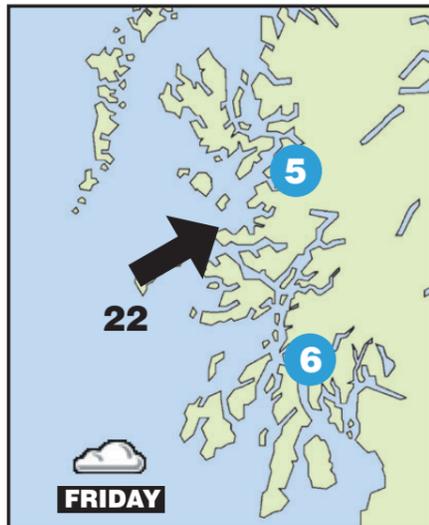
Thursday Cloudy with rain and hill snow
Winds strong west south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C

Friday Cloudy with rain, afternoon sunshine
Winds strong south south westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook Cloudy with rain, some bright spells
Winds medium north north westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate to rough
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate to rough
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate to rough



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 13, 2014** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	11.40	1.3	17.18	3.7	23.25	1.1
Thur	04.49	3.6	11.40	1.3	17.18	3.7	23.25
Fri	05.25	3.8	12.10	1.2	17.52	3.8	23.59
Sat	06.00	3.9	12.38	1.1	18.25	3.9	*** **
Sun	00.32	0.8	06.32	4.0	13.07	1.1	18.54
Mon	01.04	0.8	07.01	4.0	13.35	1.1	19.20
Tues	01.31	0.9	07.27	3.9	13.58	1.2	19.45
Wed	01.58	0.9	07.54	3.8	14.17	1.2	20.15

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardishaig	-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		

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ALDI **FREE crisps** in next week's **Oban Times** see page 11 for more details

Traditional start to angling club season

INVERLOCHY Angling Club will open their fishing season on the River Lochy in traditional fashion at Fort William on Saturday.

Committee member Charlie Donaldson will cast a dram of local malt whisky Dew of Ben Nevis into the water in the hope of a healthy season. Honorary life member and past chairman Sandie Walker will have the honour of casting the first fly of the season on the water. A work party will then carry out an inspection to see if any hazards need to be removed to improve fishing from of both banks.

Ambitious plans to transform old Skye school

AMBITIOUS plans to convert a mothballed school in northwest Skye into a £1m hostel, bar and restaurant were discussed last night.

The Glendale Trust looked at the viability of buying Borrodale Primary School, which has been empty since 2007, at its board meeting in Glendale Community Hall.

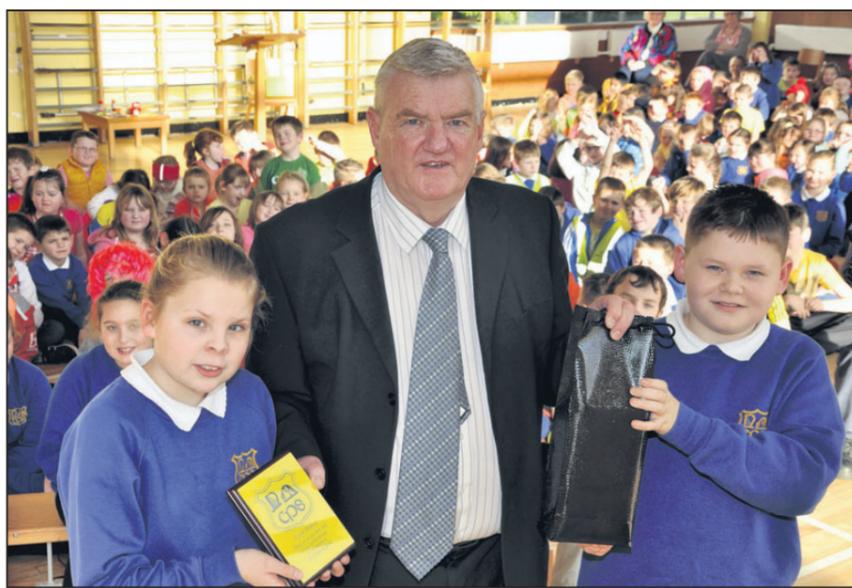
Joy Talbot, chairwoman of the board said: 'The community have said they would like us to buy the school but there's a lot of decisions to be made about how we can go forward with it. Locals are keen to see something happen but with the amount of money needed it might not be possible.'

It is hoped the potential hostel would have 16 beds, laundry services available to the public, with a bar and restaurant adjacent. It may also have a heritage centre to display a collection owned by The Glendale Trust, currently held in storage.

Budding movie makers shortlisted for competition

BUDDING movie makers at Ardnamurchan High School have been shortlisted for a Gaelic short film competition.

The pupils created a period drama which is up for the best production category of FilmG, run by MG ALBA. O Mo Dhuthiach (Oh My Country) features a young woman about to be evicted from her croft and features a live horse on set.



P7 pupils Erin Lawrie and Kale Lacey present Councillor Eddie Hunter with a plaque and a bottle of Ben Nevis malt whisky. 20_107eddi01

Councillor bids farewell to old school 60 years on

A LOCHABER councillor has bade farewell to his old primary school - almost 60 years since he first walked through its doors.

Eddie Hunter will step down as a member of Highland Council later this month after serving the Caol and Mallaig ward since his election in 2007.

And at Caol Primary School assembly on Friday morning staff and pupils thanked him for his efforts over the years.

Councillor Hunter, 62, has been a strong supporter of the school throughout his time

in office and leaves on a high note, with work on a new Caol Primary due to start this spring.

Head teacher Steven Hamilton paid tribute to the popular local politician, who was a pupil at Caol in the 1950s before returning in 1975 for a 10-year stint as teacher then deputy head teacher.

Mr Hamilton said: 'He has been very supportive of this school and quite often got money for us as well as supporting our events.'

'He has been pushing to get exactly what we need in the new school when it opens in two years time.'

P7 pupils Erin Lawrie and Kale Lacey presented Councillor Hunter with a plaque and a bottle of Ben Nevis malt whisky on behalf of Caol Primary as a token of thanks.

Councillor Hunter is moving to Renfrew to be with his wife Henrietta, affectionately known as 'Henri'. He told *The Oban Times*: 'Caol is a wonderful place - it is the centre of the earth.'

