

# The Oban Times

## & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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## Fears for young carers as funding set to be pulled

### Independent providers face cash crisis due to cuts

**LOUISE GLEN**  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A FINANCIAL crisis will see children as young as five deprived of independent support from the award-winning Argyll carer centres if plans to scrap funding goes ahead today (Thursday) at Argyll and Bute Council budget meeting.

Young carers networks in Argyll and Bute support children as young as five who provide care to family members. At the moment more than 200 children access these services.

Children care for family members who may have a physical illness, disability, a mental health condition or have an alcohol or drug misuse problem. Heart-rending stories of youngsters being taught to inject parents with life-saving medication and of primary children having to go home at lunchtime to make sure their parent has food to eat are all too common in Argyll, say the leaders of the four independent carers' centres in Oban, Lochgilphead, Dunoon and Helensburgh.

Centre managers Morag MacLean from North Argyll and Eileen McCrory from Helensburgh and Lomond will be the worst hit when funding finishes on April 22 and services for more than 180 children come to an end. In the meantime, charity applications have been rejected because funders have said there is an obligation for the local authority to put cash into the services. Ironically, while the two

services in North Argyll and Helensburgh and Lomond are at risk of coming to an end, funding has been found for children in Dunoon.

Catherine Paterson, chairwomen of the Argyll Carers Forum, said there would be a cash crisis in caring if independent services such as the carers centres were not funded.

Mrs Paterson is a former teacher who offers counselling support to young carers in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Isles.

She said: 'For every £1 the local authority puts into care services it benefits by the equivalent of £14.60 in the services that we can provide. I am not making up these figures, they are proven.'

'We are the only organisations with time to be alongside those people in a truly non-judgemental way.' The women point out that while other support services are shrinking, the number of people approaching the centres for support is increasing.

A holistic approach to care is top of their agenda.

Mrs Paterson continued: 'If we are not able to provide support for a young carer there are lots of other issues that come forward.'

'There are no real figures available for how many people care for a member of their family. If a family is coping they don't need help. The cost of that funding is then hidden.'

'People come to us in a crisis. Where will children and adult carers go if we are not here?'

'They certainly won't run to officials for these services to be provided.'

'The gaps in the services will be quite alarming.'

'The children we advocate for are not all in town centres, so coming out to a nighttime meeting or to a club is very difficult.'

'Our geography makes what we provide almost impossible if it wasn't for the way our carers and volunteers make it work.'

'What we do cannot be replicated by social workers or anyone else. We are independent.'

'Carers' health and wellbeing is why I am here.'

Speaking about the young carer services in Oban and Lomond, Eileen McCrory said: 'After April 22 that will be it. No more services. We will do what we can to meet the needs of carers whatever age. But no particular service will be funded.'

'We have applied for funding and the reason we were not successful was because there is a statutory obligation for local authorities to provide for young carers. Charities will not fund things that should be provided.'

'People often think this isn't real. But we work with children who go home to feed mummy at lunchtime, who have to make sure mummy is safe, who help granny to the toilet.'

'People don't want us to think about that – because there is no money to fund anything unless there is a crisis.'

Budget proposals for cuts to voluntary services will go before Argyll and Bute Council today (Thursday).

As part of the cost savings, more than 400 employees in the local authority have asked for redundancy.

## Hogwarts highjinks in Oban



Mull youngsters Eva, nine, and Oscar, five, had great fun at the special Harry Potter Book Night at Waterstone's bookshop in Oban last Thursday evening. For full story and more photographs, turn to page five. 15\_107harrypotter02.

## Family put marina on the market

THE OWNERS of Oban Marina, based on Kerrera, have announced they are to put the business up for sale, writes Louise Glen.

Peter and Katy Weir, from Le-daig, say their age and illness are forcing them to sell the business to someone who can expand and develop it.

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland's head of marine tourism, said the loss of the Weir family to the business: 'marks the end of a considerable local effort to sustain and develop the business over several years.'

He continued: 'There have been some challenging circumstances for the owners, whose vision was to enhance Oban's reputation as a leading leisure maritime hub on the west coast of Scotland, and to provide the levels of service and type of facilities expected by today's sailors and boaters.'

'Oban Marina represents an opportunity for new owners to carry the Weir family's vision forward. The growth of marine tourism depends a lot on infrastructure, and the greater the number of places with appropriate facilities the greater the prospect of meeting the growth agenda.'

'The new owners also have an opportunity to build alliances and service partnerships with the Oban business community – making the most of combined local resources, experience and expertise to grow the visitor economy and advance the destination's reputation. I am sure the sale will generate significant interest. I wish the Weir family well.'

Mr Weir said: 'I promise to keep everyone fully informed of future progress and developments.'

'I would personally like to thank all of our customers and friends who have supported us through the years.'

'We have all been through our ups and downs and I hope that the marina continues and finds a buyer who can fulfill its potential.'



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## Nurse's high court bid fails

AN OBAN nurse who murdered his first wife and tried to kill his second has lost a bid to have his conviction referred back to the High Court.

Malcolm Webster, 56, was jailed for a minimum of 30 years for killing Claire Morris, 32, in a planned car crash in Aberdeenshire in 1994, and attempting to kill Felicity Drumm in New Zealand in 1999 to claim insurance money.

The former medic, who worked as a senior nurse in Lorn and Islands Hospital, and also played Santa at his local school, was handed the life sentence after being convicted of the crimes in May 2011.

Webster lost an appeal against his conviction in 2013 when judges at the Court of Appeal in Edinburgh rejected a claim he was the victim of a miscarriage of justice.

## Improved ferry alerts

CALMAC is to revamp its warning code system after talking to customers.

The amber status has been making passengers see red, with many saying it puts people off making a journey.

A spokesman for CalMac said: 'We are proposing a fourth colour – yellow – to distinguish routes that have the potential for disruptions from those which are actually experiencing them on the day in question. Work to incorporate the new tier into the website and app is under way and will be introduced in the coming months.'

## 11th-hour call to aid Argyll?

AS THE deadline looms for a financial deal between the Scottish Government and Argyll and Bute Council, it is understood an 11th-hour phone call may ease the rising financial burden on the local authority.

Argyll and Bute Council would not comment when *The Oban Times* asked about a call between finance minister John Swinney MSP and council leader Dick Walsh, but it is understood the conversation was due to take place yesterday (Wednesday) evening. It is believed the discussion may end some of the ongoing concerns the local authority has placed before the government. The call was set up with the help of Michael Russell MSP.

Mr Walsh will present his budget to the full council for ratification today (Thursday).

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MULL lines



MIST is hosting free events for island drivers to highlight the benefits of electric vehicles.

MIST brings green transport to Mull

FREE events teaching island drivers about the benefits of electric vehicles and fuel efficiency begin this month, led by the Mull and Iona Community Trust's Sustainable Transport project (MIST).

'MIST is a community initiative aiming to improve the quality of island life by supporting environmentally friendly travel and transport options for all on Mull and Iona,' MIST project officer Terry Hegarty explained. 'We are committed to reducing island road transport emissions associated with climate change.'

'MIST is keen to work with drivers, passengers, community transport groups, island businesses and others to develop low carbon approaches to travel and transport on Mull and Iona for islanders and visitors alike.'

At An Roth in Craignure, on Tuesday February 16 at 10am, and on Wednesday 17 February at 7.30pm, John Lilly will lead a planned programme for electric vehicle owners, prospective owners, mechanics, businesses, representatives of community transport schemes, and anyone else interested to learn more.

Emergency services will also be trained on how to deal with electric vehicles in a traffic accident, followed by open question and answer sessions. More technical workshop sessions are scheduled at the Bayview Garage, Craignure, and at Kennedy's Garage, Salen – for more details, please contact Terry Hegarty at thegarty@mict.co.uk.

For drivers of fossil-fueled cars wishing to cut costs and CO2 emissions, there will be free fuel-efficiency training from March 2 to 4. Applications from high mileage island drivers are especially welcome.

There are only 24 spaces available for this one-to-one tutoring, scheduled in eight 50-minute sessions on each of the three days: in Craignure on Wednesday March 2, in Tobermory on Thursday March 3, and in Fionnphort on Friday March 4. To book, contact Mr Hegarty on 01681 700600.

Before the project concludes in March, MIST will explore the feasibility of an electric vehicle car sharing club for the islands.

Anyone interested in test driving or borrowing the community-owned electric vehicles, or in financial incentives from the government to buy their own should contact MIST.

MIST has also established Facebook pages for 'Mull and Iona Lift Sharing' and 'Mull and Iona Electric Transport'.

For more information contact MIST on 01680 812900 or email Terry Hegarty: thegarty@mict.co.uk

Tiree A' Bhuain set to welcome homecomers

LOUISE GLEN  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

TIREE is gearing itself up for a huge week in May as 100 homecomers return to the island of their ancestors.

With only three months to go until the second A' Bhuain (Gaelic for the harvest), the organising committee is setting the stage for the event following a 10-year break.

Eminent Gaelic scholar Professor Donald Meek, one of Tiree's most famous sons, will start proceedings on May 23 with a personal look back at his childhood in Caolas.

The week-long festival also features talks by Ishbel MacK-

innon, the archivist at the Inveraray Castle archive, on the treasures now being unlocked from the vaults.

Trail West's Ian Smith will talk about the 150th anniversary of the Balephuil Fishing Disaster, while Dr John Holliday will discuss the Viking settlement of the island.

Mr Smith will also be unveiling the first bottling, called Cairnsmuir after an 1885 shipwreck off Tiree, from the new Tiree Whisky Company.

Skipinnish, fresh from a sell-out show in Glasgow's Royal Festival Hall as part of Celtic Connections, will play for the homecomers, and the week will end with a stand-out concert, staged by the Tiree Association

under the expert ears of Mary Ann Kennedy.

In 2006 the association's closing concert was so good it was programmed for Celtic Connections the following year.

The week is about connections, people and friendships. At the heart of the festival, the island's hall An Talla will host a daily cafe where the worldwide Tiree family and today's islanders can meet over lunches hosted by a range of community groups.

An evening of house ceildhs will allow visitors to spend the evening by the island's fire sides.

There will be daily classes for those wanting to learn Gaelic, accordion and ceildh dancing, and there will be a tour of some

of the crofts and farms of the island, as well as an opportunity to spend time birdwatching under the expert guidance of John Bowler, the RSPB conservation charity's warden.

Dr Holliday, chairman of the committee, told *The Oban Times*: 'We had a wonderful week back in 2006 and we were keen to mark the 10th anniversary with a repeat. A' Bhuain has something for everyone – dancing, singing, lectures, trips around the island, and, above all, a great chance to bring together those whose families left the island, and those who still live here.'

'Whatever your connection with the island, you will get a warm welcome.'

Roadworks to begin on A82 ahead of route upgrade

A PROGRAMME of tree and drainage clearance and the removal of loose rocks from the verge of the A82 is part of a major programme of maintenance works, costing around £140,000, due to start next Monday between Tarbet and Inverarnan.

Transport Minister Derek Mackay MSP said the A82 Partnership would improve the route in advance of its upgrade.

The work is expected to be completed by Easter. Mr Mackay said: 'This 10-mile section of road through stunning hills and by the banks of the iconic Loch Lomond has presented a real challenge as we have taken forward the design work.'

'Last October we were able to let the public see and comment on the preferred route option to upgrade the road between Tarbet and Inverarnan, and we are now taking forward the next phase of design which will lead to the preparation of draft orders.'

'Last year I took a trip in an HGV to see for myself the challenges of driving the route, and as a result I pledged to carry out a programme of measures to improve the route in advance of the upgrade for all road users, but particularly those driving long vehicles.'

'This work will get under way next week and will include the clearing away of vegetation, overhanging trees and the removal of loose stones and rocks from the verge of the existing road, as well as the clearance and improvement of the existing drainage system.'

'We are committed to upgrading the A82 and have already completed the £5.5million Crianlarich bypass and £9.2million Pulpit Rock improvements in addition to the £57million invested in the route since 2007, bringing significant improvements for road users and local communities who rely on this road to get about their day to day business.'

Delay over MPA plans to allow further discussion

FISHERMEN have proposed changes to mitigate the potential economic impact of Marine Protected Area (MPA) fishing restrictions.

Members of Mallaig and North West Fishermen's Association (MNWFA) met with Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, and Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment Richard Lochhead MSP on Thursday to discuss the impact of the recently sanctioned MPA designations, which would limit some forms of fishing.

It was agreed not to lay the introduction of the Small Isles management order of the MPA until further discussions were held with a view to finding agreement on a revised order in the coming weeks.

Mr Thompson said: 'I welcome the news that the laying of the management order of the Small Isles MPA will not be going ahead.'

'The economy of the west coast is heavily dependent on a



Mallaig fishermen are involved in discussions over MPAs.

viable fishing industry and so, I support the modest changes proposed by MNWFA, which will mitigate the economic impact of the MPA fishing restrictions.'

'It is heartening that the government has listened to the concerns of the fishermen and I look forward to further constructive discussions in the coming weeks before a revised order will be laid.'

Ormsary gets connected thanks to Sure Signal

RESIDENTS of the Ormsary community in Knapdale can now, for the first time, make use of the mobile phone network to access the internet and send and receive email thanks to the Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal programme which was launched in Ormsary Community Hall on Friday February 5.

A simple Sure Signal box fitted to the roofline of the hall will distribute the signal over a wide area thereby providing a reliable 3G service to Vodafone users.

MP Brendan O'Hara, who took part in the launch, welcomed the move and said: 'I regularly receive contact from my constituents regarding difficulties with connectivity, so seeing the Ormsary area able to benefit so strongly from this initiative is very welcome and I do hope that this will be replicated throughout Argyll and Bute.'

He continued: 'Lack of connectivity is a major factor in many people leaving our rural



Brendan O'Hara MP.

communities and anything that helps to stimulate economic activity will help to redress this.'

Also taking part was Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell, who added: 'I am very pleased that Ormsary has been successful in securing a Sure Signal service which will massively improve communication and accessibility.'

'Rural communities must not be left behind by the digital revolution and Vodafone's commitment to these areas and this development is vital and welcome.'

Council to attend maritime meeting over towing vessel

SERIOUS concerns are to be raised at a stakeholders meeting to discuss the future of the emergency towing vessel on the west coast.

The current contract for the last remaining government-funded emergency towing vessel (ETV), which is currently based on the northern coast of Scotland, has less than two months to run.

Argyll and Bute Council provost Len Scoullar says removal of the service increases serious risk of shipping accidents.

The Maritime Coastguard Agency has invited stakeholders to a meeting to discuss the future of ETV provision in the United Kingdom.

Mr Scoullar said: 'Along with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Highland Council, we have serious concerns about both the current level of provision and the potential removal of the last remaining ETV.'

'It is our view that this significantly increases the risk



The Lysblink Seaway ran aground near Kilchoan in 2015. Photograph: Jon Haylett

of a serious shipping incident which could have a grave effect on the local economy and environment.

'We want to see the reinstatement of the Minch tug, based in Stornoway, as well as the retention of the tug based in Orkney.'

'Last February the 120-metre cargo vessel Lysblink Seaway grounded near Kilchoan on the Ardnamurchan peninsula.

'The Orkney-based ETV Heracles took 24 hours to arrive on the scene and only at that point could the vessel be moored safely nearby to allow counter-pollution teams to deal with leakage of diesel oil.'

'If an ETV had been based in Stornoway it is quite possible that it would have arrived at the incident in enough time to pull the ship off the rocks at high tide, significantly reducing the risk of further damage and significant pollution.'

'The Minches, Argyll coastal waters and the Firth of Clyde are all considered to be of high sensitivity and high risk to maritime incident, especially with the transport of nuclear waste.'

'A lack of ETV provision on the west coast poses a major risk to mariners and the wider environment which supports key industries, such as fishing, aquaculture and tourism.'

'We will welcome this positive step and will be pleased to participate in this meeting.'

Cove funeral for Jamie Taggart

FUNERAL details for Jamie Taggart, the botanist from Argyll who tragically died in Vietnam, have been confirmed.

A service will be held in St Modan's Church in Rosneath at noon tomorrow (February 12), followed by interment at Barbour Cemetery in Cove.

Mr Taggart, a 41-year-old retained firefighter, from Cove disappeared while on a plant-hunting expedition in a remote, mountainous area of north Vietnam in November 2013. Friends and neighbours on the Rosneath peninsula raised thousands of pounds to fund searches for Mr Taggart in Vietnam, with actor Hugh Grant, who has family connections to Mr Taggart's home at the Linn in Cove, making a substantial donation.

Mr Taggart's mother, Jill Mary, flew to Vietnam last year to join renewed searches, but no trace of his remains were found until December 17 last year.

Food of love is good for business

SALES of Scottish oysters are predicted to soar on the run up to Valentine's Day as the 'food of love' makes an appearance on menus all over Britain.

Stephen Cameron, managing director of the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group, said: 'In a normal week we sell around 35,000 oysters to our multiple retail and other customers, but last year this soared to 160,000 oysters in Valentine's week.'

Tourism tops jobs list in Highlands

THE WEST Highlands and islands top of the list when it comes to tourism jobs, according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Argyll and Bute, Lochaber, Skye, Lochalsh, Arran and Cumbrae have the highest percentage of main and second jobs in the industry at 17.29 per cent. The figures for 2014 also revealed that those aged 20 to 24 years were the most likely to work in tourism.

Islay whisky lovers could be in for dram fine windfall

RESIDENTS of Islay are being asked to raid the cupboards and hunt in the loft for bottles of whisky from the Port Ellen Distillery.

Some 320 bottles from the distillery were sold at auction in the first half of last year. The most expensive bottle was sold for £8,200.

The value of whisky has soared in recent years, and bottles from now closed distilleries, such as Port Ellen, which closed in 1983, have seen their value rise more than most.

David Robertson, co-founder of Rare Whisky 101, said: 'Whisky from Scotland's silent distilleries is undoubtedly in high demand at the moment.'

'However, while many of these rare bottles are now being

bought or sold for investment, collection, or purely just for drinking, there are still a huge number of bottles from these silent distilleries just gathering dust, with the owners unaware of the whisky's value.'

'We're also confident that many of these bottles are most likely located in and around the communities from where silent distilleries were based.'

'We'd urge anyone who has got any old bottles from the Port Ellen distillery to get in touch with us and seek a valuation.'

'They could be in for a very pleasant surprise.'

Whisky from the former Port Ellen distillery has risen in value in the last few years.



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## Tiree council slams cuts as 'ill-judged'

ARGYLL and Bute Council's proposals to cut costs have been rejected as 'thoughtless, ill-judged and punitive' by Tere Community Council.

Convenor Dr John Holliday declared the island's community councillors had 'difficulty responding in any positive manner' to Argyll and Bute Council's consultation paper Service Choices, 'given both the style and overall presumption within the consultation toward low level service and job cuts'.

The local authority expects its Scottish Government funding to reduce significantly over the next five years and has imposed a target to save £9 million in both 2016/17 and 2017/18, with further future savings, to bridge a funding gap between £21.7 and £26 million. Its online consultation, which closed on December 31, set out its ideas on how money can be saved.

But rejecting all its proposals, Dr Holliday urged the council 'to urgently consider taking a more fundamental look at the way [it] conducts its business, with far greater emphasis and thought around strategic vision, and the longer-term future of the council area than these thoughtless, ill-judged and punitive proposals suggested to us'.

Furthermore, Dr Holliday claimed Tere Community Council was not invited to attend the council's workshops, adding: 'The proposals... appear to be entirely officer-led and do not reflect any serious input from elected members.'

He asked councillors to find a 'more thoughtful and innovative' alternative to the 'ill-conceived Service Choices scenario', advocating the 'sound advice' within the Accounts Commission Best Value Audit 2015.

'Rather than proposals for piecemeal and highly damaging low level cuts,' he argued, 'the council should seriously consider ways in which it can move away from an existing, and highly expensive centralised service, to a far more devolved range of services, where the council genuinely and proactively engages with communities to establish where, and how, services can be more efficiently provided.'

'Tere continues to experience significant population decline,' he concluded, 'with a resultant decrease of economically active residents and a growing propensity towards second home ownership and an increasingly ageing population. Despite investment in high speed broadband, and vastly improved ferry/air links, none of the proposals contained within the 'Service Choices' consultation recognise or take any advantage of these infrastructure investments.'

A report on the consultation findings is due to be read today (February 11) at a council budget meeting.

# Lorn mother backs Yazidi woman's plea to politicians

Iraqi woman tells MPs of her three-month ordeal at the hand of Daesh militants

LOUISE GLEN  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A CAMPAIGNER from North Lorn has taken her concerns about women living under the Isis regime to Westminster.

Fiona Bennett, HR manager at *The Oban Times*, was in London on Tuesday to introduce a young Yazidi woman to politicians and to potentially meet with Prime Minister David Cameron.

Nadia Murad Basee Taha was among more than 5,000 Yazidi women taken captive when Isis swept through villages in northern Iraq.

She spoke about her horrific experiences at the hands of Isis fighters, who bought and sold her, and women and children like her, as 'sabria' – slaves.

Speaking at Westminster about the need for money to help women in refugee camps, the 21-year-old described the persecution the Yazidi people faced under Isis and described the torture and rape she suffered at the hands of Daesh militants who held her for three months.

Ms Bennett has been instru-



mental in setting up meetings for Ms Murad Basee Taha at both Westminster and Holyrood.

She said: 'I wanted to raise awareness and funds, but my main objective at the time was to make people aware of what was happening to this tiny minority of people. Genocide.'

Ms Bennett has already raised more than £5,000 for the US charity Yazda, which sends aid to refugees in Iraq, through the

gofundme.com website. The money raised is to be used to provide medical care, sanitary products and psychological help for the victims of sexual violence.

One of the meetings was hosted by Brendan O'Hara MP.

He said: 'Last night I hosted an event in parliament at which one of the bravest and most remarkable people I have ever met addressed a group of MPs and Peers.'



Brendan O'Hara MP with Nadia Murad Basee Taha in Westminster this week, left, and above, Fiona Bennett with Ms Taha.