Outrage at plan to kill village stag

BALLACHULISH residents are outraged after a proposition to kill a stag in the village was raised at a community council meeting.

The beast has frequented a croft at the back pier of the village for two years but some locals have suggested it poses a danger to the public and should be shot.

Fears arose after a holidaymaker suffered life-threatening injuries when she was gored in the throat by a runaway stag in Lochailort on December 30.

Dr Kate Stone, 44, from Cambridge, has only recently been discharged from hospital after undergoing windpipe surgery.

Furious Ballachulish Community Council member Lorna Scott took to a social networking website to gather views about the village stag, thought to be around 14 years old, and received over 100 comments in less than 24 hours.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'I pass it every day with my dogs and it's never been near us. I

EXCLUSIVE REPORT BY
EMMA CRICHTON

think it's been hysteria from what happened to the poor girl in Lochailort.

'It's a bit extreme to say that it should be shot just because it might attack. The children in the village could get hit by a bus but we can't stop the buses.'

She added: 'A lot of locals enjoy hunting so I take it that might have a lot to do with it rather than the safety and wellbeing of the village - its antlers would look great on someone's wall.'

Ballachulish villagers expressed anger online about the proposal to shoot the deer.

Susan Birrell said: 'How could anyone shoot such a beautiful animal when it has done no harm... do not understand!'

Jaqueline Macintyre added: 'The stag has been happily grazing in the top croft, what's the problem?'

'No one is feeding it, no one should be approaching it and certainly not trying to corner it.'

Leave it in peace, it isn't doing any harm.'

Meanwhile, some residents expressed concerns about the stag roaming so close to a residential area.

Michael Chisholm said: 'I agree it's a beautiful animal but also a wild animal which has the potential in an environment such as a village to cause bodily harm. Although this magnificent beast has caused no issue, the potential is a live issue, particularly if approached by someone wishing to get closer to him without realising his natural instinct.'

Fergus MacNeill from Scottish Natural Heritage said: 'We understand there may be some concerns regarding public safety and this well known stag.'

'We would be happy to provide advice and guidance with regard to deer management regarding any issues of concern.'

'The law on live capture of deer in Scotland allows only the landowner or occupier to capture male deer at this time of the year to prevent damage to woodland or agricultural interests.'

Seal spotting trips raise £2,000 for charity

A PLOCKTON skipper has raised more than £2,000 for charity from his seal-viewing boat.

Calum MacKenzie and his crew aboard Sula Mhor save their tips from customers throughout the season then split the total between three charities.

This year, Highland Hospice, Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Cancer Care were given cheques for £810 each at a presentation at Eilean Ban Lighthouse, on the water half way along the Skye bridge.

Mr MacKenzie, who runs trips from Plockton to Loch Kishorn and Loch Carron between April and October said: 'We all know people that have been affected by cancer and my mother-in-



Charity representatives were delighted with their donations from the Sula Mhor crew. Front from left: Helen Gordon, Marie Finlayson, Audrey Sinclair and Pat Mucklow. Photograph by Robert Ware.

law received great care from Highland Hospice. They all do great work.

'It was really nice to go somewhere different for the presentation and we had a wee glass of champagne to celebrate.'

Mr MacKenzie has been running trips from Plockton for 33 years and as well as saving tips, he runs charity fundraising cruises outside of his usual sailing hours.

He said: 'I'm happy to run an evening cruise for any deserving charity.'

'If any local charities want to organise a fundraiser I'm happy to donate my boat for the evening, these cruises normally raise six or seven hundred pounds.'

To arrange a fundraising trip contact Mr MacKenzie at www.calums-sealtrips.com.

Ballachulish Community Council chairman acknowledges concerns

BALLACHULISH community council chairman Kevin Smith said: 'Police attended the meeting when the concern was raised and they are taking it on as a matter of public safety.'

'We have also spoken to someone from Scottish Natural Heritage to see what the best way to deal with it is, no decision has been made yet.'

'I myself would hate for the animal to be shot for no reason but it is a concern. The best outcome would be to get him out of the village but how you do that

I don't know, it could just appear back or another one could take its place.'

'I definitely don't think chasing it up the hill with a stick and a tin lid is a viable option.'

Acknowledging local concerns he added: 'A lot of people don't want it to be shot or moved but

if their child or their sister or someone got hurt would they be saying something different?'

'As a community councillor if I didn't raise it as a concern then someone was injured or killed, which doesn't bear thinking about, people would be asking why nothing was done.'

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Mallaig/Uist ferry link resumes

FERRY sailings between Mallaig and Lochboisdale on South Uist resume next Tuesday when the MV Lord of the Isles returns from covering vessel refits elsewhere on the CalMac network.

And hopes are high that fewer sailings will be cancelled on the three-hour crossing after severe weather badly disrupted the trial service in its first 10 weeks.

The Scottish Government is testing the route over the winter months for three years to gauge whether enough demand exists to make the service permanent and operate it throughout the year.

But gathering sufficient data has proved difficult after 41 sailings were cancelled and only 33 completed between November 12 and January 21.

Following the scheduled four-week absence of the Lord of the Isles, the service will run until

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

April 1 and will resume again in November. Evidence for how popular the route could be came around the new year holiday period, when the ferry was packed to capacity.

But questions have been raised over the merits of trialling the route over the stormiest period of the year.

At Lochaber Transport Forum in Fort William on Tuesday there was a general acceptance that little could be done about the succession of Atlantic storms that have plagued the South Uist to Lochaber service since it began.

Forum chairman, Councillor Brian Murphy told *The Oban Times*: 'Most of the discussion was around the number of cancellations there has been.'

'But CalMac are putting that down to the

weather and ultimately the master of the vessel has the final say, which is as it should be.'

'There is a lot of support for the service and I'm pretty sure that once we get past the worst of the winter it should prove very successful.'

Councillor Allan Henderson added: 'We are looking forward to some good weather and being able to build up a true picture of demand. Businesses need certainty in the service if they are to start using it with confidence.'

A CalMac spokesman said: 'We share everyone's frustration that the extreme weather which has battered virtually all of our network since early November has impacted on the first part of the trial, but it is still early days and we are hopeful that if weather conditions improve as we come out of the winter that its value to the people of South Uist and Lochaber can be tested properly.'

CalMac operates two sailings from Mallaig and Lochboisdale on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

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Nevis Range 'snowed under'

NEVIS Range near Fort William has recorded the most snow since it opened in 1989, according to the ski resort's founder.

Prolonged wet weather in the West Highlands has fallen as snow on the mountain, reaching depths of around 60ft in some areas. Iain Sykes experienced unprecedented conditions first hand at the weekend.

He said: 'This is the best day's skiing I've ever had in Scotland. All the fences have vanished, I reckon it's 60ft deep in the Goose Gully which has completely flattened the run out. I've never seen it looking like it is today, I genuinely haven't. It's just magic.'

The blizzards have not come without problems, according to managing director Marian Austin. She said: 'The team on the hill has been working extremely hard in incredibly difficult conditions to prepare for our customers each day.'

'We've been battered by south-westerly winds which are not particularly good for our operations and have damaged our towes and there have been days when it has been too windy to operate.'

The snow bonanza means Nevis Range plans to offer ski-ing well into the spring.

Woman denies reversing car at partner

A FORT William woman has denied repeatedly reversing her car at her partner.

Anna Rybacka, of 9 Angus Crescent, appeared from custody to plead not guilty to dangerous driving and behaving in a threatening and abusive manner on February 5.

The 35-year-old was bailed and ordered to appear back at Fort William Sheriff Court on March 4.

Trio take stage in concert

A CLASSICAL music group will be performing in Lochaber High School on Saturday night.

Jacquin Trio will combine clarinet, viola and piano during a concert in the school's dance studio at 7.30pm.

The event is the fourth concert of the season for local music group, Lochaber Music For All.



The old Scottish Automobile Club sign pictured in Mr Pirie's Edinburgh antique shop before its return to Glencoe.

Massacre signpost returns to rightful Glencoe owners

AN OLD signpost marking the site of the Glencoe Massacre is being returned to its rightful home today at the annual gathering to commemorate the bloody episode.

Edinburgh antiques dealer George Pirie will hand over the cast-iron sign to event organisers Glencoe Heritage Trust just before an 11am service in St Mary's Episcopal Church in Glencoe village.

The sign was put up by the old Scottish Automobile Club next to the A82 near Glencoe village but disappeared in mysterious circumstances around 40 years ago.

Mr Pirie purchased the antique privately in Edinburgh last year and only realised its significance when city resident Morag MacDonald noticed it in his shop.

By remarkable coincidence, Ms MacDonald had her photo taken underneath the sign as a little girl with her family in Glencoe in 1969 and recognised it as the original.

Mr Pirie immediately withdrew it from sale and contacted the trust, who invited to him to today's ceremony.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It is the original sign and we have identified it as such.'

'There was a huge interest from people wanting to buy it but I decided the right thing to do was to take it back to Glencoe where it belongs.'

'It is one of the wonderful perks of this job when things like this happen.'

Trust secretary Ros MacDonald said finding the right spot for the valuable artefact would be vital to guard against theft, especially after the attempted robbery of a brass interpretation panel fixed just last year onto the Celtic cross memorial to the massacre.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a wonderful gesture but we have to decide where the sign goes. It has to be in a place where it is looked after.'

'It is metal so if we are not careful sure as anything it will be stolen.'

'We have already had to take a brass plaque off the monument because somebody tried to steal it.'

The church service will be followed by the traditional march at 12pm from the old bridge over the River Coe to the memorial at Upper Carnoch, where an outdoor service will be held and wreaths laid by the trust, the National Trust for Scotland and the Highlands and Islands Clan Donald Society.

Around 50 MacDonalDs from Invergarry, Skye, Fort William and Fife are among those expected to attend - snow permitting.

The Rev Adrian Fallows, Rector of St Mary's will lead both services.

The Littrell family from Chatham, Illinois, USA, are sponsoring the trust's wreath.

On February 13, 1692, 38 Glencoe MacDonalDs were murdered by government troops led by Robert Campbell of Glenlyon under the orders of King William III.

Pair found not guilty of assault

TWO LOCHABER men have been found not guilty of assault after an early morning altercation in Mallaig.

Lewis MacDonald of Camanach Crescent, Fort William, had been accused of repeatedly kicking Gregor MacIntyre resulting in a broken jaw and bruised ribs in the early hours of September 9 2012.

But at Fort William Sheriff Court procurator fiscal Laura Ryan said she was no longer seeking a conviction against the 21-year-old.

Donnie Dempster, 19, of 10 Blaven View, Mallaig, was also found not guilty of assaulting Ewan MacIntyre, brother of Gregor, after the Crown dropped the case against him.

Co-accused Samuel Robertson of 11 Gordon Brown Place, denies assaulting Gregor by repeatedly kicking him on the head and body, all to his severe injury, on the same morning.

The trial involves a series of assaults alleged to have taken place after complainants Gregor, Ewan, their father Hugh

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by EMMA CRICHTON

MacIntyre and the accused had been drinking in the Clachan Inn.

During evidence, Ewan, 18, said he had been walking with Dempster shortly after an alleged attack on Gregor when he was punched.

'I had my arm round him telling him to calm down and I got hit on the right side of my head,' he added.

Miss Ryan asked Ewan: 'What would you say to the suggestion that Gregor pulled Donnie's hood over his head and punched him just before you were hit?'

Ewan replied: 'Gregor was nowhere to be seen.'

Hugh MacIntyre took to the stand to give evidence against Robertson, 20, who denies a further charge of assaulting Mr MacIntyre by repeatedly punching him to the head at East Bay, Mallaig.

Mr MacIntyre told the court

he had gone to pick up his sons when he was punched by Robertson.

He said: 'Sammy Sean was coming towards us clenching his fist, I put my hand on his chest to stop him coming towards me in self defence, I turned around and the next minute I got punched on the nose. Then I got punched on the chin and knocked down to the ground.'

Robertson has lodged a special plea of self defence that Mr MacIntyre assaulted him.

Defending, Patrick Campbell said to Mr MacIntyre: 'If I were to suggest to you that you said 'I'm going to kill you' and hit him on the chest causing him to go back 10 steps or so, what would you say?'

'No, not at all,' Mr MacIntyre replied.