'Nadia Murad Basee Taha is a Yazidi woman who was kidnapped by Daesh in 2014 when they attacked her village, murdering more than 300 men and boys and taking the young women as sex slaves to Mosul.'

'Nadia suffered terribly while a Daesh slave but after several months, she somehow managed to escape.'

'Rather than refusing to talk about her ordeal, Nadia has made it her mission to tell the world what happened to her and what is still happening to thousands of Yazidi women in Mosul

and other Daesh strongholds. Nadia has spoken to the United Nations Security Council, US Secretary of State John Kerry and last week the Norwegian parliament. She has also been nominated and seconded for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

'Finally, a huge thanks to Fiona Bennett of Oban who first alerted me to Nadia's story.'

'Shortly before Christmas she contacted me as her MP to see what, if anything, we could do together. Within days we were in touch with Nadia and quickly after that we invited her to Westminster. We helped sort out a visa and with the help of the All Party Parliamentary Groups on Religious Freedom and Genocide Prevention and with the support of Change.org we organised last night's very successful meeting.'

'For me, that is a wonderful example of people using their MP to make a real and significant change and I thank Fiona for giving me the opportunity to help Nadia and the Yazidi women still currently held captive by Daesh.'

## Broadband issues continue across UK

BROADBAND issues are continuing to blight local communities, and if people don't complain the issues will remain unresolved, says MSP Michael Russell.

Last week's cross-party report from 120 MPs reveals that in spite of £1.7 billion of taxpayers' cash pumped into the construction of UK high-speed broadband, there are still 5.7 million people across Britain who cannot access the internet at the Ofcom benchmark speed of 10 Megabits per second. From a total of 650 UK constituencies, Argyll and Bute and the Western Isles are bottom for average download speed. Michael Russell MSP said: 'The present Highlands and Islands broadband project is now starting to deliver for Argyll and Bute with much better services available.'

## Police apologise for error

IN A police file in *The Oban Times*, January 28, we published an article stating a man had been charged with careless driving following an incident on a CalMac ferry on Saturday January 23.

The information we received from Police Scotland was incorrect. The man was never charged with the offence and Police Scotland apologise for any upset this may have caused.

## Arduaine Gardens stalwart set to kick off muddy boots and retire

THE HEAD gardener at the National Trust for Scotland's Arduaine Gardens near Craobh Haven retires this month after 24 years' service, writes Sandy Neil.

Former civil servant Maurice Wilkins, 67, first dreamed of gardening from his tax office in the Inland Revenue.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I remember looking out the window seeing a man cutting the grass and thinking I'd rather do that than be sitting here.'

In 1971, while working in London at Hampton Court's woodland garden, Mr Wilkins met his wife Sheila, from Glasgow, and moved to Scotland, where he got a job as a gardener at The Palace of Holyroodhouse. He studied at Elmwood rural college in Cupar, Fife, absorbing more horticulture than younger students. He recalled: 'I spent my lunches in the library – they spent their lunches in the pub.'

Mr Wilkins' enthusiasm paid off when he was appointed head gardener at Ross Priory by Loch Lomond, where he stayed for 16 years, and wrote a magazine gardening column, which funded his first plant-hunting trip to Nepal in 1990, closely followed by another in 1994 – to the world's third highest mountain Kangchenjunga.

When the head gardener position came up at Arduaine Gardens in 1991, after brothers Edmund and Harry Wright gifted it to the National Trust for Scotland, Mr Wilkins jumped at the job – and got it, moving his wife and two daughters Emily and Amy to a new house there. Mr Wilkins' first task was to map and extend the plant collection and build up visitor numbers.

'By the mid-1990s we got up to 24,000 [visitors] a year,' he said, 'but then it started to go down very gradually; by 2009 we had just 12,500. The national trust decided to mothball 11 of its prop-



Maurice Wilkins with Jean Ainsley of Arduaine Gardens' support group.

erties – and Arduaine was one, which was pretty shocking. They gave us a year to increase income and reduce expenditure, which we did, and the garden was declared safe. We're now up to 15,500, which seems to be stabilising.'

He said the national trust was again going through a regular exercise to be more financially stable, adding: 'We've got to make and save more money, and increase visitors, but that's on-going. I think the gardens are secure. Gardens are places people come back to: they change by the day.'

Arduaine Gardens, insulated by the sea against extreme temperatures, specialises in tender rhododendrons from afar as Yunnan in China, North Vietnam and Upper Burma.

Mr Wilkins said: 'These are warm,

temperate places, but the plants are very successful here.'

And he offered a word of advice for his successor: 'Gardening at Arduaine is not a job – it's your life. I'm too old and it was getting harder. My job is also changing. The trust can't justify employing both a head gardener and a property manager, so they're a combined position. Sometimes you get bogged down in admin, but that's common.'

'The house we've bought in Oban doesn't have much of a garden. I'm going to enjoy concentrating on a small area. I don't want to give up growing plants, but I'll be looking for people to take them.'

'I'll not give up links with Arduaine and will do anything to help without standing on anyone's toes, but I certainly don't plan to weed in the rain.'

## Watch this white space, says council

COUNCIL watchers will be aware that plans for the White Building on Oban's North Pier have so far come to nothing in spite of at least three public consultations and more than three years of waiting for the project to start.

But the end is in sight, claims Argyll and Bute Council, as new plans have been drawn up and the multi-million pound project for a town centre 'performance space' will be in the hands of councillors within months.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesman told *The Oban Times*: 'Following a legal challenge in January 2015 to the approved design for a new North Pier Maritime Visitor Facility the project was halted to allow for discussions between the council and the objector.'

'The challenge covered a range of issues but was primarily on the basis that the canopy in the original design restricted the objector's access to his business.'

'Discussions led to a provisional

agreement in September 2015, although the objector sadly passed away the following day.'

'The council is currently preparing plans which it believes are in keeping with the spirit of the provisional agreement.'

'These plans will include a range of options, containing similar facilities to the original design and scale, and will be presented to members of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee for consideration in April 2016.'

'The members will then select their preferred design and officers will proceed on that basis, seeking planning permission and amending the existing business case to reflect the new design.'

'Subject to the necessary statutory and members' approvals, and the conclusion of the legal matter, it is anticipated that construction on the new building will begin in the New Year of 2017, with it opening to the public in summer 2017.'

Oban Times newsdesk 01631 568000

## Texas tennis school shows its support for Oban's bid to revamp courts at Atlantis

DAVID MCPHEE  
dmpcpee@obantimes.co.uk

A TEXAS tennis ranch has spoken out in support of a campaign to upgrade the tennis courts at Atlantis Leisure in Oban.

Newcombe Tennis Ranch has a close connection with the town and every year representatives come and play in West Highland Tennis Week – a tournament held at the Oban courts.

Oban man Gregor Brydon moved to the states and joined the coaching team in Texas.

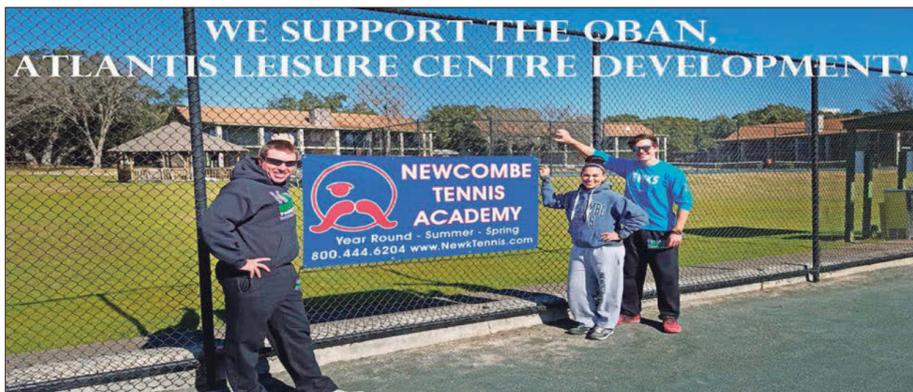
Newcombe head coach Chris Jacques said: 'Newcombe Tennis Ranch has a rich tradition of more than 15 years of bringing American representative teams to the West Highland Tennis tournament.'

'We are always treated so well and the kids get a great opportunity to play in Scotland's finest tournament.'

'One of the Newcombe pros this year is a home-grown Oban original.'

'We love the connection and our tour of Great Britain would not be the same without Oban.'

'We fully support the Oban and



Head coach Chris Jacques, left, coach Esther Delgado and Gregor Brydon from Oban.

Atlantis Leisure Centre development.' Neil Matheson, chairman of Atlantis Leisure, said: 'We are still trying to raise funds. We are getting closer to our target, but it's still a challenge.'

'We are grateful for the support we have received from both organisations and individuals.'

'People are still enthusiastic and we're determined to make it work.'

'Gregor Brydon worked with us in Atlantis Leisure, so he is integrated into the set-up.'

'It's a really good link between Atlantis and Newcombe and it's a link we hope to build on over time.'

Gregor Brydon joined the Newcombe team after becoming an ambassador to the Texas squad.

He joined them in training sessions and on sightseeing tours before Newcombe head coach Chris Jacques suggested that he go to the ranch and join the coaching squad.

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## Mary's Meals feeding over 1M children

OWING to the continued generosity of supporters from across the globe, Mary's Meals is now feeding 1,101,206 children in some of the world's poorest communities every day they attend school.

The Dalmally-based charity provides daily school meals to chronically hungry children on four continents.

Serving the food in a place of education encourages children to attend and learn, giving them the chance to break free from the poverty in the future.

The charity has also confirmed that its global average cost to feed a child for a whole school year will remain at just £12.20 throughout 2016.

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, CEO and founder of Mary's Meals, said: 'The difference that a nutritious meal served in a place of education makes to a hungry child is remarkable.'

'In all of the countries where we work, I have seen first-hand the transformation that can take place when a child is given the opportunity to learn with a full stomach.'

## Three Oban projects win with Lottery

MORE THAN £4 million was handed out across Argyll and Bute last year by the National Lottery.

Almost 60 grants were awarded throughout the area. The MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust received £61,200 for a 'Telling the Castle' story project.

Two grants were awarded to Oban Communities Trust; £8,200 to fund the initial refurbishment of four huts and a garden area, and £8,000 to support a 'Memories Matter - time to share our stories' project at The Rockfield Centre.

The National Lottery Awards allow projects which have received grants to be recognised across seven categories - sport, heritage, arts, environment, health, education and voluntary/charity.

For more information on this year's awards, call 0207 293 3599 before March 9.

# St Conan leads the Way from Dalmally to Iona

A NEW pilgrims' way has been created in Argyll, taking walkers from Craig Lodge in Dalmally to Iona Abbey.

St Conan's Pilgrim Way was created to celebrate Craig Lodge's 25th anniversary; St Conan was part of the monastic tradition established by St Columba on Iona and in the Dalmally area.

St Conan is regarded as Dalmally's saint, so there was no other name for the route which goes part of the way along the ancient pilgrim route of Glen Lonan.

The path takes pilgrims across the Ross of Mull via a choice of two paths; the road or a more challenging coastal path via Lochbuie, Carsaig and Scoor. Both meet at Fionnphort to make the final sea crossing to Iona and on to the abbey.

Calum MacFarlane-Barrow, family members and friends from the Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer have devised and tested the route and a guide to the way can be downloaded from the Craig Lodge website.

'There is an incredible resurgence in pilgrims' ways across Europe,' said Mr MacFarlane-Barrow. 'There are three new ones in Germany, and in Sweden and other places.'



Calum MacFarlane-Barrow says St Conan's Pilgrim Way will bring walkers 'great peace'.

'So many people have got so far away from God and started to question everything.'

Mr MacFarlane-Barrow believes a pilgrimage is a good way to reconnect with God: 'Walking is the prayer of the body and with prayer itself, combining the two together brings a great peace; it's an extraordinary thing,' he said.

The way goes from the gates of Craig Lodge, to Castles Farm, over to Loch Etive via Glen Noe and across the bridge at Inverawe to Taynuilt. On this first day, it reaches its highest altitude. The second day takes pilgrims to Oban, via Glen Lonan.

Throughout the walk there is stunning scenery and historic

locations. Castles Farm is almost certainly the site of a monastery founded by St Conan and the hill behind, Beinn Eunaich translates as St Adamnan, who was St Columba's biographer; in Glen Lonan there is evidence of historic crosses marking the way. From Oban and the MV Isle of Mull, the pilgrim travels

from Craignure to Fionnphort. The road takes 37 miles and the coastal route 43.

'This can take as long as you like,' said Mr MacFarlane-Barrow. 'Some very fit walkers have completed it in two days; but if you want, you can do five miles a day.'

The coastal route is for experienced walkers only, who will have to plan sections of the walk with a tide timetable. Their reward is some spectacular scenery, seascapes and geology.

The one problem is the scarcity of accommodation in places on Mull.

'A back-up car could be the answer but campers will have no problems,' said Mr MacFarlane-Barrow.

The hope is that, just like the world-famous Camino de Santiago, Way of St James, across the north of Spain, St Conan's Way will eventually be waymarked.

And just as the Camino has its cockle shell emblem, St Conan's Way will have its own sign for pilgrims to hang from their packs.

'We were thinking perhaps a small Celtic cross,' said Mr MacFarlane-Barrow.

For more information, visit [www.craiglodge.org/walking-pilgrimage-route-to-iona/](http://www.craiglodge.org/walking-pilgrimage-route-to-iona/)



## Divine inspiration behind retreat

CALUM and his wife Mary Anne MacFarlane-Barrow ran their home as a guest house until they took a pilgrimage themselves in 1984 to Medjugorje, where there were reports of the Virgin Mary appearing to six teenagers. Their children had visited before them and inspired their parents to go.

Their experiences further inspired them to turn the guest house into a retreat centre, creating the Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer.

Through this beginning, the Craig Lodge Community has grown; some members live at Craig Lodge and commit to one year; permanent members live independently in their own homes near by.

The charity Mary's Meals has its roots from when sons Magnus and Fergus collected aid locally and delivered it to people suffering during the Balkans conflict; it has its headquarters in the grounds of Craig Lodge.

Craig Lodge is a designated Mass Centre for the parish of the Visitation in the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles.



Volunteers from Oban's Hope Kitchen braved the miserable weather on Saturday to take part in the charity's annual sleepout for the homeless. The sleepout raised £365.74, with every penny raised going directly to support the people who use the centre's service, whether they are homeless, sleeping rough, vulnerable or living in poverty. The women were kept going thanks to hot soup and support from the town.

## Councillor resigns to free up time

COUNCILLOR George Freeman has resigned from Argyll and Bute Council's administration.

Mr Freeman, Independent councillor for the Lomond North Ward, explained to members he was having 'great difficulty in attending', mainly due to clashes with other council meetings.

But he also voiced frustration at having 'very little input to the budget process', and receiving 'very little feedback from other members' on issues that he raised.

Operating outside the political group system, he said, would free him to raise his constituents' many concerns about the council's proposed cost-cutting budget.



## Eye to eye with John Wallace

### Sunlight ... Good and Bad

I have just returned from my French ski holiday. There were no clouds seen all week with brilliant sunshine from dawn to dusk. After my last two ski holidays being in constant snowfalls this was extremely pleasant. However, for one member of our party it was not so pleasant. He forgot to wear his ski goggles one morning and ended up in excruciating pain with snow blindness unable to ski for two days.

Snow blindness happens when intense ultraviolet light reflected from the snow penetrates the cornea and causes massive inflammation of the nerve endings present in the cornea. The human cornea is one of the most highly innervated parts of the body so is very sensitive to trauma of any sort. Luckily for my friend the pain went after 48 hours and he was able to ski for the remainder of his holiday.

While short term exposure to excessive UV can cause extreme pain to the eye or sunburn to our skin long term exposure can cause permanent damage to the eye. Cataracts, retinal damage and a variety of tumours of the eye have all been linked to prolonged exposure to sunlight and UV damage. In Argyll we are all at risk of UV damage to the eye. That might seem strange when we have endured constant rain since last summer. When we do see sunshine it is reflected off the sea and mountains. There seems to be a macho culture in Scotland it not cool to wear sunglasses. With us all living longer it is important we need to do everything to protect our vision. We only have one pair of eyes and they cannot be replaced. Ask your optometrist how you can protect your eyes from harmful UV light when you next have an eye examination.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP  
Wallace Optometrists  
The West Highland Orthokeratology Clinic  
11/12 Argyll Square, Oban  
Tel: 0845 230 3937 (EYES)  
[www.wallaceoptometrists.co.uk](http://www.wallaceoptometrists.co.uk)

## Food and drinks cash

NEW funding will allow food and drinks companies to upgrade facilities and is expected to draw increased investment.

The Scottish Government funding is for £10million and is expected to generate a further £52m in investment announced by food secretary Richard Lochhead MSP.

Mr Lochhead said: 'Scotland's iconic food and drink sector is already the toast of the Scottish economy, with phenomenal growth and turnover now exceeding £14 billion. This huge success has been fuelled by the global ap-

petite for our iconic products, such as haggis and whisky - and the unwavering support of the Scottish Government and all our agencies.'

'This £10million over three years is expected to generate additional investment of almost £52million into our food and drink sector and builds on the achievements of our last funding programme. It supported more than 170 projects between 2007 and 2013, with our £47million investment leveraging in £114million of private sector funding and safeguarding or creating about 8,500 jobs.'

## POLICE FILES with Sgt Alan Moore

### Appin man on drugs charge

AN APPIN man was arrested by police in Oban after he was alleged to be in possession of a dealer's quantity of cocaine, a Class A drug.

The 20-year-old was stopped in High Street, Oban shortly before 2am on February 5.

A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Proceeds of Crime seizure

MONEY was seized from a 32-year-old Dunbeg man under the Proceeds of Crime Act on February 5.

Some £1,800 in cash was taken from the man. A report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal.

### Fixed fine for rowdy behaviour

A MAN was arrested after behaving in a disorderly manner in the Glenruitten area of Oban in the early hours of February 6.

The 22-year-old man was placed in custody, before being issued with a fixed fine.

### Disturbance allegation

A 22-YEAR-OLD man was arrested on Albany Street in Oban for allegedly causing a disturbance at 10pm on February 2.

A report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal.

Sergeant Moore and his colleagues can be contacted on Twitter @obanpol, by calling 101 or at Oban Police Station.

# Could grass solve problem at Rest?

A SIMPLE solution has been found to resolve problems at the Rest and Be Thankful on the A83, claims a gardener from Islay.

Hydroseeded, 'as any gardener knows', holds water to resolve issues with large areas of water-logged soil and could be the solution for landslips at the problem hillside.

Douglas Tott, of Bruichladdich, says that he has seen a similar situation in his village because of development work at the world-famous distillery.

He explained: 'I may have a simple permanent solution to the current ongoing problems at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.'

'I live in Bruichladdich and thanks to the construction work for the new Bruichladdich Distillery warehouses half a mile behind our house, every time it rains topsoil is washed down the burn beside our house and into Lochindaal.'

'A fortnight past Thursday I went to see the site agent and he put measures in place to try to solve the problem.'

'However, it was unsuccessful. This afternoon I went back to see him and I took him to the burn to see the muddy water for himself.'

'The site agent told me that they would hydroseed the soil which would involve spraying grass seed in water on to the new exposed top soil which should stop the muddy water flowing down the burn into Lochindaal.'

He said he had obtained details of hydroseeding, which could be used to help prevent erosion and establish turf, to pass on to the authorities.

'I suggest that the hillside at the Rest and Be Thankful be



The recent bad weather has seen major disruptions on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful. 06\_c04restlights01

hydroseeded and hopefully by next winter there will be no more landslides closing the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful.'

Mr Tott said: 'If you are a gardener you will know that grassroots become very matted through a relatively short period of time.'

'If I can put forward a solution then surely the engineers at Transport Scotland can at least try hydroseeding which can be applied at any time of the year and at any height of the 'Arrocher Alps'.'

He continued: 'Civil servants and the SNP Government seem to be good at talking but hopeless at taking action.'

'In my opinion native woodland and shrub planting is a non-starter because trees and shrubs can grow up to a certain height in Scotland which is well below the summit of the mountains overlooking the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful.'

He suggested that Transport Scotland should look at the hydroseeding trial on the slopes

above the Rest and Be Thankful to see if it would be a successful solution.

He added: 'The problems at the Rest started after the very wet summer of 2004. There were similar problems at Glen Ogle in 2004 when several cars were swept away as a result of a landslide, which was featured on a BBC TV programme 999 Rescue.'

'To date, after extensive engineering works, there have been no further problems at the A85 in Glen Ogle.'

'As a result of today's heavy rain, part of Lochindaal opposite my house is now brown thanks to the topsoil from the new Bruichladdich warehouses construction site flowing down the burn into Lochindaal.'

He said it could take time to take effect but he would be keeping an eye on it.

Scottish roads minister Derek Mackay MSP said he would be looking at every possible solution to find an answer to the problems at the Rest and Be Thankful.

Community  
payback for  
assault teen

AN 18-YEAR-OLD Oban man who admitted assaulting a member of his family must complete a 12-month community pay back order.

Previously Kyle McNeil had appeared before Oban Sheriff Court when he admitted the assault to injury which happened at an Oban address on October 30 last year.

He also admitted threatening and abusive behaviour.

Last week McNeil was made subject to the order for 12 months and must complete 100 hours of unpaid work in the community during that time.

'You are going to have to take responsibility for yourself and your own actions,' said Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC.

# Yvonne's plea from India

Fiancée reveals Billy's despair – 'I feel like we've been left to rot... I just want to go home'

**LOUISE GLEN**  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A PRISONER claims he has been left to rot while the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) do nothing to help him and his colleagues.

In a heart-rending message to his fiancée, Billy Irving, from Connel, who was sentenced to five years in jail last month, says his recent incarceration in an Indian jail will allow the authorities to forget that he and his UK shipmates are there.

Mr Irving was jailed on firearms charges in southern India last month following a two-year legal battle with the Indian authorities.

He had been working on an American anti-piracy vessel when it strayed into Indian waters in

October 2013. Yvonne McHugh, who is in India, but has so far been unable to secure visiting rights to see Billy, is asking people to support her call to free the six ex-soldiers from the jail.

Ms McHugh, who is the mother of Billy's son William, said: 'A letter from the prison is our only form of communication with the men. With the letters being so few and far between, each one is precious to us, and brings with it a whole mixed bag of emotions.'

'On reading my most recent letter, I was filled with a mixed bag of emotions. Joy at seeing the handwriting I recognise so well. Sadness, that I can't reach out to give him a hug and tell him everything will be okay. Love, knowing that despite everything that is happening, we both have

each other. And pride, for how proud I am of not only Billy, but all the men who have been through nearly three years of emotional torture yet have still kept their dignity.'

'But one sentence [in the letter] had a bigger impact than all the others on me. Billy wrote: "I feel like we've been left to rot in here, I just want to come home".'

Ms McHugh continued: 'We need the UK government to do more. They say they can't intervene in another country's judicial process, but have done so in the past. They can't allow these brave innocent veterans to feel like they have been abandoned and not have their own country fighting their corner.'

'The men in prison know how much love, support and backing

they have from friends, family, and everyone who has signed this petition. They now need to know they are being supported by their country's leader.'

'Please sign the petition at Change.org to pass on your support, and urge the British Government to do more.'

'If you feel like you would like to donate to our fund you can do so at [www.justgiving.com/freesgo6](http://www.justgiving.com/freesgo6).'

Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara said: 'On Monday morning I have tabled a question to the FCO asking what discussion they have had and are having with their counterparts in India about the situation that Billy and the five other UK nationals currently find themselves in.'

'I have also asked the FCO what contact and discussions they have

had with the American owners [AdvanFort] of the ship, the HV Seaman Guard Ohio on which Billy and the others were serving. I know the appeals against conviction have gone in and I will continue to call for the FCO to use whatever influence they have.'

An FCO spokeswoman said: 'Our staff in India and the UK have been in close contact with all six men since their arrest and are continuing to support them and their families, making sure their welfare is protected in prison.'

'We recognise what a difficult time this is for those involved. The men have now submitted bail and appeal applications. We cannot interfere in another country's judicial process but continue to press for this case to be taken forward as quickly as possible.'

Oban man  
who made  
false claims  
to undergo  
counselling

AN OBAN man must carry out unpaid work and undergo counselling for his drink problem, Oban Sheriff court heard last week.

Luigi Aldo Lopez, 47, of flat 2-2, 14 Soroba Road, Oban, had previously admitted striking himself on the body with a knife and falsely claiming to police he had been assaulted and stabbed in the stomach.

He also admitted assaulting his partner by seizing her and pushing her from the property on September 8 last year.

Sentencing had been deferred for a report to be prepared into what alcohol treatment was available and suitable for Lopez, and his suitability to carry out unpaid work in the community.

Last week, after reading the report, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC placed Lopez on a community payback order; he must carry out 100 hours' unpaid work in the community within six months and be supervised for 12 months. He must also undergo counselling for his alcohol problems.

After an argument with his then girlfriend, now wife, Lopez had seized her and thrown her and her belongings from their flat then went into the kitchen, found a knife and stabbed himself.

Paramedics called to the scene were suspicious as they could see Lopez had other self-harm injuries.

When police interviewed Lopez, he admitted that he had made up the account of being stabbed and apologised.

## A night of magic and fun for young Harry Potter fans



THE WORLD of Hogwarts came to Oban last Friday, as a bookshop hosted a Harry Potter-themed night.

Waterstones revamped their store, recreating iconic themes from the Harry Potter franchise as part of the annual

Harry Potter Book Night. The first event took place in 2015 with more than 10,500 groups worldwide taking part.

Children dressed up as their favourite characters, solved riddles and hunted for treasure. Anna Mockfield, a mum from

Mull, said: 'I found out about it last week. I came all the way over as these things don't happen very often, so you've got to make the most of it.'

'It's just brilliant and it supports the local bookshop.'

Iain Dench, who works in Waterstones, said: 'All individual stores were encouraged to do it [organise a Harry Potter night]. It's good fun and a good laugh. You have to get into the spirit of it and get out what you put in. We have a lot of kids in having a great time.'

Sarah Hancock, above right, came up with the majority of the ideas. She said: 'I made everything. It took me about a week. I did it at home and Spot Light Theatre Group gave me a lot of props. I'm just glad the treasure hunt is a success.'

Above left: Iain Dench, left, and Ewan Soutar with Aoibheann Clark, 9, and Oliver Clark, 6. Centre: Eva, 9, and Oscar, 5, from Mull, have their wands at the ready. Sarah Hancock.



Scottish Dental Care Group is delighted to announce the opening of their new NHS dental clinic in Oban

Oban Dental Clinic is situated in a superb, purpose built state of the art facility adjoining the Lorn and Islands Hospital, less than half a mile from Oban town centre. The dental clinic is a fully compliant facility with lift access, three surgeries and two dedicated decontamination facilities offering a bespoke centre for the delivery of all aspects of NHS dentistry to the people of Oban and surrounding areas.



Scottish Dental Care Group is a clinically-led and patient focused dental provider, offering high quality dental care to our patients across Scotland. Your treatment is our number one priority and we offer a full range of NHS and private treatments to suit your needs and budget. Since "it's all about you" at SDC Group, we aim to be there when you need us, with an entirely open and transparent pricing policy on all of your treatments and an open and transparent complaints procedure should you ever feel that we've not quite met our own high standards.

Oban Dental Clinic offers the full range of NHS treatments for the whole family. Regular examinations will ensure that your mouth is as healthy as possible and required treatment can then be carried out when needed through the NHS. The full range of NHS treatments includes EXAMINATIONS, HYGIENIST TREATMENTS, GUM TREATMENTS, ORAL CANCER SCREEN, FILLINGS, INLAYS, CROWNS, BRIDGES, DENTURES, ROOT TREATMENTS and EXTRACTIONS.

There are some treatments which are not available on the NHS, for example TOOTH WHITENING, ELECTIVE COSMETIC DENTISTRY or SHORT TERM ORTHODONTICS. For such cases, these treatments can be carried out on a private basis.

In addition to the above, Oban Dental Clinic will also provide a DENTAL IMPLANT SERVICE, to provide a full range of DENTAL IMPLANT TREATMENT, BONE GRAFTING and MAINTENANCE with our visiting implant dentist.

Oban Dental Clinic will be led by DR ADRIAN SINANAN, who qualified from King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of London. Adrian has undertaken extensive postgraduate training in the eighteen years he has been in General Dental Practice both in the UK and abroad. The treatment of patients who are anxious about dental treatment is an area in which Adrian has great success and excellent patient feedback.

NHS places AVAILABLE NOW at Oban Dental Clinic. To express your interest in becoming a patient, please visit: [www.sdccgroup.co.uk/patientenquiry](http://www.sdccgroup.co.uk/patientenquiry) and complete the required detail. Following final clinical inspection and opening in the very near future, we will be in touch to formally register you as a patient.

We look forward to welcoming you and your family to this excellent facility.

Oban Dental Clinic | Oban Dental Access Centre | Lorn and Islands Hospital | Glengallan Road | Oban | PA34 4HH



E-Mail: [oban@sdccgroup.co.uk](mailto:oban@sdccgroup.co.uk)  
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## Muckairn

A MEETING of Muckairn Church Guild was held in the church on February 1.

Stella Huntingford led prayers and Marlene Stanners read from Philipians chapter 4. Guest speaker Fiona Marks then gave a talk on the guild project named 'Let's stick together'. This charitable group works with new parents to help them strengthen their relationship and to keep their family united. Group members are local volunteers trained by 'Care For the Family'.

They give short informal talks at various early years gatherings including ante-natal, post-natal and toddler groups. These services are free with the guild's support.

The sessions focus on three principles: to stop bad habits; to introduce good habits and to keep the father involved with the family. These have been found to make a happy relationship, strengthening family life. Bereavement support is also given.

Fiona Marks also accompanied the hymns: 'Jesus calls us here to meet him' and 'What a Friend we have in Jesus' on the piano. Ivy Smart expressed thanks and appreciation.

Muckairn Guild will hold a coffee morning in the village hall on Saturday May 7 to raise funds for 'Let's Stick Together'. A world day of prayer service will be held in Muckairn Church on Friday March 4 at 7.30pm; everyone is welcome.

## Taynuilt

TAYNUILT Primary School is hoping to resurrect its netball club, after successfully receiving a grant to cover the cost of painting the court lines.

The school is currently obtaining quotes for the work to be done on the netball court, which is situated in the playground.

The children are also very keen to have an after-school football club set up.

Anyone who would like to get involved, should make it known to the school.

## Western Isles

WITH the start of Mòd nan Eilean Siar 2016 just eight months away, the local organising committee is actively raising funds before the week-long event kicks-off on October 14.

A number of events are being held over the coming weeks and months, starting with a hamper raffle.

Tickets for the hamper are £1 per strip and will be sold in the foyer area of the Western Isles Hospital until Friday February 12.

The winner will receive a wonderful hamper which has been kindly donated by local businesses.

PEOPLE who live in the Western Isles are the happiest in Britain, according to a study published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The study asked 300,000 people across the UK how happy they were on a scale of one to 10 over a three-year period.

With one being the lowest and ten being the happiest, the Western Isles answered on average with 8.08.

Orkney was named the second happiest place in the UK, followed by the Highlands in third place.

## Kinlochleven

PUPILS at Kinlochleven primary hosted a Burns supper in the school hall for older members of the community.

After the haggis 'n' neeps supper, the pupils entertained their guests with a few Burns recitals followed with some energetic Scottish dancing by pupils and guests.



Katherine Goodwin, head of marketing and communications at Food Standards Scotland, presented Declan with a prize and a framed copy of his poster.

## Staffin

A CREATIVE Staffin Primary School pupil has had his poster design included in a national calendar promoting healthy eating and food safety.

Declan Malloy, a primary six pupil at the Skye school, was picked from more than 5,000 entries from 200 primary schools across Scotland.

The annual competition invites primary school children to design a poster about food allergies, food safety or healthy eating. One overall winner and 11 runners-up are selected, with the top 12 pictures featuring in a Food Standards Scotland calendar.

## Campbeltown

PROTESTERS packing a meeting forced councillors to recommend cuts to Campbeltown Nursery Centre (CNC) be removed from budget proposals.

Parents, carers and children led by Heather McPherson from Meadows Under Fives heckled councillors arriving for the recent Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area committee meeting in Campbeltown.

They pleaded for a reprieve from £22,000 proposed cuts. These would force CNC to only open in term times and threaten the viability of Meadows Under Fives to provide essential holiday care for children with additional support needs.

A motion, proposed by Councillor Donald Kelly, that the area committee agree to remove the cuts proposal relating to Campbeltown Nursery be removed was passed by five votes to three.

Chairman Rory Colville, seconded by Donnie MacMillan, proposed an amendment to the motion to alter it by asking where an alternative saving might come from.

## St Bride's Burns supper hits all the right notes

MORE than 90 people enjoyed music and haggis at St Bride's primary's Burns supper.

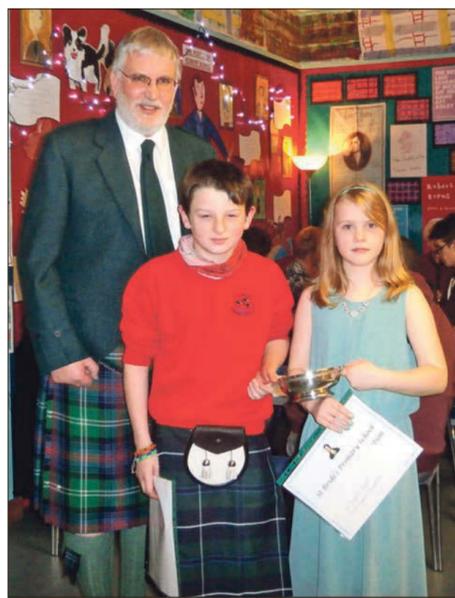
Jim Sutherland, rector of Lochaber High School, presented the winners of the St Bride's Primary Burns Quach competition with the quach and prizes donated by Lochaber Burns Club.

Competition was fierce with every North Ballachulish P4-7 pupil entering through poetry, song, instruments, projects, art and craft.

Magaith Ward, P6, shared joint first prize for her unaccompanied singing of Burns songs along with fellow pupil Morgan Lawrence, P7, who presented his project on the life of Burns and some intricate craft work.

Second prize went to Mya Clark, P7, on fiddle and Campbell Mackintosh, P6, won third prize for his poetry recitation.

A collection of £254.77 was raised in the course of the evening for the Syrian Children's Winter Emergency Fund.



Jim Sutherland, rector of Lochaber High School, presented joint first prize winners Magaith Ward, P6, and Morgan Lawrence, P7, with their awards.

## Outer Hebrides

ISLANDERS are being encouraged to have their say on the future development of the Outer Hebrides.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is consulting on a main issues report (MIR) as part of the preparation for a new local development plan (LDP), which will guide development and land use in the Outer Hebrides over the next 10-20 years.

The MIR, comment forms and associated documents (including a strategic environmental assessment - environmental report) are available to view online at [www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planningservice/devplanconsultations](http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planningservice/devplanconsultations). asp or during opening times at the following deposit locations: all main comhairle offices at Stornoway, Tarbert, Balivanich, Castlebay; libraries at Stornoway, Shawbost School, Sir E Scott School, Sgoil Lionacleit, Sgoil Dhal-abroig, Castlebay School; community locations at Spors Nis, Uig Community Shop, Taigh Chearsabhagh, and Claddach Kirkbost Centre.

Completed forms should be emailed to [localdevplan@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:localdevplan@cne-siar.gov.uk) or posted to Development Department, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2BW by 5pm on Friday February 26.

For further information contact the development plan and marine planning team on 01870 604990 or 01851 822690 or email [localdevplan@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:localdevplan@cne-siar.gov.uk)

## Mid Argyll

A MID Argyll teenager shared Christmas gifts with African orphans thanks to friends at home.

Rebecca Foster, of Achnamara, travelled to Blantyre, Malawi, in August 2015 to volunteer at Yamikani Orphanage as part of a placement with Coll Project Trust.

When her mum and dad, Alka and Martin, visited the 17-year-old shortly before Christmas they realised Rebecca was working with children who were without parents or family. On their return to Achnamara, Alka and Martin enlisted the help of Rebecca's friends to raise cash for gifts, so the orphans could celebrate the joy of Christmas.

Rebecca's friend Susan Doe said: 'During the day Rebecca teaches English to children aged between two and 16 years old. In the evening they eat meals with everyone alongside local women who also work at the orphanage.'

'Rebecca also teaches adults, aged 16-30, computer skills in the city of Blantyre.'

Rebecca has been a member of Daltote Equestrian Centre for 12 years, and has been riding horses for most of her life.

She called on the support of friend and fellow member Susan and the rest of the club to raise money to give the African youngsters a Christmas to remember.

A donation of £300 was sent to Malawi, which Rebecca then used to buy a special Christmas dinner and rent a water slide for one day.

Rebecca's friends at the horse-riding club also sent over their own presents for the children at the orphanage including t-shirts, underwear and toys and other gifts for them to open on the day.

## Islay

THE NUMBER of people using Islay airport soared in 2015, with passenger figures up by almost seven per cent.

Barra, Benbecula and Tiree also recorded an increase in the number of people using their services.

Scotland's regional airport group HIAL recorded its busiest ever year in 2015, gaining more than 45,000 additional passengers.

Latest figures show that 1,451,793 travellers passed through HIAL's 11 airports in 2015, an increase of 3.2 per cent on the previous year.

## MORVERN lines

THANKS to several heavy snow falls bringing traffic on Morvern's roads to a near stand-still and a spell of unwanted 'Stag's Revenge', I have not been as physically active as usual.

To while away the time I have been delving into a collection of papers given to me on loan by Lady Palmer, widow of the late General, Sir Patrick Palmer, KCVO, KBE (1933-1999), Colonel of the 1st Battalion, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces in Northern Europe and latterly Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle.

Sir Patrick's great grandparents were the Rev Norman Macleod (1783-1862) of Fiunary better known as 'Caraid nan Gaidheal' and Agnes, daughter of James Maxwell, the Duke of Argyll's chamberlain for Mull and Morvern from 1787 until 1820 - hence my interest.

Amongst these papers are a number of letters from Niall, 10th Duke of Argyll (1872-1949) about family and estate business and, typically, the severity of winter.

One, dated February 10 1940, penned from Inveraray Castle in the Duke's minuscule hand, shows weather conditions then to be just as bad as those of today.

It reads, 'I gather snow fell on Iona. I heard of a foot in Jura at sea level which is very rare. Here we never had but eight inches with 34 degrees of frost and often 32 degrees, but the 'Rest' [Rest and be Thankful] in Glen Croe, was wholly blocked by vast drifts, 15 feet deep, for a fortnight and was only opened last Monday. Kintyre was much worse than we were and the loss of sheep are very heavy on the hill farms, certainly over 5,000 dead. We, for days, had no letters or papers till they began coming through Glenfalloch and the Breadalbane country because the Highland Line was all blocked. Thirty-foot of snow at Glendouglas, south of



Lord Archibald Campbell.

Arrochar and five engines got buried in it.'

In the collection there are a number of other interesting documents ranging from early Macleod records to second sight, Benmore, a lodge on Mull owned by the Campbells and a programme detailing the ceremonial to be observed at the marriage of HRH the Princess Louise, fourth daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, to John Douglas, Marquis of Lorne, in St George's Chapel, Windsor on March 21, 1871.

John, who eventually became the 9th Duke of Argyll, had no children and the title passed to his nephew Niall. Niall, his father Lord Archibald, and a kinsman, John Frances Campbell of Islay, were renowned scholars and antiquarians and diligently gathered a huge amount of oral tradition and written material relating to Argyll and the ducal estates.

All of this is still housed and maintained at Inveraray by the present Duke and is one of the best family archives in Great Britain.

Duke Niall and his sister Lady Elspeth were interested in the supernatural, especially the strange warnings which occurred when a chief or

anyone closely related to them was dying.

These manifested themselves in the sound of harp music, said to have been played by a young Irish harper who was hanged at Inveraray

by Montrose's men when they came up the glen in pursuit of the great Marquess of Argyll in 1685, French horns, the appearance of a ghostly galley on Loch Fyne coming to take the soul of the deceased to Tiran Oge, and a flock of ravens which come down from the glens and hover above the castle.

True to tradition some of these occurred when Duke Niall died on August 20 1949.

His sister had predeceased him but a second cousin, Lady Meade Fetherstonhaugh, who was also interested in the occult, left a fascinating account which is in the Palmer collection. It is too long to include in full but here is a shortened version:

'.....I sat with Niall alone and thought of all the family gone ahead of us, I thought of them all in life, and all of their characters one by one. I thought strange dreaming thoughts of Mac Caelein Mor [the chief's ancient Gaelic title which means 'Colin the

Great']. Niall was drowsing deeply. About four I saw a change coming, and he was receding far away from us.'

'The castle is listening and still, in the Green Library all Niall's papers and books lie waiting for that intimate touch, there is an atmosphere so vibrant in these rooms. I don't remember when, but I found Deirdre's Farewell and played it on [Lady] Elspeth's gramophone; Niall and I played it so often. Various changes had come, and Niall's pulse had begun to fluctuate.'

'When Mr Page [Andrew Page, the Duke's chamberlain] came I asked him to get in touch immediately with the lawyers. It is most unlikely that Niall would wish to be buried anywhere but at Kilmun, but we all know so little. I asked him to make preliminary arrangements and find the keys of Kilmun.'

'I asked him to get in touch with the undertakers, with the Colonel of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, for pipers and bearers and to make provision for members of the family coming to the Castle and much else. [The reference is to the Campbell Mausoleum built in the 1790s adjoining Kilmun Parish Church on the Cowal Peninsula, to house the remains of the Dukes and Earls of Argyll who had been buried on the site since 1442. Lady Elspeth and her brother were so close that when he died it was maintained locally that he was secretly buried alongside her at nearby Kilmalieu and not in the family mausoleum at Kilmun].'

'After lunch we [Angus Campbell of Dunstaffnage, a close friend and one of the Duke's trustees] sat together in the Saloon for a little time, and we were aware of footsteps in the Green Library, and then the unmistakable sounds of someone turning over the papers on Niall's table. I think we both knew what it was and together we went into the Green Library, which was

empty, and a further search in the turret discovered no one.

'That afternoon, unknown to us, Mrs Campbell came to the Green Library and entirely cleared Niall's table, tidying the writing table, so that when we came later into the room we understood why the Harper had been heard.'

'Then in the midnight hour of Friday August, 19th-20th, we heard and saw strange and wonderful things. Angus was standing by the head of Niall's bed near the door, and I was kneeling beside Niall on the other side nearest the fire.'

'Suddenly there was a chorus of owls, there sounded many of them, not far from the windows, we looked at each other, and I asked Angus to look at his watch, and he said it was 12.45 (summer-time). Then came the music and we all heard it. We heard French Horns.'

'The first was a deep sound which rose to a higher sound, and clear as a bell the last Horn sounded, it seemed to me a clear triumphant music, but between the sounds of the French Horns, we heard harp strings swept in chords, beautiful, and unearthly music. Niall loved French Horns, and would play them to us, and often the music of the French Hunting Calls, he would regale us with them on the piano. This is the first time I had heard the Harper, and the sweep of the harp-strings I shall never forget. The owls made this curious hooting again, and then all was quiet.'

'The night was very still and warm. I drew up the wide window. There were no stars, there was no moonlight, there was no light on Loch Fyne or on the Cowal hills; all was obscured by shadow, but along the top of the Cowal hills lay a long shaped dark cloud and from behind the cloud came a curious light, which Angus said was like the light of the Borealis; but what was most strange was the top branches of the highest tree near the Aray Bridge which was faintly lighted up, and then I saw what I recognised as the Watch Lights, which moved in spherical shapes and were of different colours. I watched them intently, and there was no mistake. But it was such an unusual sight that I could

not believe what I saw, and I was glad to hear a motor approaching from Glen Shira to Inveraray as the headlights would probably dispel an allusion.'