A fourth man, Oban butcher Sean Grant, 24, earlier admitted punching Gregor MacIntyre, his cousin, on the head at East Bay on the same date.

The case was continued to March 14. Sentence was deferred on Grant until then.

Mallaig man's death threat claims

A MALLAIG man claimed another man from the village threatened to kill him on two separate occasions.

Allan Morrison told Fort William Sheriff Court that William Grant said 'I'm going to kill you when I get you on your own' at Station Road on August 6 last year.

Mr Morrison also accused the 61-year-old of driving his car onto the pavement, blocking his path and again threatening to kill him at Davies Brae on August

20. He said: 'He drove up to tell me what he was going to do to me, next thing I know he's drove right in so I was boxed in.'

When asked by procurator fiscal Laura Ryan what the threats were Mr Morrison, 37, said 'kill me, bash my head in and kick me about.'

Mr Morrison, 37, admitted he and Grant 'had never been friends' but the threats were unprovoked.

Defending, Hamish Melrose suggested there had been a

long-running feud between the men. He said: 'I'll put it to you that you are not telling the truth today. You're just making up a pack of lies.'

Witness Angus Fraser, a colleague of Mr Morrison, told the court he heard Grant making the threats on August 6.

Grant, of 22 Lovat Terrace, denies both charges of behaving in a threatening and abusive manner.

The trial continues on March 3.

Mixed news for Lochaber community councils

THERE was mixed news for two Lochaber community councils last week in interim elections held by Highland Council.

Inverloch and Torlund Community Council is back up to its full complement of eight after Mel Davenport, Archie Jeffrey, Flora McKee and Florence MacNicol stepped forward to fill the four vacancies.

However, Caol Community Council, which has been in abeyance for several years, failed to form.

Meanwhile, an election for Sunart Community Council will be held on March 6 after six people were nominated for the five available places.

The candidates are Denise Anderson, Sally Cameron, Brian Evans, James Hilder, Michael Laybourne and John MacDonald.

Greylag geese cull business boost

A BENBECULA food business is among local outlets set to take advantage of pilot project for a major cull of greylag geese on the Uists.

Maclean's Bakery will sell wild goose meat under a licence scheme operated by Scottish Natural Heritage as part of a management plan to reduce the greylag population.

The birds are normally migratory but thanks to a ready all year-round supply of grass and crops, they have taken up permanent residence on the Uists.

That led to their numbers rocketing, leading to calls from crofters for control measures to be introduced to reduce agricultural damage.

Now it is hoped selling geese shot under the project will generate income for the local community while helping to pay for some of the management work.

Maclean's Bakery butcher David MacInnes told *The Oban Times*: 'They are doing a big cull in March. There are hundreds of breeding pairs on the island.'

'I run a small croft myself at Baleshare on North Uist and the birds are just a disaster. Even in the winter they are grazing on the grass. We'll be selling goose burgers, sausages and breast filets.'

Lochbiodale butcher Lawrence Beaton was unsure whether he would apply for a licence. He said: 'We would have to look into it to see if it would pay us - it might be more bother than it's worth.'

Licences will be provided to enable the sale of goose meat for a trial period from February 2014 to March 2015. Local crofters are among those expected to apply. Johanne Ferguson, SNH operations manager for the Outer Hebrides and secretary to the local goose group said: 'Sales of geese shot under the pilot should provide the means to manage geese management self-funding in future. Although the goose population is still very high, bag limits are reviewed annually through the local group and agreed with national advisors to ensure geese are managed sustainably.'

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at the College based in Skye. The National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture will be running a range of courses in Gaelic, drama & music. At

the beginning of April our traditional 5 day residential courses at Easter will run over a 2 week period again this year. Among the 15 courses avail-

able, will be Christine Primrose's Gaelic Song course, an ideal opportunity to study with a highly respected, world class Gaelic singer. Gabe

McVarish, fiddler with renowned trad band Dàimh returns to lead his unique fiddle course and Caillean MacLean will also be at the College that week with his successful digital photography for beginners. Amongst the Gaelic courses we have available will be a new course for native Gaelic speakers who wish to improve their Gaelic be it through understanding grammar, improving their reading & writing or indeed their confidence in speaking their own language.



Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's Short Courses will be returning this spring with a combination of 1 day and 5 day courses

As usual there will be plenty of concerts and music sessions running at the College over the April fortnight which are open to all. Local arts agency SEALL will be presenting concerts each Tuesday with Christine Primrose & friends appearing on 1/4/14. More information and tickets can be accessed through SEALL's website: www.seall.co.uk

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For more information about all the Short Courses at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, please visit the College's website: www.smo.uhi.ac.uk.

Church filled to capacity for funeral of Robin Banks

OBAN Parish Church was filled to capacity last Friday as friends and family of the late Robin Banks paid their respects to the former solicitor and councillor. Among the mourners were representatives of the Scottish Parliament, Argyll and Bute Council, the legal profession, An Comunn Gaidhealach and the many other organisations Mr Banks represented in a lifetime dedicated to serving his community. The service was conducted by Rev Dugald Cameron and Rev Bill Gray. Rev Gray said the large attendance was 'an astonishing reflection' of the commitment Robin and his widow, Ishbel, had on Oban and the wider Argyll community. Rev Cameron added: 'It was a thank you for what he did and who he was.'

Teenagers referred to Children's Reporter

THREE teenagers have been referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter by Oban police officers investigating incidents of spraypaint vandalism throughout the town. The three boys, two aged 14 and one aged 15, have been reported in connection with 12 counts of vandalism and the theft of paint materials from a shop in Oban. Over the past few weeks areas including Mossfield, Drummore Road and the town centre had been 'tagged' with spraypaint.

New management at Lochnell Arms

THE LOCHNELL Arms Hotel in North Connel will have new owners as of this Saturday. MacGregor Hotels has re-let the property under the new management of former Oban High School pupil Susan Shaw and Dutchman Ruud van de hee, who take over from Joan and Colin Felgate. MacGregor Hotels thanked the Felgates and wished them good fortune for the future. The move is a homecoming for Susan Shaw, who has spent the past 11 years in the hospitality industry abroad.