'As the car continued on its way the headlights showed clearly as they passed along the road, but the Watch Lights continued to show light and movement up above and to illuminate the top of the tree. Angus came to the window and saw the lights, and then I asked Kate [Kate MacRobbie, wife of the castle gardener and the Duke's nurse] and later I asked the Canon [Canon Collett, Rector of the Church of All Saints, Inveraray] if they saw anything and they all saw the lights.'

'The Canon talked with a quiet conviction of the 'strangeness' of what we all saw. As it grew light that morning on Saturday August 20, there was a lovely serenade of robins singing in the garden below the window.'

'The nurse came on duty after six hours' sleep, and it was after four that I went to my room, but could not sleep, and at eight Kate came to tell me there was no change in Niall's condition. But when I got to Niall's room, I found Angus beside him saying that Niall had returned to the consciousness and knew them. It was wonderfully true; and when I came to his side his eyes had meaning in them, though he could not speak. It must have been about one o'clock that a change came, and Angus and I were with him when he died peacefully at 1.27.'

'I wrote a message asking the Dr to come and the information given to Mr Page and the Canon; and then I walked in the garden among Niall's favourite trees; the birds sang and showed themselves without fear. It was a day of great beauty, and presently the great bell of Niall's church tolled and the sound of it I shall never forget; or the sunshine.'

Iain Thornber  
[iain.thornber@btinternet.com](mailto:iain.thornber@btinternet.com)



Arms of the Duke of Argyll showing the galleys that appear when the chief and his family are dying.

# Fare price hike prompts call for bridge to replace ferry crossing

CAREN MCPATE  
fort@obantimes.co.uk

A BRIDGE should be built to replace the Corran ferry, residents and a councillor have said. The views were expressed following a decision to increase the fares for the crossing by two per cent. It's the fourth hike in less than two years as Highland council, operators of the ferry

connecting the Ardnamurchan peninsula to mainland Lochaber, try to balance the books. The council's capital programme contains an allowance of £8 million for a replacement boat in 2022/23. However, Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor Brian Murphy believes the money could be better spent. He said: 'There has been a long-held aspiration in Ardnamurchan for a bridge. I think it

deserves a more detailed and complete report. 'We need to look at the whole life cost of a bridge as against ferries and replacement ferries in the next 80 to 100 years. 'It cost £2.9m in 2001 and will be £8m in 2022/23, and I think it could be £10m. 'I think we need to look very seriously at a bridge. That to me is the way forward for the Corran ferry. Get rid of it and build a bridge.'

Pedestrians, cyclists and disabled drivers receive a free service on the ferry. The fare increase means a single journey will rise from £8 to £8.16 from April 1. A book of 30 tickets is also currently available for £71. Campaign group Free Crossing for Corran (FC Corran) has fought against fare rises and has appealed to the local authority to look at other ways to balance the books, resulting

in a meeting in May last year. Tony Boyd, chairman of FC Corran, said: 'We've not happy about the fare increase, but it didn't come as a massive shock. 'There needs to be a bridge. People have to make the crossing to go about their business. 'A fixed link would open up the area and make it far more enterprising. 'We need to keep the pressure on our local members as this is not going away.'

A report before Highland Council's community services committee said: 'Further work is required to assess the whole life costs of a new fixed crossing against a replacement ferry vessel and the council will work with HTRANS to secure funding for a more detailed study into future options. 'Further work on the introduction of more flexible fares and ticketing hardware will also be carried out.'

## TIMESLINE

### Break-in leaves house damaged

AN EMPTY house in Glen Etive has been broken into and damaged. The incident took place between 3pm on Friday February 5 and 10.30am the following morning. Meanwhile, a window of a house in Blar Mhor Road, Caol, was smashed at around 1.10am on Sunday February 7.

### Fence work closes single lane of A82

WORK to erect a 600m fence along the A82 trunk road at Primrose Bay, a mile north of Alt Sigh, begins on Monday February 15 until late March. A single lane will be closed Monday to Friday, with traffic lights removed at the end of each working day. Forest Enterprise Scotland's A82 Project apologises for this and further disruption, when it begins felling mature trees on the hillside above the fence later this year.

### Ladders snatched from Free Church

THIEVES stole a set of extending aluminium ladders from the Free Church in Kilmallie Road, Caol. The theft took place between 9pm on February 3 and 8am the following day. Anyone with information should contact police on 101.

### New restaurant at Inverloch Castle

TOP CHEFS Albert Roux, his son Michel Roux Junior and Michel's daughter Emily are to open a new restaurant at Inverloch Castle near Fort William later this month.

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## Lochaber job fears in meeting spotlight

THE SCOTTISH Government called a meeting in Lochaber on Tuesday following news of potential job cuts in the area. Minister for business, energy and tourism Fergus Ewing MSP met with the Highland Council leader, chief executive, senior officers, local councillors and representatives of the local business community and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Rio Tinto Alcan, which employs 170 people, is carrying out a review of its assets in Lochaber and Marine Harvest Scotland, which has plants in Fort William and Mallaig, is cutting 100 jobs. Council leader Margaret Davidson said: 'The meeting was positive, with good engagement across partners and the community.' Director of development and infrastructure Stuart Black added: 'Highland Council is keen to hear local concerns regarding employment and to further support the Lochaber economy.'



The groups were presented with certificates to thank them for their hard work on Fort William's war memorial.

## Fort groups recognised for war memorial work

THE HARD work of community groups to prepare the Fort William war memorial for the Legion Scotland Best Kept War Memorial competition 2015 has been recognised.

The town's memorial was judged as being the best in its category within the Highlands and Islands region. To mark the achievement of Highland Council's Fort William community works

team, Fort William Town Team and the local branch of Legion Scotland, a ceremony was held this week. Certificates were presented by Danny Munro, president of the local branch, to each of the groups involved.

Prior to the presentation, Kevin Lane, branch chairman said: 'We were fortunate to have the full backing of the council in championing the preparation of the memorial. The community works team

provided the manpower and the expertise to prepare the fabric of the memorial and Fort William Town Team played a pivotal role in completely remodelling the flower bed adjacent to it.'

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Agenda: THIS WEEK Mike MacKenzie Macaulay Cup match report and photos from the 2015 final  
Nialla's a class act say pupils as school staff leave them out in the cold  
TIMESLINE Annual review on the scale of 100

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**HURRY while stocks LAST**

# Award of Arctic Star marks the brave service of Lewis captain

LOUISE GLEN

lglen@obantimes.co.uk

THE SERVICE of a brave Lewis man, who led a Russian Convoy during World War II, has finally been marked with the award of the prestigious Arctic Star Medal.

The late Captain Murdo Macleod, originally from Barvas, was commodore of a convoy of 39 ships (PO18) which left Loch Ewe in February 1942.

As captain of the Empire Snow, he was involved in the voyage to Russia which, despite relentless attack, successfully brought supplies to the Allies.

His proud family had tried in vain to secure the medal posthumously for Captain Macleod, who was lost at sea in 1944, but were refused as no records were identified by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Na h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus MacNeil wrote to the MoD last year and was very pleased to receive a letter confirming Captain Macleod's eligibility and apologising for previously being unable to locate the records.

Mr MacNeil said: 'It was a great honour to help to secure this medal for the Macleod family which marks the service of Captain Murdo Macleod on the Arctic Convoys in 1942, for which he also received the posthumous award of Distinguished Service Cross.

'He was a dedicated and courageous mariner who had a long distinguished career in the Merchant Navy. The marking of his service in the Arctic Convoys by the award of this medal means a lot to his family and I was delighted to be able to assist them.'

Margaret Macleod from Carloway, who is Captain Macleod's niece, received the medal on his behalf. She said: 'I remember my Uncle Murdo very well and words cannot express how proud I am about receiving this award on his behalf.'

Fiona Whiteford, Captain Macleod's grand-niece, who

contacted Mr MacNeil about the family's quest to receive the award said: 'We are delighted to receive this medal on behalf of my great uncle Murdo, who was a very brave man and we would like to thank Angus and his staff for all their help with this matter.'

John Macleod, his grand-nephew said: 'My interest in Captain MacLeod was sparked by a chance meeting with George Milne, chairman of the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum Project in Wester Ross.

'Captain MacLeod played a major role in the passage of PO18 from Loch Ewe to Archangel in Russia. His ship was at the head of the third column of the convoy and not only did he and his crew have to repel repeated attacks from German forces but also horrendous weather conditions.'

He added: 'In a letter to his niece, Catherine, dated October 11 1943, he wrote of his pride at the award of the Distinguished Service Cross for his part in the convoy. He regarded Winston Churchill as "the greatest of all men" but with typical modesty said that everyone concerned with PO18 deserved a medal.

'Although he went down with his ship the SS Fort Buckingham on January 20 1944 he is still remembered fondly by Deck Officer Apprentice Norman Gibson. He was one of the 46 crew members who survived 16 days on a life raft and now aged 90 has become a family friend.

'Although we regret that Captain MacLeod is not acknowledged at the Stornoway War Memorial, he is remembered at Tower Hill in London. We are also very pleased that the Barvas and Brue War Memorial Committee will commemorate his remarkable achievements by inscribing his name on their war memorial alongside other WWI and WWII casualties.'

The late Captain Murdo Macleod, right, who was originally from Barvas.



## Special whiskies outperform gold in stellar year

THE MARKET for rare whisky in 2015 significantly outperformed many other well-established asset classes, including wine and gold, according to figures published today by whisky analyst, broker and investment experts Rare Whisky 101.

In a record year for the rare whisky market, the leading index for Scotch whisky, the Rare Whisky Apex 1000 Index closed 2015 up 14 per cent.

The total value of rare whisky bottles sold at auction in the UK in 2015 hit record levels of £9.56million, exceeding 2014 (£7.64m) by 25 per cent.

Over 12 months, 43,458 bottles of single malt Scotch whisky were sold in the UK on the open market, an increase of 9,460 bottles and a 28 per cent increase on 2014. As an indication of the speed with which this new asset class has emerged, 2009 saw just 4,072 bottles sold throughout the entire year.

For more information or to download the full report visit: [http://www.rarewhisky101.com/insight-and-intelligence/rare\\_whisky\\_reviews.html](http://www.rarewhisky101.com/insight-and-intelligence/rare_whisky_reviews.html)

## Bridge repaired, road reopened

ARGYLL and Bute Council's bridge squad has repaired and reopened Crossaig Bridge on the B842 in Kintyre.

The road was closed on January 28 after it was discovered the wall protecting the bridge base from water ingress had been washed away, making it unstable. After five cubic metres of concrete were poured in and the protective walls rebuilt, the bridge was reopened on February 4.

Councillor Ellen Morton, policy leader for roads, said: 'The team did well to have the bridge reinstated and the road reopened within a week. We thank people for their patience.'

## Obituary – Henry T Powell BSc, MSc

2nd May 1925 – 2nd January 2016

HENRY POWELL (known as Harry), a seaweed scientist, community stalwart and campaigner, was born and brought up in Abergavenny, Wales and studied at The University of Wales, Aberystwyth during the Second World War.

In 1946 he was awarded a first-class Honours degree in Botany and worked for two years at the University of Bangor before joining the Scottish Marine Biological Association (SMBA) in Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, in the Firth of Clyde in 1948, an institution where he was to remain for the rest of his career. SMBA would later become known as the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS).

It was at Millport that he met his future wife Grace, who was there as an undergraduate studying on a field course. They married in 1956 and later their two children, Anne and David, were born there.

During Harry's early career he worked on barnacles, but his main interest was in seaweeds and, in particular, their ecology on rocky shores.

He carried out seaweed surveys all around the Scottish coast, publishing several significant papers, including two in the highly prestigious journal Nature, and conducted important studies on Fucus species (wracks). He was the founding secretary of the British Phycological Society in 1952 and was also a founder member of the Institute of Biology.

In 1967 the SMBA relocated to Oban and Harry was a member of the small group who came to oversee the building of the laboratory at Dunstaffnage.

His family moved to their new home in Connel that year, but Harry also negotiated with the council housing department to allocate a number of new homes in Dunbeg to ease the resettlement of the remaining staff from Millport.

Harry, Grace, Anne and David bought a house in Grosvenor Crescent, Connel. They named it 'Cumbrae' to remind them of the very happy days they had spent in Millport.

Harry soon became heavily involved in village life. He was



Harry Powell, Oban's scientist and community activist.

a founder member of Connel Community Council and enthusiastically supported the work of the Association of Community Councils in Argyll and Bute.

During that period he was also a union rep, chairman of the SMBA IPCS union branch, and was active in the SMBA social club and management of the canteen.

An important piece of work led by Harry in the late 1970s was the 'Survey of the Littoral Zone of the Coast of Great Britain' for the Nature Conservancy Council, involving a large team of scientists carrying out fieldwork.

Following retirement in 1989 Harry was a driving force as chairman of the Lorn branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust Support Group for many years and was chairman of Connel Community Council.

Harry's scientific training and career had made him an extremely precise, inquisitive, and determined individual, a master of detail in everything he did.

Harry's meticulous hand written minutes and voluminous correspondence from his years as secretary of Connel Community Council remain a vital library of information recording almost every aspect of the village for the last 30 years.

It is fair to say that without Harry Powell there probably would be no modern village hall in Connel. Harry worked tirelessly to secure funding to build a first-class venue for a wide variety of users.

He was rightly proud of what had been achieved and he continued to serve on the hall committee and to take a real interest in its affairs right up until his death.

Harry was also a hard working committee member of the local branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The annual fundraising day at Achnacloch, near Connel, was a great favourite and was always financially very successful for the trust. His other lifelong interest was in the Liberal party, where he was a committed volunteer and campaigner.

Aside from his community work, his main love was for his family: his late wife Grace, his children, Anne and David, and his grand-children, Jenny, James and Maxwell.

On his death in Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, at the age of 90, he left behind a wonderful legacy to his family, to marine biology and to the village he loved.

A memorial service will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, February 18 in St Oran's Church, Connel.

## Tribute – Simon Fraser: lawyer and land reformer

22nd April 1955 – 26th January 2016

Following the death last week of Simon Fraser, Jim Hunter reflects on this Lewis lawyer's huge contribution to the cause of community ownership.

FRIDAY March 15, 2002 was cold and damp in Gigha, with a gusty wind shoving squalls of icy rain across the island. Nothing of this, however, dulled the enthusiasm of islanders and others who, that day, witnessed a ceremony not seen in Scotland for several centuries – one intended to give symbolic significance to the moment when ownership of Gigha was acquired, not by another of the absentee landlords who had so long presided over island affairs, but by islanders themselves.

What that ceremony consisted of was explained a year later by its restorer, Simon Fraser, when, on a hillside above Loch Seaforth, another crowd braved similarly rough weather to be on hand when the 55,000-acre North Harris Estate was formally taken over by its residents. 'From time immemorial,' Simon said on that occasion, 'it was the custom and the law of Scotland that, when a new owner was given possession of land...stone and earth of that land would be handed to the new owner. This ceremony was known as giving sasine. Through time...the ceremony of sasine was abolished. However, it was revived in Gigha last year and we are now going to bring it back to the Western Isles.'

Turning to North Harris's David Cameron, as he had done to Gigha's Willie McSparran 12 months earlier, Simon gave David a piece of rock, a lump of turf. 'I hereby deliver into your hands,' he said, 'stone and earth of this land, and in so doing give unto the North Harris Trust true and lawful sasine of these whole lands of North Harris, from the low tide of the sea to the highest mountain tops, *ab caelo usque ad centrum*, to be held on behalf of the people of North Harris in all time coming.'

In those words, and in the actions accompanying them, there is much of Simon Fraser. There is a profound sense of history. There is recognition of



Simon Fraser.

the epoch-making importance of the sort of community ownership Simon did so much to bring about in North Harris, Gigha and many more places. There is reverence for the forms of Scots Law and an appreciation of the way that law – so often an instrument of oppression and exploitation – can be a means of securing justice, liberation, progress.

As was recognised across the Highlands and islands, Simon Fraser's death last week deprived the cause of land reform, and the cause of community ownership in particular, of one of its greatest champions. That helps account for the strength of feeling evident in tributes posted on land trust websites and on social media more generally. But to speak with people in any one of the widely separated localities affected by Simon's passing is at once to become aware that folk feel they have lost more than a valued adviser and confidant. They have lost a warmly regarded friend.

Recalling a man to whom he became very close, former Highland Council leader Michael Foxley describes Simon as a family man who, with his wife Ann, raised four children, Alasdair, Simon, Cara and Anna, of whom their father, Michael says, was 'immensely proud'. Michael talks too of times spent with Simon at his home at Callanish in Lewis and at Molinginis in North Harris – a place that, as everybody who knew him knows, Simon spoke of with the deepest of affection.

'Simon rebuilt a ruined croft

house at Molinginis,' Michael says. 'There he took his children, his nephews, nieces and friends, including me and my sons. It's a magical spot. No phones, no emails – just the hissing of a Tilley lamp and the crackling of a wood-burning stove. A place to walk, fish, catch lobsters – and put the world to rights while looking out over the Shiant's.'

Like John Watt who, when heading HIE's Community Land Unit, worked closely with Simon Fraser in Gigha and elsewhere, Michael Foxley insists on Simon's key contribution to making community ownership the now widespread reality it has become. 'No matter how much support community ownership had on the ground,' Michael says, 'no matter how much backing we got from politicians, the public, the media, we'd never have succeeded without someone who was always on top of the legalities and never less than two moves ahead of the other side in any negotiation. That someone was Simon Fraser.'

Simon's involvement with community ownership began in 1989 when the then Conservative government offered to transfer ownership of its crofting estates on Skye and Raasay to crofting communities on those estates. Simon, already a well-established lawyer with Anderson MacArthur, Stornoway, was a member of the team commissioned by the Scottish Crofters Union (SCU) and the Highlands and Islands Development Board to look into possibilities arising from the government offer – his remit being to devise the means by which crofters might best manage the land they lived on.

In the event, the government's Raasay and Skye tenants rejected community ownership, and the documentation setting out how such ownership might take shape was accordingly filed away in Simon's Stornoway office. But it was brought out again in June 1992 when Simon got a call from Achmelvich crofter Bill Ritchie. At a meeting called by the SCU's Assynt branch, Ritchie explained, it had been agreed that crofters on the North Lochinver Estate, then just advertised for sale by

its Swedish owners, should try to buy the property. Would Simon act for them? Yes, he would.

There followed a six-month saga during which the newly formed Assynt Crofters Trust confronted obstacle after obstacle while, amid nationwide publicity, doing something crofters had never done before – bidding, in the open market, for the sort of estate where faraway landlord had previously succeeded faraway landlord without it occurring to anyone that affected residents should have any say in who owned the land around them.

'Simon was critical to what we were about,' Bill Ritchie recalls. 'Night after night he folded that big frame of his into a bunk bed made for one of our boys. Day after day he got on quietly, confidently, reassuringly with what were immensely complex and difficult negotiations. What I remember most is the sheer presence of the man. Soft-spoken, gentle in his manner. But never wavering in his belief that it could be done or in his commitment to making it happen.'

From the eventual victory of the Assynt Crofters Trust, there followed the continuing series of other successes that have taken more than 500,000 acres into community ownership.

Of these, perhaps, none meant more to Simon Fraser than what was accomplished in Eigg, where the island's absentee proprietors had long been at loggerheads with islanders and where Simon – whose role in winning the community ownership secured in 1997 was every bit as crucial as in Assynt – will always be remembered with great fondness by Maggie Fyffe and her Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust colleagues.

'Simon had so much leadership ability,' says John Hutchison, the Eigg Trust's recently retired chairman. 'He made everyone involved feel we were engaged in something truly transformational. I remember him saying on the day Eigg's ownership passed to its people: "The purchase of this island by the community is one in the eye for everything mean-spirited or self-serving".'



Councillor Thomas MacLennan, centre, looks at the new plans for Tweeddale with principal housing officer Morag Cameron, Robertson project manager Malcolm Sinclair, senior architectural technician Iain Robertson, and Robertson's plant operator Tony Pinder. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## Work starts on new £2.9m Fort housing development

A £2.9 MILLION development is under way to build much-needed new homes in Fort William.

The Tweeddale site in the town centre has lain empty for some time and will be transformed into 22 flats for rent by Highland Council by January next year.

It's one of several housing projects planned for the town and brings the amount invested in Fort William over the last five years to £40m.

Leader of the Lochaber Committee Councillor Thomas MacLennan said: 'These are tough financial times for local government, but when you see the list of projects, it highlights just how much is being invested in our area.'

'This important investment comes at what is a most difficult time for the region with a fragile job market and economic uncertainty for many.'

He added: 'We also recog-

nise that the town pier needs investment and we need to create opportunities to attract more marine tourism which will help drive Fort William forward.'

Further housing developments include:

- 21 new build flats for Lochaber Housing Association at Upper Achintore in a £2.5m project due to start next month.

- £1.2m to build 10 new houses for rent by Lochaber Housing Association at Lochyside, to be completed in May this year.

- The demolition of the existing buildings at the former Whisky Shop on High Street site to provide 10 flats for council rent. The work, which is yet to be tendered for, is due to start in August 2016.

This year will also see work on the new council offices and civic hub at the former Fort William Secondary School.

# Skye's Ally K on the run in marathon charity challenge

CAREN MCPATE  
fort@obantimes.co.uk

A KIND-HEARTED dad is gearing up to run 120 miles in just under 35 hours to raise money and awareness for a charity close to his heart.

Alistair Macpherson will attempt to run non-stop all the way from his home town of Portree on the Isle of Skye to the capital of the Highlands in Inverness.

Alistair (know locally as Ally K) is no stranger to long distance endurance events after running around Skye in 2014 and raised an impressive £35,000 for Cancer Research UK.

For his latest challenge, the 37-year-old is running to raise cash for Maggie's Highlands, the charity that provides free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer and their family and friends from across the Highlands and islands.

Alistair has lost family members to cancer and wants to support charities fighting against the disease.

He said: 'After the success of Run Skye I wanted to get the old team back together. I was approached by Maggie's Highlands to help it to raise funds and awareness of the centre in Inverness and I said yes pretty much straight away.'

Alistair, who is a second steward on ferry company



Alistair in training for the 120-mile run.

CalMac's MV Finlaggan, isn't getting complacent though, despite having already conquered 120 miles worth of running.

He added: 'This is a completely new challenge and unlike Run Skye I will have to run through two evenings which I have never done before. This adds an extra mental challenge but I am confident I can draw strength from the fact I have a superb support team with me with a lot of experience.'

The run starts at midnight in Portree square on Wednesday April 6. Alistair's route will take him over the steep climb on the back road into Inverness through to Garve where he will eventually run through Muir of Ord and Dingwall before finishing at Maggie's Highlands at 9am on Friday 8.

Asked how he thought the event would go Alistair responded: 'Anything can happen in running, especially when you are on your feet for so long. That's part of the challenge and what makes it such a great adventure. I have the right people with me and I will be drawing on my own experience to ensure I put in a good performance.'

To follow Alistair's progress, visit [www.skyetomaggies.com](http://www.skyetomaggies.com) or [www.facebook.com/skyetomaggies](http://www.facebook.com/skyetomaggies). Donations can be made via the event Justgiving page at [www.justgiving.com/skyetomaggies](http://www.justgiving.com/skyetomaggies).

## TIMESLINE

### Bike owner urged to come forward

A MAN who found a mountain bike in hedges in a Fort William park wants to reunite it with its owner.

Mark McGugan came across the bike in September last year in the park, near Alma Road, and reported it to the police.

However, no-one has come forward to claim it. Contact Mark on 07949 233137.

### Fight for towing vessel continues

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar is to continue the case, along with colleagues in neighbouring councils, for an Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV) to be based in west coast waters.

After the eighth storm of the season, Henry, battered Scotland recently, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency invited stakeholders to a meeting yesterday (Wednesday) to discuss the future of ETV provision in the UK.

### Climbers' lucky escape from peak

CLIMBERS had a lucky escape after they triggered an avalanche on Staghorn, Crag Meagaidh, Lochaber.

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team members were called to the scene where one of the men was swept 300 metres over crags last Saturday afternoon. He was airlifted and taken to Belford Hospital in Fort William.

The lead climber managed to climb down to the foot of the route and was picked up by team members and walked out.

### Relax and enjoy a candlelit swim

ANYONE looking for something different and relaxing to do this Valentine's Day can enjoy an evening candlelit swim.

Mallaig and District Swimming Pool is holding the swim on Sunday between 5.30pm-7.30pm.

Anyone wanting to attend must be aged over 14. Contact the centre on 01687 462 229.

### Relatives urged to consider staff

PEOPLE with relatives in Raigmor Hospital, Inverness, are being asked to consider staff when calling wards enquiring after patients.

Staff are asking that only one relative calls in. That person can then pass on any information to the wider family.

## Parking enforcement switch over

THE HIGHLAND Council is preparing for the implementation of a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Scheme this year.

Remedial works have started, including sign and road markings being replaced across the council area. The taking over of parking enforcement by the council follows the withdrawal of the traffic warden service by Police Scotland.

The implementation of DPE will aid traffic management of Inverness and towns across the Highlands, reducing congestion and emissions and allowing Highland Council to target enforcement.

A new enforcement team will include a minimum of 11 parking enforcement officers and two parking attendants, providing a seven-day service.



## Pupils mark Holocaust Day with assembly

A special open assembly to mark Holocaust Day was held by pupils of Lochside Primary School.

The day recognises the events of World War Two and current atrocities still taking place. In a programme of stories, poems and songs and prayers researched by the children, the whole school, along with friends and family, recognised the effects of these events on people across the world and remembered them with a minute's silence.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## Residents and group representatives have their say on future Claggan improvements

RESIDENTS and groups came together to have their say on improvements and initiatives for Claggan.

The Claggan Matters community consultation brought together Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL), The Greenfingers Community Garden, Lochaber Environmental Group, Highland Communities

Credit Union and the Highland Council tenant participation officer. Improvements to the play park and community garden and the possibility of starting a tenants' association were among some of the projects discussed. Helen MacGillivray, from VAL's community action team, said: 'The consultation enables closer relationships

between the projects and Claggan. The feedback we got was that people are very enthusiastic and there is a lot of useful information. Each project has different things to go away and work with.'

Anyone who would still like to have a say can go to the VAL office, An Drochaid, Claggan, or call 01397 706044.



Residents are working together to improve Claggan. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

## Tests confirm shells are 8,000 years old

NUTS found during an archaeological dig on Skye were from the hunter-gatherer period more than 8,000 years ago, tests have confirmed.

The hazelnut shells were discovered during the five-day excavation by Staffin Bay in September 2015 when University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) archaeologists investigated a suspected Mesolithic structure, in collaboration with the Staffin Community Trust (SCT).

Radiocarbon dates have now confirmed the excavated lithics date to the mesolithic period, towards the latter half of the 7th millennium BC.

Two fragments of charred hazelnut shell both returned dates of circa 6800-6600 BC (calibrated). The hazelnuts were recovered from soil samples from the lower part of the sequence at the site, suggesting human activity may have occurred over a long period of time.

The north Skye archaeological excavation has yielded a fragment of worked bone, and several thousand flints which could provide a fuller picture of Staffin's hunter-gatherer period.

Dan Lee, archaeology institute UHI, lifelong learning and outreach archaeologist, said: 'We are really pleased to have such convincing mesolithic dates from the site. This hints at the huge potential for additional excavations in the area and presents a great opportunity to understand life in the Staffin area during this period.'

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[www.facebook.com/obantimes](http://www.facebook.com/obantimes)

## Police urge abuse victims to come forward

POLICE are encouraging victims of sexual crimes to report the incidents.

Last week a Lochaber man was sentenced to three years at Fort William Sheriff Court for sexual offences. Detective Inspector Richard Baird, senior investigating officer, said: 'We welcome the conviction and sentence of [this man] who took

advantage of young girls for his own pleasure. He has shown no regard or remorse for his actions and the impact they had on the victims. I want to pay tribute to the victims who assisted us with our enquiry, resulting in [him] being apprehended and brought to justice.'

He added: 'We continue to encourage victims

of sexual crimes to come forward and report to us and to have the confidence that we will take it seriously and thoroughly investigate.

'Police Scotland is committed to identifying people within our communities who prey on young people and we will use all tools and resources available to protect them and prevent abuse.'

Scottish Opera

# OPERA HIGHLIGHTS

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**Tue 23 Feb, 7.30pm**  
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# Viewpoint

## The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 8216

A happy, carefree childhood is what most parents want for their children. But a number of youngsters in Argyll and Bute are having to grow up too fast because they are the primary carers for a family member who may have a physical illness, disability, a mental health condition or have an alcohol or drug misuse problem.

Up until now these children have been supported by the independently-run Argyll Carer Centres, a net-

work of services that support children as young as five years old. But with the council facing a serious cash crisis, those services are at risk of having their funding pulled.

We know the council is having to make some very difficult choices, but when it comes to our children, and particularly those who are as vulnerable as these youngsters are, we would implore our councillors to find a way to protect them and these support groups.



## Days gone by - staff sale of work, Dalintart Hospital, Oban, 1980s

This week's flashback photograph was submitted by John Hay of Taynuilt and features staff of Oban's Dalintart Hospital on a sale of work day in the 1980s. Digital versions of flashback photos for *The Oban Times* can be sent to 'editor@obantimes.co.uk' or prints sent to the editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Anyone who wishes a print returned should include a stamped-addressed envelope.

### Glasgow Letter

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**  
robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

## Special gathering to mark 150 years of Mull and Iona Association

IT WILL be a historic night in the National Piping Centre on McPhater Street this Friday February 12 as the Mull and Iona celebrates its 150th anniversary.

The association has pulled out all the stops with a fantastic line up to mark this special gathering.

The Mull and Iona Pipers and Mull Gaelic Choir will both perform. Kirsty Renton will give a few songs, as will Mòd Gold Medallist Duncan Macdonald.

A particular highlight of the evening, and something I am looking forward to, will be the performance, for one night and one night only, of the star-studded Mull and Iona Ceilidh Band - featuring Anda Campbell, Duncan Mackechnie, Ross Wilson, John Graham and Charlie Kirkpatrick.

The concert will be chaired by Sir Lachlan Maclean of Duart and Morvern, Bart, Honorary President of the Association.

After the concert, dance music will be provided by Gunna Sound. Tickets for this unmissable event, which starts at 7.30pm, are available on the door or from David Kirkpatrick, Iona, Janet Campbell, Tobermory or Charlie Kirkpatrick, Glasgow.

Mull and Iona gatherings are always extremely enjoyable evenings and it looks like the association is going to celebrate its 150th anniversary in style.



The Mull and Iona Association will celebrate its 150th anniversary this Friday.

## Gaelic speaking Moderator to preach in Glasgow

ST COLUMBA Gaelic Church, 300 St Vincent Street, will welcome the Moderator of the Church of Scotland to the pulpit on Sunday February 14 to preach during a joint Gaelic and English service at 11.30am.

The Right Reverend Dr Angus Morrison is the first Gaelic-speaking moderator in 40 years so it is very appropriate he should preach at St Columba during his year as moderator.

The church hopes to be joined by the Gaelic choirs and pupils from the Glasgow Gaelic School, as well as the whole Highland population of Glasgow and beyond - whether Gaelic

speakers or not. The Gaelic church, which was established in 1770, has a wonderful history and the visit of the moderator is going to be a special part of that.

### What's on

**Friday February 12:** 150th annual Mull and Iona Gathering, 7.30pm, National Piping Centre, 30-34 McPhater Street.

**Sunday February 14:** The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Right Reverend Dr Angus Morrison, preaching during a joint Gaelic and English service, 11.30am.

**Saturday February 20:** Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Marag Supper, Partick Burgh Hall.

**Friday February 26:** Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance, Crawford Hall.

**Friday February 26:** Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir annual concert, Western Hall, Bearsden, 7.30pm.

**Saturday February 27:** Glasgow Skye Association's Buntata 's Sgadan evening.

**Friday March 4:** Glasgow Islay Association annual gathering concert, 7.30pm, and dance, 10.30pm, in Glasgow University Union.

### Pub scene

**Islay Inn:** Friday February 12: The Keelies. Saturday February 13: The Raggals. Wednesday February 17: quiz night.

**Park Bar:** Friday February 12: Nicky McMichan and his band. **Saturday February 13:** Robert Robertson. **Sunday February 14:** Nicky McMichan and his band.

## Everyone will benefit from healthy seas

Sir, I read with disappointment the erroneous interpretation on your letters page of how proposed marine protected areas (MPAs) will affect the fishing industry.

The seas around Scotland belong to everyone, not just one small sector. What is being proposed is that three per cent of the total inshore waters of Scotland should be protected from the most damaging fishing activities - scallop dredging and trawling - in order that the seabed and fish stocks can recover.

This, of course, leaves 97 per cent of waters available for boats which by their nature are large seagoing vessels which fish widely, not just in small local areas.

Protecting areas brings marine environments damaged by years of exploitation back to life and this recovery is beneficial to fishermen as well as to wildlife tourism.

This has been proved around the world with New Zealand leading the way.

We live next to the Firth of Lorne where there has been no scallop dredging for eight years.

The recovery underwater is remarkable with the area now a nursery for small fish and scallops. Wildlife tourism is thriving with eight boats taking wildlife watchers and divers out to enjoy the marine environment.

All these people bring business to accommodation providers, restaurants and pubs.

Not all fishing will be banned from MPAs, sustainable fishing such as scallop diving and creeling will continue which, of course, brings jobs and prosperity to local communities.

Everyone in Scotland is a stakeholder in our seas.

In the initial consultation on MPAs, the vast majority of 5,000 respondents asked for there to be more protection for the marine environment. In the long term, everyone will benefit from healthy seas.

Jean Ainsley, Seil.

## Comments at odds with Labour stance

Sir, I refer to the article about Labour MSP Rhoda Grant and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). 'MSP tells minister 'people are also endangered', which appeared in *The Oban Times* of Thursday January 28.

While Ms Grant's comments about the impact of some of the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are

accurate and based on widespread concerns among west coast fishermen which I also share, I regret to say Ms Grant's stance appears to be completely at odds with Scottish Labour's official position on this matter, as demonstrated by the actions of her two MSP colleagues Sarah Boyack and Claudia Beamish in the Scottish Parliament this week.

Ms Grant is quoted as saying the MPAs 'will become a reality'.

The fact is that at the Rural Affairs Committee meeting in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday January 27, my party's fisheries spokesman, Jamie McGrigor MSP, who has worked closely with west coast fishermen on this subject for many, many months, moved motions to annul the MPAs.

If the motions had been successful, it would have ensured the Scottish Government had to rethink its current MPA plans.

The two aforementioned Labour MSPs on the committee not only failed to support Jamie McGrigor MSP but actually voted with the SNP MSPs to give the MPAs the green light in their current form.

While Ms Grant's supportive comments might be welcomed by the west coast fishing industry, the support of her MSP colleagues when the actual decisions which could have halted the proposals were being made would have been far more useful.

Labour is guilty, at the very least, of a complete lack of joined up thinking which one should expect from a party supposedly trying hard to retain its position as the main opposition in Holyrood.

Donald Cameron, Ardriishaig.

## Oban museum needs more new volunteers

Sir, Oban War and Peace Museum has been running successfully for more than 20 years.

It was started by a number of Oban ex-servicemen and women and residents to celebrate the 50th anniversary of VE day in 1945.

Some of the original members of the museum are still with us, living representatives of those who gave their lives in the service of their country.

The museum moved from the white building at the back of the North Pier to the old Oban Times building in 2006.

This building was bought with grants and loans made available from a number of sources and the benevolence of a successful local businessman.

Artefacts contained in the museum

range from a scale model of the 19th century Northern Lighthouse vessel 'Hesperus', the former Oban cinema projector, many photographs of old Oban and surroundings depicting ferries, trains and transport, a model of the Short Sunderland Flying Boat famous for its anti-submarine patrol medals gained by local servicemen, their uniforms, lifeboat and fire service memorabilia and many other interesting items.

The museum is a valuable asset to Oban, visited by 30,000 visitors every year who are encouraged to give a donation during their visit.

The museum is also supported financially by 'Friends of the Museum' and as a charity is able to bid for funds from other sources.

The real challenge to operating is the recruitment of volunteers who are in the museum a few hours during the week looking after visitors while we are open from March until November.

Also needed are volunteers to act as board directors in management.

The museum achieved the Queen's Award for voluntary service in 2011, the equivalent of the MBE.

This remarkable achievement was gained along with only 130 other organisations that year through the efforts of all of our volunteers.

It is a fact of life people come and go but right now we have lost many of our original volunteers through being mortal.

We are looking for new blood to keep the museum going for Oban and Argyll as a source of interesting memorabilia, stories, photographs of the old town in war and peace and as a location where history can be seen and where the young can be educated in their heritage and be made aware of the sacrifices made by others for their security. Age or service is not important - volunteering is. If anyone reading this letter feels they can help in any way at all - as a volunteer in the museum or in administration, PR or accounting, as a member of our team - please get in touch through our museum manager John MacPherson on 01631 570007, email obanmuseum@btconnect.com or visit www.obanmuseum.org.uk.

Charles Struthers, chairman of the board.

## Views of the majority are being ignored

Sir, I always understood that democracy meant the rule of the majority.

In Britain today, laws seem to be made to suit minority groups while the views of the majority are ignored.

William W Scott, North Berwick.

### Beachd Ailein

**ALLAN CAMPBELL**  
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

MÀRTAINN Dòmhnallach. Sàr Ghàidheil! Sàr fhear-naidheachd is fhear-craolaidh, agus sàr charaid.

Bidh ionndrainn air Màrtainn far am bheil luach air aithris naidheachd a tha lèirsinneach, pongail, agus a th' air a libhrigeadh le faobhar, ach gu tric le eirmseachd shocair cuideachd.

Bidh cuimhne air mar fhear-naidheachd dìomhthal, diceallach, gu h-àraid far an robh e a' faicinn ana-cearantas dhan fheadhainn a bu mhiosa dheth.

Dh'ionnsaich Màrtainn sgilean rannsachaidh agus aithris ag obair tro mheadhan na Beurla oir cha robh cothrom aig an àm sin gus an leithid a libhrigeadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

Dh'fhàg sin gun robh fear-naidheachd òg a' faotainn eòlas ann an cuideachd sàr phroifeiseantaich anns a' ghniomhachas, agus shùigh e na sgilean farsaing sin thuige.

Thar nam bliadhnaichean dhearbhadh na h-obrach aig Màrtainn toradh an oideachaidh a fhuair e mar sgrìobhaiche naidheachd ach chan eil teagamh nach robh alt nàdarra aige le cainnt, is chàradh e faclan ri chèile cho snasail ris a' chlachair a b' fheàrr riamh.

Bha e ag innse dhomh turas gun

robh e den bheachd gun robh daoine eàrr ann a bhith a' càineadh fhàppearan beaga agus a' cur an cuid mhodhan-aithris ann an suarachas fon fhacl 'tabloidism'.

Nuair a thòisich esan, thuir e, ghabhadh fear-deasachaidh 's dòcha dà mhìle facal air sgeulachd àraid, ach nuair a shearg meud nam pàpearan dh'iarraidh iad an aon aithris innse ann an dà cheud gu leth facal.

Ann am beachd Mhàrtainn b' e seo sàr ealantas cainnte, agus bha e fhèin fìor mhath air a leithid nuair a rachadh iarraidh bhuaithe.

Nuair a ghluais e chun a' BhBC, bha Màrtainn a' toirt an eòlais-rannsachaidh agus sgrìobhaidh leis agus chaidh loinn da-riabh air a chuid obrach nuair a thòisich e ri aithris naidheachdan air rèidio agus telebhisean.

Bha seo ùr dha fhèin mar fhear-naidheachd agus bha e ùr cuideachd dhan luchd-èisteachd feadh na dùthcha, ach choisinn e a cheart uimhir de mheas agus lean-tainn mar chraoladair 's a bha aige mar sgrìobhaiche.

Bha Màrtainn air leth moiteil à a dhualchas agus chan e a-mhàin gun robh sin a' soillseachadh a chuid aithrisean naidheachd, bha e

cuideachd a' ciallachadh gun robh a chuid chomasan luachmhor dha leasachadh na Gàidhlig is a cultar.

Cha b' e annas a bh' ann gun deach fhastadh gus aithris a dheasachadh air obair agus co-dhùnaidhean buidheann-obrach air suidheachadh na Gàidhlig a stèidhich Bòrd Leasachaidh na Gàidhealtachd toiseach naoi-deug 's na h-ochdadan.

Tha an aithisg sin, Cor na Gàidhlig, na cuimhneachan urramach air an ùghdar oir 's i bunait na thachair le leasachadh na Gàidhlig bhon uairsin.

Craobh a b' àirde anns an doire thu, ann an coille nan Gàidheal.

MARTIN MacDonald was well known and appreciated as a writer and broadcaster of both Gaelic and English.

As probably the first professional newsman to work in Gaelic, Martin established a standard which continues to guide and challenge all who follow in the profession.

His legacy to Gaelic news journalism is immense and matched his unswerving loyalty to his language and culture.

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

### Press policy

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

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times,

Crannog Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can

either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

### Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and

postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

Anonymous letters or those supplied without a

contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

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## Money Matters

with Iain Cairns



### Mortgages - How much can I borrow?

IN THE past, mortgage lenders largely based the amount you could borrow on a multiple of your income. This is known as the loan-to-income ratio. For example, if your annual income was £30,000, you might have been able to borrow three to five times this amount, giving you a mortgage of up to £150,000. Now, when you apply for a mortgage, many lenders will cap the loan-to-income ratio at no more than four and a half times your income. They must also assess what level of monthly payments you can afford, after taking into account various personal and living expenses as well as your income. This is called an affordability assessment. These changes were brought into effect by the Financial Conduct Authority in 2014 following a comprehensive review of the mortgage market. The lender must also look ahead and 'stress test' your ability to repay the mortgage. This takes into account the effect of potential interest rate rises and potential changes to your lifestyle, such as redundancy, having a baby or career break. If the lender thinks that you won't be able to afford your mortgage payments in

these circumstances, they might limit how much you can borrow. Various lenders have affordability calculators on their websites but www.moneyadvice.org.uk has a more generic calculator that will show you a range of what lenders might offer, and also what your monthly mortgage payments may be. Although this can be a great place to start it is no replacement for expert independent advice. Argyll Financial Services limited help many individuals and businesses throughout Argyll on a wide range of mortgage and financial planning needs. Contact us on 01369 706198 or info@argyllfinancial.co.uk to help us secure your financial future. The purpose of this article is to provide technical and generic guidance and should not be interpreted as a personal recommendation. It represents our interpretation of current and proposed legislation and HMRC practice as at the date of publication. These may change in future. Argyll Financial Services Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. There may be a fee for mortgage advice. Typically, this will be £199.



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## Technology Matters

with John Orr



### Telephones for Business Efficient, Functional and Flexible

VOICE over Internet Protocol telephones are great for business. They use digital technology and internet connectivity to provide an extensive range of user features, lower call charges and the flexibility to add and reduce the number of lines in use. In days gone by these services would have required an expensive office phone exchange and associated bills.

The system uses internet connectivity rather than traditional BT analogue lines. That in itself is a bit of a plus because it means that BT is not your only option, you can shop around and find many service orientated suppliers keen for your business. Price packages can make comparisons difficult but charges for VoIP calls over internet phones tend to be a fraction of traditional analogue call rates.

Traditional office phone systems have a fixed capacity to distribute calls out to a limited number of extensions. The VoIP exchange is a bit of software hosted in the cloud and so no costly exchange box is required and there is no limit to the number of lines which you can

add. If you need more phones just buy a handset and an extra user licence and plug in to your internet connection. If your needs reduce then it is a straight forward matter to adjust the licence agreement and keep your costs in trim.

In the same way that your mobile device can connect to the internet as you move around the country so a VoIP phone can offer similar flexibility. Unplug the handset from your office and take it home and plug it in to your home router - that handset will receive and make calls using the office number. A big benefit of the VoIP system is that a call between two handsets on the same system is free so a system spanning country-wide regional offices could save a bundle.