Kim, centre left, and Finlo, centre right, were joined by Penny, held by Sennen Last, and Snowy, held by Ruari Cottier, at Dunbeg Primary School last week. Teacher Nicola Bichard is pictured with the children. 15_107dunbegps1

Dunbeg fun as fluffy friends aid learning

PUPILS at Dunbeg Primary School have been learning all about the Arctic Circle thanks to local scientists carrying out research there - and a couple of fluffy friends. Finlo Cottier and Kim Last both work at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Dunbeg and their children, Ruari Cottier, 6, and Sennen Last, 5, both attend the village school. So when Finlo and Kim were setting off for the Arctic to investigate how life survives in the long, dark winter months, they decided to bring along two helpers to keep their children up to date - Penny the Penguin and Snowy the Seal. The dotting dads were providing regular updates - but it was their cuddly companions who were the stars of the show. Enthralled Teacher Nicola Bichard, who was relaying tales of the Arctic adventures thanks to Finlo and Kim's photographs and blogs, said the children in her primary two class were enthralled. She said: 'We had a choice of geography projects and because Finlo and Kim were going to the Arctic we thought we'd take full advantage. The kids have absolutely loved it and have been so excited. It has brought it to life for them and it will be far more memorable because of this. 'They remember far more of the lessons because of what Snowy and Penny have been getting up to.' While they have now returned to the shores of Dunstaffnage, Kim, Finlo, Snowy and Penny are likely to be making a return journey next winter - much to the pupils' delight.

Introduction of Methadone clinic 'by stealth' sparks fury

THE INTRODUCTION of a Methadone service 'by stealth' sparked fury in Campbeltown this week. Most of the town's residents have opposed plans for a service, expressing fears that a clinic and the area's availability of cheap rented housing would attract hard drug users from outwith the town. 'The community has been cheated,' said Councillor Donald Kelly. 'We were assured by health minister Michael Mathieson and the Scottish Government in August that nothing would be imposed on us that we were not happy with, that there would be consultation. Now, suddenly a service is up and running by stealth. 'It is underhand and the people of Campbeltown are going to be furious. It is totally disrespectful to them.' Prescriptions Prescriptions for Methadone are already being given to users by a dispensing nurse - contrary to original plans to involve GPs. MSP Jamie McGrigor, Campbeltown Community Council and others say the move goes against promises for full consultation. Nona Ruesgen, of the Kintyre Substance Misuse Group, said: 'Procedures set down to have transparency have been bypassed completely. It's extremely underhand.' A NHS Highland spokesman admitted this week the group, set up to oversee the setting up of a clinic, was not told about the start of the service. He said: 'As a result of discussions between the nurse prescriber, the clients and their previous prescribers, it was agreed there was no benefit in delaying the start of the service. 'We apologise to the group members for not informing them in advance.'

Council £8m tied up in vacant property

ON THE day Argyll's councillors meet in Kilmory to determine the coming year's budget, The Oban Times can reveal the council has £8million tied up in vacant properties. Figures obtained under freedom of information show that the local authority has 34 empty buildings across the region. Of those, 10 are either under offer, being marketed, or are to be re-listed. Six are subject to interest from a community group or planning partner. While the council has spent £38,707.96 maintaining the buildings, there has been concern recently that some have been neglected and not enough spent keeping them wind and watertight, causing damage and reducing their value. Kilbowie House, in Oban, was marketed for sale for £450,000, but The Oban Times understands bids of less than half that were lodged by this month's closing date, due to its condition. Last year, £1,080 was spent on maintenance there. Rockfield School in Oban had £1,493.70 spent on it last year - but the condition of the building is so poor a buyer has not been found and moves are afoot to try and have it demolished. Eighteen council buildings were not maintained at all last year. The council has also spent £71,925.69 on security for its vacant buildings last year - but only for two. Rothesay Academy, which is considered uneconomical to redevelop, cost £2,167.54 to patrol, while Castle Toward in Dunoon - which has been the subject of controversy over dealings with a prospective buyer - cost £69,758.15. A spokeswoman for the council said there was a difference between vacant and surplus properties, saying only those deemed surplus will be put on the market. The council says surplus properties are put on the market as soon as possible, and of the 22 it currently deems surplus, seven are under offer and five available for sale. Asked if the council felt it maintained vacant properties to a high enough standard to maintain their value, the spokeswoman said: 'Maintaining the buildings and properties we use to deliver essential services is our priority. When a particular property has been declared surplus and is to be marketed, we will do what we can in terms of maintenance, keeping the building safe, water and weather tight.'

OBAN has more vacant council properties than any other part of Argyll, with eight currently lying empty. They are: Kilbowie House Rockfield Primary School 29 Lochside Street Former Tracie's Takeaway Former Lochside Street Public Conveniences 43 Stevenson Street Site 2 Mill Park Site 13 Mill Lane

'Open mic' blocks coastguard signal

MARINERS across the west coast have been warned about operating radios properly after a coastguard distress channel was blocked for two hours last week. Lifboat crews in Oban and Tobermory were asked to investigate the seemingly accidental jamming of VHF Channel 16 from 1pm on February 5, caused by someone leaving their microphone open. The 'open mic' jam was traced to Oban's harbour by the Royal Navy helicopter Rescue 177. However, before the vessel responsible could be found, the jam was removed just before 3pm. A spokeswoman for Stornoway Coastguard said similar situations can arise 'quite regularly'.

Grab your FREE bag next week see page 11 for details

Teenage voters lack information in independence debate

REPORT by EMMA STORR WITH seven months to go before the independence referendum, the majority of senior pupils at Oban High School are still unsure of how they will vote. Sixteen year olds are allowed to vote in the upcoming election and, while most Oban pupils of voting age are undecided, those intending to vote no outnumber the yes votes by three to one. In a poll of 98 senior pupils at the school asking if they would vote for an independent Scotland, 59 were unsure, 11 were for independence and 28 preferred to stay within the union. Pupils who were undecided claimed a lack of information was the reason for the large proportion of undecided voters, rather than a lack of interest in the referendum. Sixth year pupils Rebecca Simcox and Hannah Duncan are on either side of the debate. Rebecca, who is against independence, said: 'Independence is ludicrous and absurd. There is not a necessity for change in our country. A union provides financial safety which aids our country in political, social and economical progression. Why change that? Our country is most definitely better together.'

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Alan Reid MP

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Independence debate for all

HUNDREDS of people gathered in Oban's Argyllshire Gathering Halls on Friday to tackle the area's political heavyweights on the independence question. Lining up in the Yes corner was Argyll and Bute's MSP, Michael Russell of the SNP, alongside his former party colleague and now independent Oban councillor, Roddy McCuish. In the No camp was the county's Liberal Democrat MP Alan Reid and the area's prospective Labour candidate for the 2015 general election, Mary Galbraith. They were joined on the panel by Oban High School pupils Matthew Hall and James Kane. Hosted by Argyll Voluntary Action (AVA), the debate was the first in a series organised by the organisation, which encouraged an 'intergenerational' audience, made up of Oban High School pupils as well as those of a working age and retired local residents. While some chose to take to their feet to press their case for either the Yes or the No vote, the panel faced questions on university fees, tax increases, the EU, recent revelations about the SNP's plans to share the pound and the future of the Barnett Formula used to determine the Scottish Government's capital block grant.

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Lorn Lines

PIPE Major Douglas Murray, of Police Scotland Fife Pipe Band, will be the guest player at the next Netherlorn Piping Society.

The forthcoming recital will take place on Wednesday, February 19 at 7.30pm in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls. Mr Murray, whose grade one band almost always features in the prize list, is also a top solo player, regularly winning high profile competitions.

He is also a professional reed maker, whose reeds are in great demand by many of the competing bands. He will be supported by some of Angus MacColl's talented pupils.



ROY Wood, the educational director of Oban Speakers Club, had given some challenging subjects to the main speakers he was introducing on Ladies' Night last week.

Perhaps the most difficult subject was given to Tom Clegg who did an excellent short biography of Edith Cavell.

The other two speakers were Archie McPhail, who entertained with his subject 'The man who is always talking', and Jim Fraser, who did his best not to upset the guests with 'Did ever woman interrupt a man'. After an enjoyable tea

break the topics chairman gave a variety of topics to Roy Wood, Peter Mills, Eamonn Arthur, Bill Leech and John Maclean.

The timekeeper was Nick Maclean and a kind and humorous general evaluation was given by Alex Clark.

In his closing remarks the president, Frank Walton, thanked the guests for their attendance and expressed his wish that they would all return next year.

The next club meeting will be held in the Ambo Room, Church Centre, Glencruitten Road at 8pm on February 20.



ST COLUMBA'S Primary School's new under 5 parent/toddler group starts on Wednesday, February 26.

Held in the spare classroom, the group is held between 1.45pm-3.15pm. Activities include toys, arts and crafts, stories, songs and games.

One of the mums running the club, Helen McGuigan, said: 'We will have a little routine and themes going each week. All ideas are welcome.'

'Spread our good news. I think I'm more excited than the kids!'



A NUMBER of choristers from Oban and Lorn took part in an unforgettable choral event on Sunday (February 9) in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall.

More than a dozen members of various choirs made the trip to the city's date with the Big Big Sing, a UK-wide project to get people singing as part of the celebrations for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The Oban and Lorn contingent, including members of Taynuilt Gaelic Choir and Sequence ladies choir, joined 850 other singers in learning four songs from

the Big Big Commonwealth Songbook under the tutelage of choirmasters Stephen Deazley and Eugene Skeef.

They learned two songs from Africa, one from Jamaica and one from Samoa, mastering the different languages in the songs.

The ladies of Sequence choir said it had been a 'brilliant' experience and well worth the journey.

The next Big Big Sing takes place in Edinburgh's Usher Hall on February 16 2014; see www.bigbigsing.org for more details on the project.

Got a story for Lorn Lines? Phone 01631 568000 or email editor@obantimes.co.uk



Irene Hannah and Mac can be seen walking around Oban as she aims to clock up 80 miles before her 80th birthday. 16_107walk01

Great-grandmother steps out on 80-mile charity challenge

A GREAT-grandmother who suffers from a long list of ailments is encouraging others to get out and about as she takes on an 80-mile walking challenge.

Oban pensioner Irene Hannah, who turns 80 on April 20, is regularly accompanied by her faithful West Highland Terrier, Mac, as she strides pavements and paths in and around Oban.

The Nant Drive resident has already covered 41 miles and is well on her way to surpassing her target before her birthday party in Glencruitten Golf Club - not bad for someone who suffers from neuropathic feet, varicose veins and asthma, among other conditions. She has also had a replacement hip and has postponed a leg operation in order to complete her fundraiser.

Irene's target is to raise £1,200 for the Dementia Resource Centre and North Argyll Carers Centre, services that became so important when her late husband, Samuel, became terminally ill.

He died on January 5 2012. The mother of six, who doesn't hold a driving licence, said: 'I was barely able to walk to the door after Samuel died.'

'But if he had seen me then, he would have said, 'Get on your bike'. I would be too dangerous on that now, so I prefer to walk!'

'Now I go walking anywhere I can, whatever the weather. If it is raining, I just put on my hood. 'If you are feeling down and depressed, get outside and see what is around you.'

Asked about her health, she replies: 'You don't get to 80 without having something wrong with you. I just do a few miles at a time. Anyway, why sit around, wasting away?' Livewire Irene drops off sponsor forms and asks for donations at houses and businesses she passes while out walking.

In 2003 Irene swam 66 lengths of the Atlantis Leisure pool in an hour to raise £1,009 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Tree trouble at root of tourism woes

TREES are branching out all over Oban and Lorn - and they're causing a tourism headache.

Several of the town's popular viewpoints are either blocked or in danger of being obscured as private landowners allow their trees to grow unabated - much to the chagrin of visitors and those who enjoy the town's views.

Trees growing alongside the train line into Oban from Glasgow seem to be causing as much of a problem - blocking views on a line Wanderlust three times described as the most beautiful in the country.

Now the town's community council wants something done about it.

Member George Berry said: 'There are walls of trees and some are so bad tourists can't see the town from some places.'

'The railway line into Oban is supposed to be one of the most beautiful in the world,

but two thirds of the railway from Glasgow into Oban there's nothing but trees. Tourists are travelling through an alley of trees and that's not good enough.'

The Friends of the West Highland Lines group agrees and is currently pressing the point to bidders for the west coast line franchise, which will be renewed next year.