Typical features of a VoIP system include answerphone, call diversion, cascading (ie moves the call to a second extension if no reply after five rings), call transfer, call pick up and even call recording. With so many options you can design a cost effective system to ensure that your callers get a quality response and you aren't stuck with an expensive system and huge bills.

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# Family firm takes land surveying to new heights with drone flights

A FAMILY run business from Benderloch is flying high after using drones to help survey the land.

Digital Land Surveys was set up in 2007 by Richard Ayling and covers Argyll and the islands.

But it's his son, David Ayling, who has helped take the business to a new height.

David, 31, said: 'I'm just coming at it from a different perspective.'

'I started to see that drones were coming in to surveying, so we started looking into it and realised it was definitely a space for us to be able to go into as well, rather than just traditional surveying, which is what we have always done in the past.'

The company still does traditional surveying, but David said: 'As digital land surveys we do title deeds, new builds; we do a lot of work for the forestry commission, various



David Ayling with his fixed wing drone. 15\_107survey03

housing associations, work for local architects and local builders.

'We've really seen the drone come forward for covering huge areas of land.'

'We've started doing small scale hydro schemes and realised pretty quickly that

we could do it in probably an eighth of the time and a lot more accurately over that distance with a drone.'

The main drone that the company uses costs £15,000 just for the plane itself and another £5,000 for the software that goes with it.

But in order to fly one commercially, a training course has to be completed first.

David said: 'It's quite stringent really. Basically it's a course to learn all the ground-work that a pilot for a small aircraft would have to learn.'

'Obviously you don't need to know how to fly a plane, but you need to know all the legislation, the use of airspace with other planes, all your radio stuff and healthy and safety is a massive part of it.'

At the end of the course participants must sit a written exam and detail how to deal with any potential dangers that could arise when flying a drone.

But it isn't all about flying the craft; a lot of time is spent producing the end result - a detailed drawing and 3D animation of the surveyed land.

David added: 'To produce the results that you want it's very little time on the ground

compared to being back in the office on the computer.'

'With traditional surveying you're out there taking readings and it is quite intensive, whereas the great thing about drones is you can just go out and get quite a lot done in a day.'

'We did a six-to-seven-kilometre stretch of a hydro scheme recently. We could do that more or less in a day, and you spend the best part of a week in the office doing that.'

'I think actually seeing the results come together is the most enjoyable part of the job.'

'When we surveyed Tralee, for example, you don't realise how big it is.'

'We produce a full ordnance survey-style map for our clients and they can then work out over the distance the exact gradient. So it's pretty handy for them to know.'

For more information, visit www.digitalandsurveys.com

## New idea adds up to business success

A FORMER maths teacher from Oban has set up her own company helping small businesses improve their operations and efficiency.

Sally Thompson launched Optimus Argyll last year with support from Business Gateway Argyll and Bute.

Since then she has worked with a range of small businesses, helping them make the best use of their time and resources.

Using solutions such as implementing staff schedules to reduce overtime, helping to create websites optimised for mobiles, creating social media strategies and analysing data, Sally uses methods she learned from teaching maths to support decision making in very real, business-based contexts.

She said: 'One of the A-level maths units I taught was about mathematical techniques used to support decision-making in business situations. I was hooked from the start and decided I wanted to pursue my own career in it. I knew I



Sally Thompson of Optimus Argyll.

had to increase my skills and knowledge so in 2013 I went back to university and studied a masters in operational research at Strathclyde University, specialising in improving operational efficiency.'

'Although we focused our studies on large companies I felt these techniques were just as applicable to small and me-

dium-sized enterprises, which can potentially benefit a lot more from a small change to their operations. I want to help businesses improve how they do things without changing what they do. At a micro-level, time spent on business administration is time away from carrying out the core, income-generating activities and something as simple as a user-friendly, customised spreadsheet can cut down this time.'

Although she is enjoying her new venture, Sally hasn't given up teaching completely and also provides maths tutoring for Oban students.

She said: 'In the short term I will be working on increasing my client base and attracting more companies such as the dairy co-operative I worked with last year. The work I did there gave me a lot of satisfaction as I reduced a process of what used to take upwards of two and a half hours per day to 15 minutes. I also hope to get to a position where I have a number of on-going relation-

ships rather than providing one-off solutions.'

'I loved teaching too much to give it up fully so I began maths tutoring which has also proved very popular. Business Gateway Argyll and Bute have been a great help. Early on I met with Angela who became my adviser to discuss my ideas and it's great to know there is someone to turn to for support. Also, I attended two courses, a two-day business start-up workshop and on bookkeeping.'

'These are free and provide fantastic advice.'

Angela Vernel, business adviser for Business Gateway said: 'Sally took advantage of our fully-funded workshops which provided her with knowledge and advice to help her establish Optimus Argyll. As Sally's business develops we will be on hand to further assist her.'

To find out more about how Business Gateway can help set up and develop a business call 01546 808 363 or visit www.bgateway.com/argyll-and-bute

## Airport group signs up to forces covenant

AIRPORT operator Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) has become the latest high profile organisation to sign the Armed Forces Covenant, and the first airport group in Scotland to do so.

More than 700 charities, public sector organisations and businesses have signed the Corporate Covenant since it was introduced in 2011 as a public demonstration of their support for the armed forces community.

HIAL has pledged to support the covenant by offering greater flexibility for employees who serve as reservists in any branch of the armed forces so that they can be released for training or deployment.

Grenville Johnston, chairman of HIAL, said: 'We are proud to become the first airport operator in Scotland to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. A number of employees at HIAL are reservists.'

'We know the pressure these places on them and their families, and by signing the covenant, we make a pledge to them, and to the others in our armed forces, to honour their service and to treat them with respect.'

Dai John, Highland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association's director of engagement, said: 'HIAL is the 20th organisation in the HRFA area of responsibility to have signed the covenant, with more anticipated to follow suit.'

'We are delighted to be working with such a forward-leaning champion of the armed forces community and look forward to continuing our ever-closer relationship.'

He added: 'Organisations such as HIAL can benefit significantly from membership of the covenant scheme as it offers an opportunity to build a reputation for being forces-friendly at a time when public support for the armed forces is unprecedented.'

## Ask the adviser – taking on staff

BUSINESS Gateway Argyll and Bute's advisers can help with a range of issues.

Adviser Donald Melville shares his top tips on how to recruit and retain staff:

'Taking on a member of staff for the first time can be daunting but the most important thing to remember is people make your business work, so they need to be looked after. The first question I ask clients is, 'Are you ready?'

'It's tempting to rush into recruitment but it's important to pause and think about the job being offered; is it full or part time, what can the business afford and how can you attract the best quality staff?'

'There are many practicalities to address including making sure your premises meet basic health and safety requirements, having employer's liability insurance and registering as an employer with HRMC.'

'Always ensure you get the right person. Creating your own application form can be the best route as you can outline the skills and requirements you seek and it makes it easier to compare and contrast candidates.'

'Once you've found that right person, a contract of employment is important to clearly set out what's expected. You also need to consider right to work issues and any vetting or disclosure checks that might be relevant. Keep up-to-date with new legislation to ensure you're complying with law.'

'An induction period and an understanding that new people take time to settle will ensure you get off on the right foot.'

Business Gateway offers free half-day

workshops that can help. A Becoming an Employer workshop still has a few spaces left in Oban on Thursday February 18 and in Dunoon on Thursday February 25. The Managing and Developing Staff workshop will take place in Helensburgh on March 17 and in Oban on March 24.

NEW BUSINESS Gateway workshops have been added to the range on offer across Argyll and Bute, with many of the established workshops being refreshed too.

A limited number of places are still available at workshops in Oban.

The Build Your Business Website workshop on February 25 is a practical workshop aimed at those who don't yet have a website. This workshop will be delivered for Business Gateway by John Paterson of Evolutio Ltd.

The Craft Businesses - Reaching More Customers workshop on March 3 will help small craft businesses develop and reach more customers profitably. This workshop will be delivered for Business Gateway by Redpath Marketing.

The new Get Your Business Noticed - PR on a Budget workshop will take place on March 9.

This workshop is about getting a business noticed without spending money. It covers how to get a business featured in newspapers, radio and television, understanding how the media works, finding the stories in a business that journalists will want to tell and understanding how to make contact with them so that the business enjoys the

benefits of free publicity. This workshop will be delivered for Business Gateway by Colin Kelly. Colin is best known for his work as a journalist presenting programmes at BBC Radio Scotland, STV, Real Radio and Radio Clyde. He has a BA Journalism from Napier University and for the last few years has been running his own media relations consultancy. He works with individuals and businesses, helping them gain free, positive coverage in newspapers and on radio and television.

The Selling with Confidence workshop will take place on March 15. It will help people feel more confident selling and promoting their business. They will learn some top selling tips, how to identify their customer needs and match them with their products, find out why people buy and how to highlight the features and benefits of their products or services. It also covers how to overcome customer objections, deal with feedback and identify the buying signals to help close a sale.

The workshop will be delivered for Business Gateway by Jill Connell. Jill has started and grown a number of companies and her first business idea achieved equity investment from Sir Tom Farmer CBE.

As a professional and qualified business trainer with 18 years of experience, Jill has trained more than 10,000 individuals through business start-up and growth development. To book a place or to find out more about the full range of workshops, contact the Business Gateway team on 01546 604555 or email business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

Your ambition. Our know-how. Together we can make your new business happen.

Free, practical advice and support to help start your business. Call your local office on 01546 605 459 or visit www.bgateway.com/argyllandbute





# Suddenly I see... KT Tunstall at Oban Live

GRAMMY Award-nominated songstress KT Tunstall has been announced as the headline act at Oban Live – an exciting new open air concert taking place in Mossfield Park, Oban, on Friday and Saturday May 13 and 14.

KT Tunstall shot to fame when her debut album Eye to the Telescope earned her a nomination for the Mercury Prize. She later went on to win awards for Best British Live Act and Best Breakthrough Act at 2006 BRIT Awards, then later added the Ivor Novello Award for Best Song to her trophy cabinet with hit song Suddenly I See.

Trad superstars Capercaillie, Julie Fowlis, Skipinnish and many more also feature on the concert's bill, which has already seen 1,500 early

bird tickets sell out in under three hours.

General tickets go on sale at noon on Saturday February 13 via [www.obanlive.com](http://www.obanlive.com) or from [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk).

Oban Live came about after the hugely successful 'Decade' concert, held in Oban in May 2015, generated an incredible £1.1 million for the town and its surrounding area.

The concert, which celebrated the 10th anniversary of Skerryvore, saw international acts attract crowds from across the world to attend. Artistic director and Skerryvore band member Daniel Gillespie saw the huge potential for an open air concert in Oban and, as a result, Oban Live was born.

The economic impact of the concert is expected to

be double that of Decade and organisers have already had to arrange additional capacity at Mossfield Park to cope with demand.

Daniel, also Oban Live artistic director, said: 'We are absolutely delighted to announce KT Tunstall as our headline act at Oban Live.'

'She is an iconic musician who has been flying the flag for Scotland for many years around the world.'

'Oban has hosted incredible music events in the past year - including our own Decade event and The Royal National Mod - and we want to continue to celebrate this town's wonderful community spirit and incredible atmosphere with an event that will welcome people from all over the world to Oban for a weekend

of sensational live music.

'With the early bird tickets selling out so quickly, we advise people to book tickets early to avoid missing out. See you all in May.'

Paul Bush OBE, director of events for VisitScotland, said: 'We are delighted to be supporting the inaugural Oban Live through our National Funding Programme. This exciting addition to Oban's existing portfolio of music events, with its impressive line-up of trad and international pop artists, will no doubt attract visitors to the town from the local area and further afield.'



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12 February - 18 February 2016

### Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip (U) 112mins

Fri, Mon, Tue, Wed: 16:15, Sat: 12:00, 15:15, 17:00, Sun: 12:15, 14:15, Thu: 15:45

Through a series of misunderstandings, Alvin, Simon and Theodore come to believe that Dave is going to propose to his new girlfriend in New York City - and dump them. They have three days to get to him and stop the proposal.

### Carol (15) 128mins

Fri, Mon, Tue, Wed: 18:45, 21:15, Sat: 17:30, 21:45, Sun: 16:30, Thu: 18:45

Parent and baby screening Tue 11:30  
Silver screening Sun 14:30

Set in 1950s New York, a department-store clerk who dreams of a better life falls for an older, married woman. Parent & Baby Screening! Lights will be left on at a dimmed level and baby changing available. Silver Screening - Concessions (age 60+) entry just £2.50! Includes complimentary tea and cake.

### Dad's Army (PG) 119mins

Daily Except Sat, Sun: 16:30, Sat: 13:00, Sun: 12:00

The Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard platoon deal with a visiting female journalist and a German spy as World War II draws to its conclusion.

### Kids Club: Big Hero 6 (PG) Sat: 11:00

Children's Classic. The special bond that develops between plus-sized inflatable robot Baymax, and prodigy Hiro Hamada, who team up with a group of friends to form a band of high-tech heroes. Adults & Children £2 entry.

### Notting Hill (15) 120mins Sun 21:00

Valentine's Day Special. The life of a simple bookshop owner changes when he meets the most famous film star in the world.

### Snoopy and Charlie Brown: The Peanuts Movie (U) 113mins Sat: 14:30

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the rest of the beloved "Peanuts" gang make their big-screen debut, like they've never been seen before, in state-of-the-art 3D animation. Snoopy, the world's most lovable beagle and flying ace embarks upon his greatest mission as he takes to the skies to pursue his arch-nemesis The Red Baron, while his best pal, Charlie Brown, begins his own epic quest.

### Spotlight (15) 149mins Fri, Mon, Tue, Wed: 18:30, Sat: 19:00, Sun: 17:15, Thu: 20:30

SPOTLIGHT tells the riveting true story of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Boston Globe investigation that would rock the city and cause a crisis in one of the world's oldest and most trusted institutions.

### The Baftas 2016 (Screened Live - Free entry!) 120mins Sun: 21:00

Watch The Baftas 2016 live on our big screen! Free entry - come dressed for the occasion!

### The Revenant (15) 176mins Fri, Thu: 21:15, Sat: 20:00

Inspired by true events, THE REVENANT captures one man's epic adventure of survival and the extraordinary power of the human spirit. In an expedition of the uncharted American wilderness, legendary explorer Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) is brutally attacked by a bear and left for dead by members of his own hunting team. In a quest to survive, Glass endures unimaginable grief as well as the betrayal of his confidant John Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy). Guided by sheer will and the love of his family, Glass must navigate a vicious winter in a relentless pursuit to live and find redemption.

### Coming Soon Deadpool (15) 19/02/2016

Based upon Marvel Comics most unconventional anti-hero, DEADPOOL tells the origin story of former Special Forces operative turned mercenary Wade Wilson, who after being subjected to a rogue experiment that leaves him with accelerated healing powers, adopts the alter ego Deadpool. Armed with his new abilities and a dark, twisted sense of humor, Deadpool hunts down the man who nearly destroyed his life.

### Kids Club: WALL-E (U) 20/02/2016

Children's Classic. In the distant future, a small waste-collecting robot inadvertently embarks on a space journey that will ultimately decide the fate of mankind. Adults & Children £2 entry.

THE OBAN TIMES CAN REVEAL THE FULL LINE UP FOR OBAN LIVE 2016

KT Tunstall  
Julie Fowlis  
Capercaillie  
Skerryvore  
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Aly Bain & Phil Cunningham  
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To enter, simply answer this easy question, complete the entry form below and post it to The Oban Times, Heat Holders Comp, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Entries must be received by Tuesday February 23, 2016.

Question: Complete the first line in this well known romantic poem:  
Roses are red, violets are \_\_\_\_? a) Torquoise b) cream c) blue

Answer.....  
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Winners will be selected at random after the closing date. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash equivalent. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. Winners may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. The competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. Digital subscribers can enter by printing this page and submitting their entry accompanied by a letter explaining that you are a digital subscriber. The closing date for entries is midnight, Tuesday February 23, 2016.

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Terms and conditions: 10% discount only available on Oban Live Early Bird Tickets to the first 300 people to apply the code and whilst early bird tickets last. First come, first serve basis. All tickets are subject to Oban Live terms and conditions which can be found at [www.obanlive.com](http://www.obanlive.com).

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MONDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1700 Drivetime With Marcus, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen

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

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

THURSDAY: 0800 Morning show, 1100 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with Stephen, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight

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

SATURDAY: 0800 Breakfast Show, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crosner, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis

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



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**WANTED**

any 4x4 vehicle, Landrover, Toyota, Mitsubishi etc, all makes and models, any age, mileage or condition, non runners/MOT failures accepted. Collection anywhere. Top cash prices paid.

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**WANTED**

All 4 x 4s, old or new Toyota Hilux, land cruiser, all pickups single or double cabs, any condition, runner or not, high miles no problem.

Tel 07703490572 ask for Robert

**WANTED**

touring caravans, camper vans, motorhomes, all makes and models, any age, mileage or condition. Collection anywhere. Top cash prices paid.

Call 07789855381 for a hassle free sale

**WANTED**

Any 4x4, Landrover, Nissan, Mitsubishi, Toyota etc, MOT failure or high mileage considered.

Telephone 07340367285 or 01382 843415

**WANTED**

All types of good quality 4 x 4 vehicles, Landrovers, Mitsubishi, Kia, Ford etc and all 4 x 4 pickups, must be good condition and reasonable mileage. Older 4 x 4's and non runners/MOT failures etc considered. Will collect.

Telephone 07546 788945

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All types of motor homes and caravanettes. Any age or condition. We also buy water damaged or in need of repair. Also all types of touring caravans from 95 onwards.

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First Class Condition, MOT July, 2016, Worth A Look. Offers When Seen.

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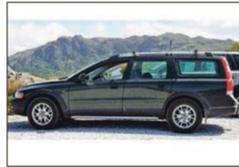
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2011, Silver hatchback, 24,000 miles, immaculate. MOT april 16, steering wheel controls, bluetooth etc. Manual. Fast and economical. **£6700 o.n.o.**

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2.4 diesel, manual, AWD, 69kmiles. 1yr mot, Tow bracket, leather, full electrics pack, service history, 5 vgood tyres + extra alloy wheel, excellent condition **£6,995**

01631 770698 / 07867624679

**Nissan Navara 09 plate**



Leather seats Electric sunroof seats and windows Fantastic condition 104,000 miles **£6450.00 +vat**

Tel: 07751116278 Gavin

**Suzuki Grand Vitara**



2.0L Petrol, 5 Door, 96k miles, MOT sept16, Good A/T tires, Lady owner last 6 years, well maintained. **£2400 ono.**

Tel 07789 758473 Kilmartin

SAILING TIMES

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PCP Representative example	
OTR Cash price	£21,995.00
Customer Deposit	£3,508.00
Subaru Deposit Contribution	£1,000.00
Total Deposit	£4,508.00
Total Amount of Credit	£17,487.00
Option to Purchase Fee (included in final payment)	£10.00
48 Monthly Payments	£299.00
Optional Final Payment	£6,468.00
Total Amount Payable	£25,328.00
Duration of Agreement	49 Months
Representative APR	6.9% APR
Interest Rate (Fixed)	6.67% APR

MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Official fuel consumption figures for the XV range fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km): Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km): Urban 31.4-41.5 (9.0-6.8); Extra Urban 48.7-61.4 (5.8-4.6); Combined 40.4-52.3 (7.0-5.4). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 160-141 g/km. Credit available subject to status to UK residents aged 18 and over. Representative Example based upon total contract of 40,000 miles. With Subaru Personal Contract Purchase you have the option at the end of the agreement to: (1) return the vehicle and not pay the Final Payment. If the vehicle has exceeded the allowed mileage a charge per excess mile will apply. In this example, 14.0p per excess mile up to 4,999, or for excess mileage of 5,000 or more, a charge of 28.0p will apply to each excess mile above the allowed mileage plus VAT. If the vehicle is in good condition and has not exceeded the allowed mileage you will have nothing further to pay. (2) Pay the Final Repayment to own the vehicle. (3) Part exchange the vehicle subject to settlement of your existing finance agreement, new finance agreements are subject to status. Excludes motability, fleet and BASC Members Affinity Scheme sales. Available at participating dealers only. Not available in conjunction with any other offers. This credit offer is only available through Subaru Finance. We may receive commission or other benefits for introducing you to Subaru Finance. We can introduce you to Subaru Finance and a limited number of other lenders to provide funding. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Offer ends 31.03.16. Prices correct at time of going to publication. Subaru Finance is a trading style of International Motors Finance Limited, registered office at Charterhall House, Charterhall Drive, Chester, Cheshire, CH88 3AN. \*Every vehicle marketed by Subaru (UK) Ltd, excluding WRX STI, is covered by a 5 Year/100,000 mile (whichever comes sooner) Limited Warranty which comprises of a standard 3 Year / 60,000 mile (whichever is sooner) Manufacturer's Warranty (bumper to bumper, excluding clutch driven plate) and an Extended Warranty (applies to powertrain only) provided by the importer. OTR price includes VAT, delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee. Vehicle shown is an XV 2.0i SE with optional special paint finish OTR price of £22,495.00 Without special paint finish £21,995.00.

Visit Helensburgh for eateries, shopping and superb motoring. Helensburgh Motor Sales is an independent, privately owned company having traded for 39 years. It has represented the Toyota brand since inception and is consistently recognised for excellent customer care in Scotland and the UK. In July 2015 it was honoured to represent the Subaru marque. From its two sites in Helensburgh, it covers Argyll & Bute and Dunbartonshire areas with a one-stop shop for new and used car sales, service, parts and Kitemark approved accident repair centre. Helensburgh Coastal Destination Town We can uplift and deliver or provide a free courtesy car whilst we carry out your yearly servicing. Just let us know what is best for your needs. You will not be disappointed with the excellent service we provide. Helensburgh town has undergone a recent facelift and is well worth a visit. In October 2015, Helensburgh was described as a "coastal destination town". Come and experience the excellent choice of restaurants and coffee shops or do some sightseeing. Test Drive to You We have been serving the Oban and Lorn area for many years with Toyota and now with Subaru, and if you can't come to us, we will bring your chosen car to you to experience. Whether it is one of the legendary 4x4s, Rav4, Forester or Outback, or one of the smaller popular models like Aygo and Yaris, just call us and arrange a time that suits you. Door to door service. Some Great Cars and Deals The 2016 Toyota RAV4 now benefits from hybrid technology, combining petrol and battery power with zero road tax and improved economy, whilst the Toyota Aygo gets free insurance for over 18-year-olds with an attractive low-rate finance offer. The Subaru range with its emphasis on all-wheel-drive for great road holding and acclaimed engineering excellence benefits from 0% finance on Forester and XV models plus a 5 year warranty. The popular Toyota Aygo available with free insurance for over 18s. Subaru XV comes with a 5 year warranty.

Grieg Seafood is recruiting for the following position:



### Assistant Area Manager – Dunvegan, Skye

**The Company**

Grieg Seafood is a leading producer of quality farmed salmon, with a proven track record of achievement. The company is the one of Scotland's largest producers of Scottish salmon with an annual production of 20,000 tonne. Environmental awareness and sustainability are at the heart of our business.

**The Role**

The Assistant Area Manager will be based in Skye. Reporting to the Area Manager, the position would initially entail:

- Assisting in the prioritising and planning all day to day work on 3 salmon farms in Loch Dunvegan
- Looking after the health and welfare of all fish farm staff and contractors employed within the area
- Monitoring and maintaining the security and effectiveness of all equipment
- Oversee the prompt and accurate reporting of production figures for all sites within the area
- Identifying and rectifying any problems which might affect fish health or security

**Requirements**

The successful candidate will have previous experience within a sea based aquaculture environment. While formal qualifications in relevant subject areas are advantageous they are not a requirement. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, hardworking and a good personnel manager with a strong focus on health and safety.

A salary of £30,790 per annum plus overtime is available for this position. Performance and loyalty based bonuses are also available for this post. For an informal discussion regarding the post, please contact Grant Cumming on 01595741804 or e-mail grant.cumming@griegseafood.com. To apply, please contact Suzan Roberts by e-mail or telephone at the address below.

**Suzan Roberts, Grieg Seafood, Gremista, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0PX Scotland (UK)**  
**Tel: 0044 (0) 1595 741800 Fax: 0044 (0) 1595 741806**  
**E-mail: suzan.roberts@griegseafood.com**  
**http://www.griegseafood.no**  
**Closing date will be Monday the 29th of February 2016.**

Grieg Seafood is recruiting for the following position:



### Area Manager – Dunvegan, Skye

**The Company**

Grieg Seafood is a leading producer of quality farmed salmon, with a proven track record of achievement. The company is the one of Scotland's largest producers of Scottish salmon with an annual production of 20,000 tonne.

**The Role**

The Area Manager will be based in Skye. Reporting to the Production Manager, the position would initially entail:

- Prioritising and planning all day to day work on 3 salmon farms in Loch Dunvegan
- Looking after the health and welfare of all fish farm staff and contractors employed within the area
- Monitoring financial and biological performance of the area against budget and identifying and reporting deviations
- Oversee the prompt and accurate reporting of production figures for all sites within the area
- Preparing and submitting operational and capital budgets for the coming year

While the successful candidate will have intra-company support in their position, due to the distance between the Dunvegan area and the head office based in Shetland, they will need to be organised and self-reliant.

**Requirements**

The successful candidate will have several years of experience within a sea based aquaculture environment. They will also have previous experience in a management role. While formal qualifications in relevant subject areas are advantageous, they are not a requirement. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, hardworking and a good personnel manager with a strong focus on health and safety.

A salary of £50,000 per annum is available for this position. Performance and loyalty based bonuses and a company vehicle are also available for the successful candidate. For an informal discussion regarding the post, please contact Grant Cumming on 01595741804 or e-mail grant.cumming@griegseafood.com. To apply, please contact Suzan Roberts by e-mail or telephone at the address below.

**Suzan Roberts, Grieg Seafood, Gremista, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0PX Scotland (UK)**  
**Tel: 0044 (0) 1595 741800 Fax: 0044 (0) 1595 741806**  
**E-mail: suzan.roberts@griegseafood.com**  
**http://www.griegseafood.no**  
**Closing date will be Monday the 29th of February 2016.**

### Caledonian MacBrayne

Hebridean & Clyde Ferries

### Seasonal Port Assistants

Calmac Ferries Limited is currently recruiting for Seasonal Port Assistants at various Port Offices across our network.

Calmac Ferries Ltd is a multi-award winning business serving some of the most beautiful parts of Scotland. With over 30 ferries, we provide lifeline services to the islands and peninsulas on Scotland's West Coast.

Our excellent benefits package includes a competitive salary plus a generous annual leave entitlement. You could also take advantage of free ferry travel for you and your family.

To view further details of all our current vacancies, and details of how to apply, please visit our website at [www.calmac.co.uk/careers](http://www.calmac.co.uk/careers)

Caledonian Ferries Limited is an equal opportunities employer.

### VALMAR HANDLING SERVICES LTD

Valmar are the UK's leading Sideloader Manufacturer who distribute to companies both in the UK and Europe.

**We are currently seeking -**

#### Experienced field service engineers across the north of Scotland

**The key responsibilities are -**

- Service, Maintenance and Repair of both Valmar's and our Clients Mechanical Handling Fleets.
- The ability to fault find both Mechanical and Electrical problems.
- Experience on Diesel Sideloaders and Diesel Counterbalance trucks is essential.
- To possess First Class communication skills.

**Client Base**

Our Client base consists of "Blue Chip" Steel, Concrete and Timber Accounts (including the largest home grown timber company in the UK).

**Qualifications**

As a Field Service Engineer you will be responsible for the planned service and maintenance of our material handling fleet primarily in and around the Scottish area.

Ideally you would have electrical / mechanical qualifications and have the experience to work on your own initiative.

Specific product training will be provided as required.

A competitive salary, transport and benefits package is included.

**To apply please email a CV to [martinvalente@valmarhandling.co.uk](mailto:martinvalente@valmarhandling.co.uk), or post to: Martin Valente, Valmar Handling Services Ltd., 17 Springburn Place, Collee Milton, East Kilbride, G74 5NU.**



Refusing to go with the flow

### Vacancy: 1 x Full Time Freshwater Operative

**Location: Ardtaraig Hatchery, Loch Striven, Dunoon**

Cooke Aquaculture Scotland is a leading company in the Scottish Salmon Industry producing exceptionally high quality products for an increasingly demanding market. We have operations throughout Scotland, Cumbria and the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, together; we pledge a strong dedication to achieving a sustainable aquaculture industry.

We are currently seeking candidates to take on the position of Freshwater Operative at our Ardtaraig Hatchery, Argyll. As part of a small team, they will assist their colleagues in building strong key relationships and ensuring a safe working environment for all.

**The Role:**

The successful candidate will find themselves reportable to the Freshwater Manager for Ardtaraig.

Qualifications/Skills required but not essential as full training can be given:

- 2 years' experience working in a Freshwater Hatchery environment
- Ability to participate in an 'Alarm Duty' rota system
- Good understanding of the aquaculture industry
- Candidate must be flexible with regard to hours worked, weekend working will be required
- Be a good team player but have the ability to work alone when required
- Inter-personal and excellent communication skills
- Clean UK driving licence

The ideal candidate will be committed to achieving the best results in a challenging environment and delivering the highest standards of performance possible. In return, we offer a highly competitive salary, employer pension contribution, company bonus scheme and salary sacrifice programmes.

**If you feel you have the necessary attributes to successfully fulfil this position and contribute to a progressive, results orientated company, then please send your covering letter and CV to [vicci.laird@cookeaqua.com](mailto:vicci.laird@cookeaqua.com) by 24 February 2016.**

### Home Carer (Permanent Variable)

£17,131 - £18,694 pro rata

Mid Argyll Ref: CMA01063

Hours to be worked as and when required by the Service

☎ 01546 604334

Closing date: 26 February 2016.

To apply visit our website



[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/jobs](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/jobs)

We are a rapidly developing multi-site business and market leading UK company within the timber industry, employing over 1100 people and with a Group turnover in excess of £300m. With ten profit centres across the UK and one in Latvia, We are BSW.

### Finance Manager (Dual Site Role)

Based Fort William - recent investment to build the largest sawmill in the UK - (Plus Travel to Boat of Garten) Competitive Salary + Benefits & Bonus Scheme

As the Finance Manager for our Fort William and Boat of Garten sites, you'll be responsible for overseeing all areas of the admin and finance function. Reporting directly to the Regional Mill Manager, you'll be a key member of the management structure across both sites, with 5 direct reports and a close working relationship with the Group Finance team.

Alongside your strong administrative and accounts background, preferably backed by management experience, you'll also be able to demonstrate first class PC/IT literacy, with a solid working knowledge of an accounting system and Excel. In addition, you'll be well organised, able to communicate at all levels and be a self-starter with excellent attention to detail.

In return, you will receive a competitive package and genuine prospects in a rapidly developing business, with exciting plans ahead.

Closing Date: Friday 19th February 2016.

To apply please email your CV and covering letter, detailing salary expectations, to: [kathleen.woodhouse@bsw.co.uk](mailto:kathleen.woodhouse@bsw.co.uk)

We are BSW.



Five generations of investment, ensuring the future is safe for the sixth.

### Corachie Clematis

Taynuilt, Argyll Scotland PA35 1HY  
 Tel: 01866 822266

#### Vacancies

##### Driver Required

**Seasonal - Full/Part Time**  
 Must have Class C+E/Class 1 or Driver for 7.5 tonne lorry  
 Must have own transport and be able to work away from home 1 or 2 nights per week  
 Help with CPC Licence possible  
 Accommodation available

##### Garden Centre/Nursery

**Seasonal staff - required**  
 Full/part time  
 Must be flexible regarding hours  
 Must have own transport  
 Accommodation available  
 Start date w/c 7th March 2016

Please contact Douglas on 01866 822266 or email us on [www.wholesale@corachieclematis.co.uk](mailto:www.wholesale@corachieclematis.co.uk) for further details

### Oban Times RECRUITMENT



51% of people turn to their local newspaper first when looking for a new job.

The regional press is the best medium to use when looking for local jobs.

### Skyline Winch Team required

for work in North Argyll, preferably experienced but training could be given to reliable hard workers with chainsaw tickets.

Telephone 07747016900 after 7pm or weekends.



### Full Time/ Part Time Chef Required

The Argyll Hotel, Bellochantuy, is looking to add to their team.

With the hotel open all year this position has the potential to be permanent. Hours will be a mixture of day and night service. All levels of experience considered. Salary negotiable based on experience. Although we do not offer live in accommodation, we can help in finding accommodation if required.

For application form and job description contact Nick or Ian.

[info@argyllhotelkintyre.co.uk](mailto:info@argyllhotelkintyre.co.uk) t. 01583 421212  
**Closing date for applications Friday 26 Feb 2016**  
 Argyll Hotel, Bellochantuy, Campbeltown, PA28 6QE.

### Retained Linesperson X2

Isle of Colonsay

[www.ssejobs.co.uk](http://www.ssejobs.co.uk)

Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau  
**Patient Adviser (PASS Project)**  
 Based in Lochgilphead - 21 hrs per week  
 Fixed term contract until 31st March 2017  
 £20,859 pro rata. Driving licence.  
**For an application pack contact 01546 605550 or [info@abcab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:info@abcab.casonline.org.uk)**  
 Closing date 26th February 2016

### Director's Personal Assistant



Kilmarin Museum is seeking to appoint a Personal Assistant to assist the Director/Curator with administrative tasks during the development phase of the Museum's Redevelopment Project. This is a part time (18.5 hours per week) contract until June 2017 with the possibility of further extension, subject to successful funding applications. The salary is £16,031 per annum pro rata.

For more information and an application pack please email [sue@kilmarin.org](mailto:sue@kilmarin.org) or phone Sue Creech on 01546 510 278. Closing date 11th March 2016, interviews will be held on 21st March 2016.

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 No transport necessary, will deliver and collect items.  
**Telephone 01631 570351**



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You will benefit from on-going training, first class support, job stability and the opportunity to work for a professional company that believes in rewarding success and effort. A full driving licence is essential.

**Please apply by email with full C.V and covering letter to: [ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk](mailto:ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk)**

# West Coast PROPERTY GUIDE

LETTINGS COMMERCIAL PROPERTY SALE PROPERTY REVIEWS PROPERTY NEWS LOCAL ESTATE AGENTS

## NHBC reports continued house-building growth in 2015

The number of new homes registered to be built in the UK has topped 156,000 in 2015 - a continued increase of 7% on the previous year, new NHBC figures have revealed.

7% year-on-year increase in NHBC new home registrations  
156,140 new homes registered - representing 8 year high  
75% more new homes registered in 2015 than in 2009

In total, 156,140 new homes were registered by NHBC in 2015 - compared to 146,359 in 2014. The figures show NHBC registered 75% more new homes in 2015 than it did at the time of the housing crash in 2009.

Private sector registrations increased by 7% (118,611 in 2015; 110,674 in 2014), with the public sector increasing by 5% (37,529 in 2015; 35,685 in 2014). The figures also showed that NHBC registered 75% more new homes in 2015 than it did at the time of the housing crash in 2009.

Continuing the trend from 2014, the number of detached homes registered over the last 12 months (42,173) is the highest for over a decade. Additionally, the number of semi-detached homes registered in 2015 (35,423) is the highest in more than 20 years (36,757 in 1994).

NHBC's latest data also revealed that the majority of UK regions experienced notable growth on 2014 levels, with the Eastern region (+23%), North West (+16%) and Scotland (+15%) leading the way.

The East Midlands (+12%), South West (+9%) and West Midlands (+9%) also enjoyed a positive year, as did Northern Ireland (+30%) although this was from a relatively low base.

London is still leading the way in the number of new home registrations. Although the 2015 figure of 25,994 registrations is down 9% on the record 2014 total of 28,518, 2015 saw the third highest number of registrations on record. Yorkshire & the Humber is down 13% on 2014 and Wales is down 2% on 2014.

As the leading warranty and insurance provider for new homes in the UK, NHBC's registration statistics are the lead indicator of the health of the country's new homes market. For over 80 years, NHBC has been committed to driving up quality and raising standards in house-building and enjoys an 80% plus market share in UK new home warranties.

Commenting on the annual statistics, NHBC Chief Executive Mike Quinton, said: "We are pleased to report that 2015 was a year for continued housing growth in the UK. Both the public and private sectors have performed well and we have seen encouraging levels of house-building across most regions of the country."

"The detached home continues its resurgence, with our figures showing that house



builders are building the highest number of detached properties for over a decade, with semi-detached homes also at their highest level in more than 20 years.

"There is still a way to go before we are building the levels of new homes that were seen before the economic downturn, but 2015 represents consolidation on the growth seen over the last three years."

"As always, NHBC's mission is to ensure construction quality of the very highest standard in new homes and this emphasis on quality remains unwavering, particularly during such periods of increased activity and production that we have seen over recent

years." NHBC UK statistics for 2015 show that:

In 2015 the number of registrations was 156,140, a 7% increase on last year (146,359). Of these:

Private sector registrations in 2015 increased by 7% (118,611), compared with the same period in 2014 (110,674).

Public sector registrations in 2015 increased by 5% (37,529) when compared to 2014 (35,685).

NHBC's role is to support the industry in maintaining and improving the build quality of new homes for homebuyers, whilst providing the benefit of its 10-year Buildmark warranty protection, when required.

NHBC does this through a wide range of activities, from standards setting through technical support to warranty and insurance.

NHBC is a non-profit distributing organisation with no shareholders. It invests any surplus into activities that improve new homes further, in particular through its research arm, the NHBC Foundation.

NHBC is the leading warranty and insurance provider for new homes in the UK. NHBC's ten-year Buildmark warranty covers around 80 per cent of new homes built in the UK, having covered nearly eight million homes since it began and currently protecting around 1.6 million homes.

### PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

#### Brackenfield, Lochdon, Isle Of Mull

- Features:**
- Modern Detached House
  - 3 Bedrooms / 3 Bathrooms + WC
  - Mature garden
  - Excellent B&B potential
  - Located close to Craignure ferry terminal
  - EPC Rating - D(57)

**Description:**  
Brackenfield is a spacious 3 bedroom detached house in the popular village of Lochdon on the Isle of Mull.

**Rooms:** Hall- Lounge- Kitchen/Diner Utility Room- Dining Room- 3 Bedrooms (all ensuite) - Downstairs WC- Garage

**OIRO £295,000**



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See all our properties at OnTheMarket.com  
w: www.west-property.co.uk e: info@west-property.co.uk t: 01631 569 466

### To Let Taynuilt

One bedroom furnished semi detached bungalow in quiet cul-de-sac.

**£450 per month plus bills**

One month deposit required, no pets, no dss or smokers.

Landlord registration number 244145/136/21121.

**Telephone 07747844935**

See our new West Coast PROPERTY GUIDE website at [www.westcoastpropertyguide.co.uk](http://www.westcoastpropertyguide.co.uk)

### LBTT (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill published

The Scottish Government, on December 16, 2015, announced a change in Land and Building Transaction Tax (LBTT) for Buy-to-Let investors and people buying a second home.

According to Scotland's Finance Secretary, John Swinney, The Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT) (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill proposes a supplement on the purchase of additional homes, for example, second homes or buy-to-let properties. The planned supplement is 3% of the total price of the property for all relevant transactions above £40,000, and will be paid in addition to the current LBTT rates. The draft Budget estimated that the new supplement would raise about £23 million in 2016-17, and it is intended to take effect from April 1, 2016.

The announcement echoes a statement by the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, in November 2015 that applied to the rest of the UK. This means that properties that are currently exempt from LBTT, due to their purchase price being under £145,000, will be subject to the new tax of 3% of the total purchase price for these categories of buyers. According to the Scottish Fiscal Commission, the official watchdog of the Scottish

Government's plans on tax and spending, the additional levy is likely to affect 8,500 to 12,500 property purchase transactions each year.

Mr Swinney said: "Our priority is to make sure that first time buyers have the greatest possible chance to get a foot on the property ladder. That is why I decided to take action to avoid any potential distortions which could arise in Scotland from the new higher rates of stamp duty land tax payable on the purchase of additional residential properties, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Autumn Statement on 25 November 2015."

According to Nicola MacPhail, Managing Partner at West Property Sales and Lettings, the LBTT additional homes supplement will help first time buyers get on the first rung of the property ladder; they have struggled ever since the tightening of rules on mortgage lending following the Mortgage Market Review (MMR) in April 2014.

Ms MacPhail said: "The second thing to consider is that the flow of new buyers at the bottom of the property ladder will impact on the property market as a whole as people sell to upsize into larger properties. If this has the effect the Chancellor is looking to achieve, then this can only be positive for the housing market in Scotland."

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### Properties for sale

**Rowantree Cottage, Isle Of Lismore**

- Detached Cottage
- 2 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom
- In excellent condition
- Large private garden
- Located on the beautiful island of Lismore
- EPC Rating E(43)

**OIRO £120,000**

A charming 2 bedroom detached cottage in the beautiful Isle of Lismore. The property is comprised porch, hall, kitchen/diner, bathroom, lounge with stairs leading to two bedrooms upstairs. The property has been restored and improved by the current owners

**13 St Conan's Road, Loch Awe**

- Semi detached
- 2 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom
- Views of Loch Awe
- Private garden and separate garage
- Multi fuel stove
- EPC Rating - D (53)

**OIRO £100,000**

13 St Conan's Road is a two bedroom/one bathroom, semi detached property enjoys views over Loch Awe and would make an attractive and practical home in a popular hamlet. The house has been well maintained and enhanced with a number of improvements, including Velux windows and the creation of a larger bedroom on the first floor.

**Oakfield, Dervaig**

- Semi-detached
- 2 Bedrooms / 2 Bathrooms
- Village location
- Holiday home potential
- Close to Calgary Beach
- EPC Rating - F (24)

**OIRO £180,000**

Oakfield A charming 2 bedroom semi-detached house in the popular village of Dervaig on the west coast of the Isle of Mull. The pink house as it is known locally, was built in the 1820s and enjoys a unique position at the end of the Dervaigs main street. The property comprises entrance hall, lounge, kitchen and back porch downstairs with family shower room and two bedrooms (one en-suite) upstairs.

**The Lodge, Kilberry**

- Detached Cottage dating back to 1896
- 2 Bedrooms / 1 Shower Room
- Mature garden
- Distant sea views
- Within walking distance of the renowned Kilberry
- EPC Rating - F (32)

**OIRO £180,000**

The Lodge is a delightful traditional cottage situated in the small settlement of Kilberry on Argyll's beautiful west coast. Dating back to 1896, the cottage is deceptively spacious and large windows throughout the property ensure the interior has plentiful natural light.

**51 Rockfield Road, Tobermory**

- Ground Floor Flat
- 3 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom
- Situated in a popular residential area
- Private front and rear garden
- Excellent first time buyer property

**OIRO £110,000**

47 Rockfield Road offers excellent family sized accommodation within easy reach of Tobermory town centre. Situated a short walk from the Main Street, the ground floor flat has a lounge, kitchen/diner, 3 double bedrooms and a family bathroom.

**Plot on Craigsuir Lane, Tobermory**

- 0.25 Acre Plot
- Stunning View towards the Sound of Mull
- Elevated site above Tobermory
- Planning Permission for a 1.5 storey architect des

**OIRO £85,000**

This elevated site enjoys views across Tobermory towards the Sound of Mull and the Ardnamurchan peninsula. The 0.25 acre site currently has detailed planning permission for a 1.5 storey architect designed house with large expanses of glazing to allow maximum enjoyment of the far reaching views.

**12 Riverside Court, Tobermory**

- Modern ground floor flat
- 2 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom
- Move in condition
- Factored Development
- EPC Rating - D(68)

**OIRO £110,000**

1 Riverside Court - A modern and spacious ground floor flat in a modern development in Tobermory. This 2 bedroom flat forms part of a small block of 4 flats at the top of the Riverside Court development.