The Friends' Norman MacNab said: 'We've been working with Network Rail and the [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs] National Park and managed to clear a small section near Lochawe. We funded that ourselves, but there are still too many trees.'

'Network Rail isn't funded to clear views so it's something the Scottish Government is pressing with the new franchise.'

Argyll and the Isles Tourism is also keen to see overly tall trees

cut back to save the views that help make the region one of the country's most photographed areas.

A spokeswoman for the organisation said: 'We are very fortunate to live in an area which is spoiled for choice in terms of stunning views and viewpoints.'

'We would of course expect something to be done about any trees which may present a danger to the many thousands of people who enjoy those views.'

Argyll and Bute Council, meanwhile, says it can only act to remove trees when they present a danger.

A spokeswoman said: 'If overhanging trees or branches are dangerous, our first priority would be to ensure the safety of the public and we would take steps to do so - for example, cordoning off the area. We would then work with landowners to find a more long-term solution.'



Some of the town's most popular viewpoints, like this one on Pulpit Hill, are blocked by 'walls of trees' according to Oban Community Council. 16_107trees1

Oban woman kicked and punched partner

A WOMAN who 'lost the plot' with her partner and ended up kicking and punching him in the middle of Oban's Esplanade has been told by Sheriff Douglas Small that she must learn to control herself.

Andrea Michelle Hendry, aged 25, of 12 Macdougall Court, Dunollie, pled guilty, when she appeared before Sheriff Small last Tuesday, to assaulting her partner, kicking him on the body and repeatedly punching him on the head to his injury.

The attack, which happened on December 12 last year, left him with a minor cut on his lip. Stephen Macleod, defence agent for Hendry, said the couple had 'a difficult and turbulent relationship'.

'My client, for want of a better description, lost the plot,' he added. Hendry was fined £250.

Police station counter opening hours cut

REDUCED hours at public counters in police stations across Scotland will come into effect on March 1.

Argyll's towns remain largely unaffected; Oban, Dunoon, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead and Rothesay will continue to be open 24/7.

However, Police Scotland had already confirmed there would be no public counter provision at Bowmore, Islay, Tobermory on Mull and Garelochhead.

Helensburgh Police Station is also operating at reduced public hours. Police stations can be contacted by phone on 101.

Man in court on assault charge

A MAN has been ordered to be of good behaviour after admitting assaulting a woman and behaving in a threatening manner.

Appearing from custody at Oban Sheriff Court, Waldemar Bogdan Bartczak, 55, of 33 Creag Bhan Village, pled guilty via a translator to the offences, which occurred on Friday evening.

He's accused of seizing the woman by the back of the neck, pushing her and shouting at her. He returns to the court in March.

ADVERTORIAL

JDP supporting local farmers and builders in the West Scotland

OVER the last 40 years, JDP has grown to become one of the leading stockists of civil and drainage products for agriculture, building and groundwork, servicing house builders, ground workers, civil engineering contractors, local builders and farmers.

'Since its opening last year, the Oban branch has supported local farmers, builders, ground workers, and contractors, with a comprehensive range of

products available locally, close to the project, and with expert advice on all aspects of drainage and water management,' commented Paul McIntyre, area manager of JDP Scotland.

Part of JDP's national network of 26 branches, visitors to JDPoban will find a dedicated trade counter area serviced with professional and experienced staff on hand to provide the highest levels of in-depth technical

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The branch at Oban is located at 10-11 Glengallan Industrial Estate, Glenshellach, Oban PA34 4HG. For more information call 0800 195 1212 or visit www.jdpipes.co.uk.



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Gary MacDonald maintained his early lead throughout the course at Kinlochleven.

BIKING

WEST HIGHLAND Wheelers took on a new course at Kinlochleven on Sunday for the latest race in their winter league series.

A short 2.5 mile course was to be completed as many times as possible in one hour but steep climbs and treacherous descents meant even the fastest riders managed only three laps.

Gary MacDonald took an early lead which he maintained throughout, powering through as a clear winner.

Stephen Dent came in second and Lachlan Blair finished third of those completing three laps.

Of those completing two laps, Marie Meldrum had a clear lead putting her in fourth place. Fiona Thompson followed after in fifth with Frances Dent in sixth. Thanks go to marshals, helpers and timekeepers. Next round is at Nevis Range on March 2.

Results: 1 Gary MacDonald 3 laps 52:31; 2 Stephen Dent 3 laps 1:01:40; 3 Lachlan Blair 3 laps 1:06:30; 4 Marie Meldrum 2 laps 51:39; 5 Fiona Thompson 2 laps 1:00:40; 6 Frances Dent 2 laps 1:06:10.

Fort William boxer wins place at sport's top gym

A YOUNG Fort William boxer has become the first from the town to be invited by Boxing Scotland to train at the sport's top boxing gym.

Lochaber Phoenix fighter Igor Sliwinski will leave Lochaber tomorrow (Friday) to attend a three-day training camp at English Institute of Sport Sheffield, home of the GB Boxing Olympic programme.

Igor, 17, will be one of a select Scottish squad going down to spar against the UK's best at the state-of-the-art facilities.

The Scottish boys will have their own flats to live in and will train four times a day at the elite centre, where all the GB squad such as Olympic super heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua prepared for the London Olympics.

Club official Steve Docherty told *The Oban Times*: 'Nobody from Fort William has been picked at this level before.'

'It is a tremendous honour and it will be great for Igor. He is different class and will get to spar against the best from England and Wales.'

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Meanwhile, Igor, the reigning Scottish open champion at 64kg, earned revenge over rival Robert Gordon from Insh Boxing Club at the Northern District Open championships in Aberdeen last weekend.

Gordon defeated Sliwinski in the final of the Scottish Intermediate championships last year but this time the result was reversed on a split decision.

Points
Igor looked to have won the first round comfortably but in the second Gordon picked up points with his powerful combinations until Sliwinski found a huge right cross which almost dropped Gordon to his knees.

Round three was all Igor as he kept busy with the jab enabling him and the decision was declared a split points victory for Sliwinski.

The bout was an engaging appetizer for the Scottish championships where these two are favoured to meet in the final.

Lochaber had two more boxers on the bill - and 12 year-old Robert Stewart became champion without landing a blow after his final opponent pulled out after having come down ill.

Kein Johnstone, also aged 12, had a final against the more experienced Highland Boxing Academy's Keiron Swanson.

Johnstone showed good speed to out jab the taller Swanson for the majority of the contest and always seemed to control the centre of the ring.

The Fort William contingent's confidence seemed to be justified when the score was announced as a majority verdict for Kein.

But amazingly the official in charge then stated he had made a mistake and the result was changed for a majority verdict for Swanson.

Coach Stevie Docherty said: 'It was a heart breaking way to lose especially when we considered he had done enough.'

'There are a lot of titles in Kein still to come and I don't think it will be too long before he's back in the win column.'



Igor Sliwinski: new North District open champion will train and spar at the UK's top boxing gym.

INDOOR FOOTBALL

GOON Squad retained their six-point lead at the top of the Ali Young indoor football league with a 5-2 win over Caol Cosmos at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

Lochaber Leisure kept up the pressure in second by beating With Ourselves 7-3 while AFC Distillery drew 1-1 with Caol United.

The Janis B team caught up with Portowcy after thumping them 6-0 while Kentallen leapfrogged into ninth place from bottom by beating Ballachulish 5-2. Lower down the table, HWE Energy opened the gap on the teams below them with a 3-0 win against Walk Over.

Team	Pts
Goon Squad	45
Lochaber Leisure	39
AFC Distillery	37
Caol United	33
Caol Cosmos	29
Portowcy	27
The Janis B Team	27
Ballachulish	17
Kentallen	16
HWE Energy	12
With Ourselves	9
Walk Over	3

SQUASH

LOCHABER Plumblin met MRG Inverness in the Highland and Islands Squash Association Premier League.

It was a poor start for Lochaber as Alan Love lost 3-0 to Ewan Urquhart and Andrew McMaster lost 3-0 to Ally McCorquodale. There was some hope when Stuart Cameron beat Ian Prott 3-1 and the improvement continued when Bruce MacLean also won 3-1 against David Dillnutt. Lochaber Plumblin lost the overall match by a close 6-8 meaning they have slipped to bottom place in the Premier League.



Lochaber man Antoine Cordier tackles a Banff rival into the waterlogged pitch at Black Parks.

Lochaber thump visitors Banff

Lochaber RFC 37
Banff RC 0

LOCHABER are improving in leaps and bounds after thumping visitors Banff at home in the RBS Caledonia Division 2 North League on Saturday, following a narrow 17-22 defeat against Moray last week.

A flooded pitch and continuous downpours at Black Parks didn't deter the Lochaber team as Rory McKay and Euan Larter both scored tries against the Aberdeenshire side in the first half. Scott Hendry scored another

RUGBY

try ten minutes into the second half shortly before a Banff player was sin binned for 10 minutes following an argument with the referee.

Banff were doing themselves no favours as another player was yellow carded for the same reason, just minutes after his teammate's return to the game.

Meanwhile, Lochaber dominated the remainder of the

game with another two tries from Kenny Turnbull and Jack Baxter.

This weekend sees Aberdeenshire travel to Black Parks and Lochaber are hoping to secure another win.

Kenny Turnbull told *The Oban Times*: 'The boys played really well in pretty horrendous conditions. They've now got a good bit of confidence, it'll be by no means an easy game but if we keep the standard up there's no reason we can't get a good result.'

Great day of netball at junior festival

LOCHABER High School played host to five primary school teams in this year's junior netball festival.

Caol came second to winning visitors Fyrish Flyers who made the trip from Dingwall to the tournament, arranged by Fort William Falcons netball team and Active Schools.

Inverlochly finished in third place with Banavie and Upper Achintore in fourth and fifth.

Afterwards, the primary school players were invited to watch the league match between Fort William Falcons and Fyrish Flyers Seniors in which Fort

NETBALL

William secured a comfortable win with a final score of 31-23.

Active Schools co-ordinator Rebecca Stafford said: 'A huge thank you to the Fort William Falcons, specifically Claire Lumley-Holmes, for organising a great day of netball.'

'Thank you also to the secondary pupils from Lochaber High School for helping out on the day. Finally, a big thank you must go to the school staff and parents for their coaching and support.'



Caol Primary School's netball team came second in the tournament at Lochaber High School. Back from left: Emily Campbell, Bethany Henderson, Anna MacDonald and Natasha Gregor. Front from left: Ella Smith, Kacy McLean, Lucy Fraser and Shannon Laverty.

Fort FC seek revenge over Lossiemouth in return fixture

FORT William Football Club will be seeking revenge over Lossiemouth for a 5-1 league defeat earlier this season in the return fixture at Claggan Park on Saturday.

The Fort have not kicked a ball in anger for three weeks and will be desperate to post a much improved performance from their last outing, a 9-0 reverse at the hands of Cove Rangers.

Manager Danny Conlon still harbours big hopes that

his team have it within them to escape bottom spot in the league, but accepts the Moray men's impressive recent form means carving out a win will be a tall order.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Lossie have gone really well since the new year and have won one and drawn two. They beat Buckie and drew with Forres and Wick so they are a hard side to turn over.'

'They are very direct and dangerous at set pieces and a

strong physical side whereas we try to get the ball round and play it on the deck.

'But it is up to us to impose ourselves on the game and we have to keep the ball better if we are to take something from it.'

'I think we can score against them but its a matter of not putting in silly challenges around our box and concede free kicks.'

Weather

Thursday Cloudy with rain and hill snow
Winds strong west south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C

Friday Cloudy with rain, afternoon sunshine
Winds strong south south westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook Cloudy with rain, some bright spells
Winds medium north north westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate to rough
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate to rough
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate to rough

Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 13, 2014** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	04.49 3.6 11.40 1.3 17.18 3.7 23.25 1.1	
Fri	05.25 3.8 12.10 1.2 17.52 3.8 23.59 0.9	
Sat	06.00 3.9 12.38 1.1 18.25 3.9 *** **	
Sun	00.32 0.8 06.32 4.0 13.07 1.1 18.54 3.9	
Mon	01.04 0.8 07.01 4.0 13.35 1.1 19.20 3.9	
Tues	01.31 0.9 07.27 3.9 13.58 1.2 19.45 3.8	
Wed	01.58 0.9 07.54 3.8 14.17 1.2 20.15 3.7	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrihaig	-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		

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