**Main Street, Tobermory**

- Semi-detached cottage
- 2 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom
- Central location close to Tobermory Harbour
- Excellent holiday let potential
- In need of some modernisation
- EPC Rating D - (58)

**OIRO £85,000**

Portmore Cottage offers an excellent opportunity to purchase a centrally located traditional cottage situated just meters from Tobermory's harbour and bustling Main Street.

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**BIRTHS**

**JOHNSTON** - At Oban Hospital on Wednesday January 27, 2016 to Tommy and Alice (née Miller) a son, Brodie Miller Johnston, a little brother for Bella. Thanks to midwives Kirsteen and Mairead.

**ENGAGEMENTS**

**MACINTYRE - O'FARRELL** - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Fiona, daughter of Duncan and Rosemary, Kilmore to Derek, son of Eamon and Betty, Dublin.

**DEATHS**

**BEGBIE** - (née Hoey). Peacefully at home, after a short illness and with her family around her, Catherine Begbie (née Hoey), beloved wife of Gerard, dear mother to Catherine, Aileen and Ian, mother-in-law to Charlie, Ian and Sandra, cherished granny to Ryan, Sean, Niamh, Olivia, Alex and Archie. R.I.P.

**BLACK** - Suddenly but peacefully at Muirton House, Blairgowrie on Sunday January 31, 2016, Bill Black, bandleader and ex Bremner Black & Co, dearly loved and cherished husband of Anne, much loved dad of Kate, Robert and Duncan, devoted grandad of Kieren, Taylor and Anna, a dear brother and uncle and a good friend to many. Bill's funeral took place in Dunkeld Cathedral on Tuesday, February 9.

**DOUGLAS** - Peacefully, after a short illness on January 24, 2016 at St Brendan's Hospital, Isle of Barra, Cathy, (née MacIntyre), aged 76. Beloved wife of the late Duncan and much loved mother, grandmother, GG, sister and aunt.

**IVES** - Peacefully at Belford Hospital, Fort William on Sunday February 7, 2016 Charles (Chubby) Ives, aged 95 years. Much loved father, father-in-law, grandpa and great grandpa. Funeral service at Keil Church, Lochaline on Monday February 15 at 1 pm.

**MACKINNON** - Peacefully at home surrounded by his family on January 30, 2016, Colin MacIntyre MacKinnon, age 87 of no. 4 Kilkenneth, Tiree. Beloved husband of Jessie, much loved father of Hugh and Catherine Ina, father-in-law of Margaret, loving papa to Jennifer, Colin and Hugh and great-grand papa to Reuben. Sadly missed.

**MACLAINE** - At home on January 23, 2016 aged 82 years, Morag MacLaine, Harperfield, Dervaig, Isle of Mull. Loving mother and sister, sadly missed. Funeral was held at Kilmore Church Dervaig on Tuesday, January 9, 2016.

**MASON** - Peacefully at home on February 7, 2016, in his 80th year, Bill, beloved husband to the late Christine, much loved dad to Hazel, John, Lorna and father-

in-law to John, Ian and Karen, devoted seanaid to Kayleigh, Caley, Cara and Christina, a dear brother, uncle and friend to many. Funeral will take place from St. Modan's Church, Benderloch on Friday February 12 at 10.00 am, thereafter to Achnaba Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection/donations if desired for Friends of the Beatson.

**MCCULLOCH** - Robert (Bertie), died peacefully at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Larbert on January 31, 2016, aged 89. A dearly loved dad, grandpa and great-grandpa. Bertie will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

**MCGREGOR** - Peacefully at Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy on Friday February 5, 2016. Elizabeth (Beth) Henderson McGregor (née Smith), aged 87 years, beloved wife of the late A. Murray McGregor, much loved aunt and great-aunt. Who will be sadly missed. Private family service upon Beth's wishes.

**PORTER** - Peacefully, but very suddenly on February 2, 2016 at her home, Flora (Patsy), beloved wife to Dick and cherished mother to Dixie. Forever in our hearts.

**SHIELDS** - Peacefully at his home 20 Dee Walk, Kirkcudbright on Saturday February 6, 2016 James Broll Shields (Jimmy). A much loved dad and a loving papa. Funeral service will take place at Roucan Loch crematorium, Dumfries on Monday February 15 at 1.00 p.m. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please but, if desired, donations for the Fishermens Mission and Marie Curie, will be accepted at service or by Osborne, 41 Castle Street, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4JD. Will be missed by all.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**GALLOWAY** - Ella, Elma and Sandra would like to express their sincere thanks to relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy by way of cards, telephone calls and flowers received in the recent sad loss of Bill and for their attendance at Achnaba. Special thanks to the staff at Lynn of Lorne Care Home for care and attention shown to Bill during his stay there and the devoted, loving care shown to Bill during his last few days; to Rev Jeff McCormick and Norman Nicolson for their contribution to the service of celebration and thanksgiving held at Achnaba and to Mr Chris Holden at the graveside at Campbelltown. Grateful thanks to Kenneth Blair, Campbelltown for his sensitive and efficient handling of funeral arrangements at North Connell and Campbelltown. Thanks to the Lochnell Hotel, North Connell and the Archdiel, Campbelltown for providing us with lovely lunches. The family also thank everyone who very generously donated £400 to Alzheimer Scotland.

**LYNN** - Colin, Kate, Norie and their families would like to thank everyone most sincerely for the love and support shown to them in the recent sad loss of Winnie, a most loving wife, sister, aunt and great-aunt. Thanks to the Rev. Alan Lamb for his uplifting service and to the ladies for their floral arrangements in the church. Thanks to all those friends and relatives from near and far who were at the service and the graveside and those who sent flowers, cards and letters. Thanks to Margaret and her helpers for the catering after the interment. Thanks to all the nurses and doctors who attended Winnie over the many years of her illness. Finally, thanks to John McLellan Funeral Directors for their very caring and helpful funeral arrangements and their support on the day.

**MACFADYEN** - Angus and family of the late Marion MacFadyen wish to thank friends and relatives from near and far for their kind expressions of sympathy and support by way of cards, phone calls, visits and flowers. Thank you to all doctors and carers who helped care for Marion at home and in hospital. To Rev. Chris Fulcher for a comforting service in church and at a windswept graveside. Special thanks to all at D&A Munn for their caring and efficient funeral arrangements. Thank you to the Royal Hotel for catering. The retiring collection was £1,026 shared by Marie Curie Care and Dementia Local Branch.

**MACKELLAR** - Tom and family would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy in the form of cards, flowers, phone calls and visits, following the recent sad loss of Violet. Also, to all who attended the funeral service at St. Modan's, with special thanks to Rev. Jeff McCormick for a very comforting service, to Ian MacInnes at D & A Munn, for the efficient funeral arrangements, to Angus MacColl for his piping and to the Lochnell Arms Hotel for their hospitality. Grateful thanks also, to the staff at Lynn of Lorne Nursing Home, for their dedicated care and thanks to all who contributed to the retiring collection of £680.24 in aid of Alzheimer Scotland.

**MACMILLAN** - Janet, Bill and families wish to thank all relatives and friends both near and far for the kindness and sympathy shown to them by way of cards, flowers, visits and calls following David's (Herc) death. Heartfelt thanks to all at Glasgow Royal Infirmary ICU for the support, love, care and attention shown to both Herc and the family. They could not have done more. Also thanks to Dr. Michael Boyle and staff, Lorn Medical Centre for Herc's care over the years. Grateful thanks to all at D & A Munn for their

professional and efficient funeral arrangements and for young Ian's kindness and support in helping make Herc's funeral unique. Many thanks to Rev. Dugald Cameron for a warm, comforting service and his visits which were much appreciated. Thanks also to The Royal Hotel for providing the funeral tea. Thank you for the many who attended both the church and Pennyfuir on such a wild day. The retiring collection raised £489.66 which has been shared between RNLI Oban and ABCD.

**MEMORIALS**

**BUCHANAN** - In loving memory of dear Anne who passed away on January 31, 2015. Loved and always remembered. - Auntie Margaret.

**CURRIE** - Cherished memories of Lily who died February 15, 1989 and Archie who died June 1, 1998. Loved and remembered always. - Margaret, Donald and family. Missed more than words can say. - Mike, London.

**LAIRD** - In loving memory of Susan (Oozie) a much loved mum and nana who died February 14, 2003. Loved and remembered always. - The Laird family.

**MACCALLUM** - Remembering Alastair, a dear brother and uncle taken on February 11, 2010. Your resting place I visit and put flowers there with care. But no-one knows the heartache as I turn and leave you there. Love always. - Wilma and Boys.

**MACCORMICK** - In loving memory of a dear husband, dad and grandpa John, who passed away February 11, 2014. - Iona and family, Heathervale, Mull.

**MACDONALD** - In loving memory of our dear parents, 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 our dear mum Rhoda (Carswell), who passed away on February 15, 2013. Loved and remembered every day. - Linda, Dennis, Kenneth, Flo, John and Catherine Ann x Miss you lots Gran - Jordan, Eilidh, Erin and Laura xx

**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of our dear mum, gran and great gran, Annag MacLean, Kinlochleven, passed away February 10, 2011 also remembering our dad and grampa Calum MacLean, who passed away May 19, 1984. Loved and remembered always. - Ian, Elizabeth and family and Roddy, Fiona and family.

**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of my gran Annag MacLean, who sadly passed away on February 10, 2011. Loved and remembered always. - Christina xx.

**MACLEAN** - In memory of Mary Campbell MacLean who died February 8, 2005, a dear sister, sister-in-law and auntie. Those we love don't go away. They walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard but always near. Still loved, still missed and very dear. - Margaret, Archie, Fiona and Duncan.

**MENZIES** - In loving memory of Hamish who died February 10, 2007. Always in our thoughts. - Betty, Elizabeth, David and Isla.

**POULTON** - In loving memory of my baby grandson and our nephew Danny who died on February 15, 1992. Always in our hearts. - Freena and family, Iochdar, Bunessan.

**ROBERTSON** - Treasured memories of a much loved husband, father and grandfather who passed away on February 11, 2015. God called your name so gently that only you could hear. No-one heard the footsteps of the angels drawing near. Softly from the shadows there

came a gentle call. You closed your eyes and went to sleep. You quietly left us all. Love and miss you always. - Margaret, Anne and Robert.

**STEWART** - In loving memory of Mena who died February 12, 2002. Also remembering Jimmy and James and loved ones gone before and after. If memories bring us closer. We are never far apart. For you are always with us. In our thoughts and in our hearts. - From all the family.

**GRADUATION**



**RUTH BOWMAN**  
Daughter of Douglas and Jenny Bowman, Biggar, granddaughter of Mary Bowman and the late Ian Bowman, Tobermory, and Cathie Craig and the late Rennie Craig, Robertson, graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University with a Bachelor of Nursing, Paediatrics. Ruth has taken up a post in the Schiehallion Unit at the Children's Hospital Glasgow.

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**MARIE CURIE CANCER CARE**  
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Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB  
Tel: 01631 568000  
Fax: 01631 568001  
www.obantimes.co.uk

**Editorial**

**Chief reporter**  
Louise Glen  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

**Senior reporter**  
Caren McPate  
cmcpcate@obantimes.co.uk

**Trainee reporter**  
David McPhee  
dmpcpcate@obantimes.co.uk

**Newsdesk**  
Oban 01631 568060  
Fort William 01397 703003  
editor@obantimes.co.uk

**Advertising**

**Advertising supervisor**  
Nadine Ross  
nross@obantimes.co.uk

**Advertising executive**  
Rhona McKillop  
adverts@obantimes.co.uk

**Advertising executive**  
Stephanie Dunstaffnage  
sdunstaff@obantimes.co.uk

**Advertising executive**  
Julie Baird  
jbaird@obantimes.co.uk

**Branch Offices**

**Fort William**  
Tel 01397 703003

**Lochgilphead**  
Tel 01546 602345

**Campbeltown**  
Tel 01586 554646



Coping with *bereavement*

LOSS happens to everyone at some time. Most people expect this to happen later on in life, perhaps to an elderly relative, and loved ones have an idea that they are going to be faced by loss. But even though they know a loved one is dying, when it happens it comes as a great shock, and they are overwhelmed by unexpected feelings. And sometimes the loss of a loved one is sudden and unexpected.

Research has shown that in order to grieve in a healthy way, those suffering bereavement need to spend time grieving for the person

and somehow continue to live and to function. If a person spends all of his time grieving and not engaging with life, or all his time pushing the grief away, he may have trouble moving forward and recovering.

The funeral can be one of the most important parts of the grieving process. The funeral offers a chance to say goodbye while sharing memories, experiences and anecdotes with friends and family - a true celebration of a person important to so many. Funeral directors will take care of the practical arrangements and guide

the bereaved through the selection of flowers, music and order of events.

Grief counselling can help make the bereavement process a bit easier. Sometimes it is helpful to talk to someone outside of the circle family and friends. A counsellor can help make sense of and help to normalise feelings. In addition, bereavement groups can help one through the process by providing an outlet to talk about difficult feelings, while acting a social hub for those who have something in common.

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**Ursuline Support Services shares tips for those coping with bereavement.**

1. Talk about your loss with friends, family or a professional. Grief is a process, not an event.
2. Grief is work, requiring time and energy. The memories, meanings and fulfilled needs provided by the lost loved one take time to work through.
3. Let yourself enter the emotions of grief. Grievers tend naturally to avoid the painful emotions. Losing someone close to you means you deserve to allow yourself to feel all your emotions - sadness, anger, intense longing, guilt and others.
4. Resume your life but leave time and space for grieving. Life marches on for the living. But try to resist the temptation to

5. Take care of yourself. You have been wounded.
6. Something very valuable and dear has been taken away from you. Give yourself time and space to begin healing. Get enough rest. Eat nourishing food. Give yourself a break.
7. Resist the temptation to use alcohol or drugs to numb your pain. These can interfere with the grieving process by delaying it or covering it up.
8. Consider seeking out other grievers. Someone who has also been through grief can empathize with you, and vice versa.
9. Don't feel obligated to join groups if they are not

10. Don't neglect your own health. Grieving puts a heavy burden of stress on your body. It can disturb sleep patterns, lead to depression, weaken your immune system, and worsen medical problems that had been stable, such as high blood pressure.
11. Get help for severe or persistent depression. Someone once said: "grief is not a disease but it can become one." Grief can lead to serious depression. Consider getting professional help if you feel overwhelmed, hopeless, or helpless.

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PRESENTATION: Magnus Bradbury, middle, is presented with a tie and a pennant by members of the first, second and third year rugby teams. 15\_107Magnus01

# Magnus returns to his rugby roots



Magnus, left, and Oban High School's Murray Hamilton holding a pennant presented by the first, second and third year rugby teams. 15\_107Magnus02

A FORMER Oban High School pupil and top professional rugby player paid a visit to his old school last week.

Ex-Oban Lorne Rugby Club player Magnus Bradbury, 20, who now plays for Edinburgh Rugby, held a meet-and-greet session in the school's assembly hall before venturing outside to help coach first, second and third year rugby enthusiasts.

Magnus said: 'It's good to be back. I introduced myself to the pupils and explained to them how I got to where I am.'

'They are where I was 10 years ago. In school, my goal was to play for Oban Lorne.'

The pupils were then given the chance to ask Magnus a variety of questions such as what he thinks the best and worst thing about playing professional rugby.

Magnus said: 'The best thing is getting paid to do what I love to do and the worst is waking up at 6am and seeing the rain and knowing I have to train in that.'

He continued: 'It's not a hin-

## Rugby

dance being from Oban, but it is more difficult to make it.

'Nothing will come to you unless you work for it. Everything is in Glasgow and Edinburgh, so you have to travel at some point.'

Murray Hamilton, principal teacher of health and well being at Oban High School, said: 'It's nice to have Magnus Bradbury come and talk to the boys and it's good to see a former pupil.'

'The main purpose was to let the boys see that coming from Oban doesn't prevent you from achieving professional status.'

'Magnus came through the Oban High School and Oban Lorne teams and if the pupils work hard they can achieve anything they want. And this applies to any sport.' Magnus represented his country in a seven-a-side tournament in Dubai and speaking about the experience, he said: 'It was amazing to represent Scotland, especially in Dubai.'



Magnus gets involved with the training session and helps coach the youngsters. 15\_107Magnus08.

# WIN!

## a place on a tall ships sailing experience

Inverness to Oban, April 22 - 24, 2016.

Worth £250

The Oban Times has teamed up with Maybe Sailing to offer one lucky reader a sailing experience of a lifetime.

Can you picture yourself sailing through the Great Glens on the Caledonian Canal, hunting for Nessie on Loch Ness and exploring Loch Linnhe on board a classic tall ship? This could be your chance to take your turn on the helm, help hoist the sails or sit back, relax and soak up the Scottish sunshine. All meals and refreshments are included on this amazing voyage. To find out more about Maybe

Sailing and their range of sailing experiences visit [www.maybe-sailing.com](http://www.maybe-sailing.com)

For your chance to win a place on this fantastic sailing experience from Inverness to Oban, April 22 to 24 2016, simply answer this easy question, complete the form below and post to Sailing Comp, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. This hands on experience involves climbing steep stairs and sleeping in a shared bunk room. Entrants must be physically fit. Entries must be received by Tuesday February 23, 2016.

**Question: Which device would you most commonly use to secure a boat to the sea bed?**  
**a) Anchor b) Paddle c) Buoy**

Answer..... The Oban Times  
 Name.....  
 Address.....  
 .....Postcode.....  
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Winners will be selected at random after the closing date. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash equivalent. Tickets do not include travel or parking. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. Winners may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. The competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. Digital subscribers can enter by printing this page and submitting their entry accompanied by a letter explaining that you are a digital subscriber. The closing date for entries is midnight, Tuesday February 23, 2016.

## Father and son team bowl them over at North Connel open pairs

A FATHER and son team were crowned winners of the open pairs bowls tournament in North Connel after rolling over the competition.

Billy and Fulton Ronald were victorious after a hard fought battle in the final against Alistair and Angus Dickie, with the Ronalds winning by 'a couple of shots in the end'.

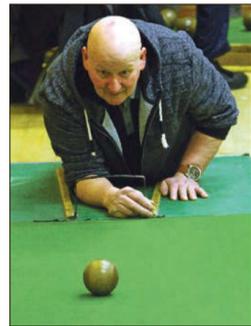
Twenty-six pairs braved the weather to play in the event, which started at 6pm and didn't finish until midnight.

### Indoor bowls

Calum Munro and Archie Buchanan received the Billiemore Memorial Quaich for the best North Connel pair.

Shuggie MacLeod, who helped organise the event, said: 'It was a superb night. Everyone who was there enjoyed it and everything went well.'

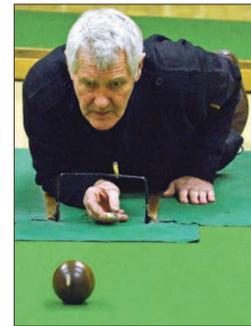
'It's nice to be sponsored by the Bank of Scotland as it costs us around £600 per year for the hall.'



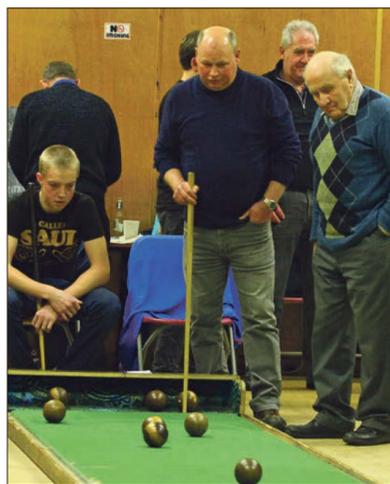
Shuggie MacLeod studies his shot



Marion Kirkham enjoying her first-ever night at the bowls.



Sandy Carr - a study in concentration.



Blair Menzies, seated, Callum Munro, centre and Archie Buchanan study form during the open pairs competition held at North Connel recently. Photos: Kevin McGlynn



The father and son team of Fulton and Billy Ronald won the North Connel Open Pairs Tournament.

## Pre-season friendly shinty matches

### Shinty

**Saturday February 13**

- Ballachulish v Taynuilt Jubilee, Ballachulish
- Bute v Kyles Athletic 1sts and 2nds venue the
- Caberfeidh 2nds v Lovat 2nds Castle Leod, Strathpeffer 1.00pm throw up
- Dunoon v Oban Lorn Dunoon
- Glenorchy v Glengarry Mart Park, Dalmally
- Glenmhor Cup
- Lochaber 1st v Fort William 1st Spean Bridge Playing Field
- Inverness 2nd v Kilmallie 2nd Bught Park, Inverness
- Kilmallie v Oban Camanachd Canal Park, Caol
- Kingussie v Caberfeidh The Dell, Kingussie
- Lochside Rovers v Lochaber at Ganavan
- Lovat v Inverness at Balgate, Kiltarlity
- Newtonmore v Inveraray The Eilan, Newtonmore
- Oban Celtic v Fort William Oban
- Strathglass v Skye at Cannich
- Strathspey v Newtonmore Grantown
- Tayforth v Aberdeen University Musselburgh
- Uist v Lewis Uist
- Portaferry GAC v Glasgow MA Portaferry

## Oban U13s impress in Kilmarnock Youth rugby

OBAN Under 13 rugby teams impressed at a friendly festival in Kilmarnock on Sunday. Oban entered two teams into the event boasting an impressive 22 players.

Both teams did a fantastic job on the day by winning all but one game with the loss coming against Stewartry RFC.

## Fraser joins up with top racing team

### Mountain Biking



Fraser McGlone

Photo: Dennis Hardley Photography.

A DOWNHILL mountain biker from Appin is the latest addition to a professional race team from Canada.

Fraser McGlone, 21, who had his best season to date in 2015, has been signed by Norco Factory Racing.

Last year Fraser achieved a 24th place finish at the UCI World Cup event in Lourdes and a 23rd place finish in the Fort William event.

He said: 'This is a huge opportunity for me and is the perfect chance to take my career to the next level with the proper backing of a professional team.'

The Appin man left to go to New Zealand last Wednesday for seven weeks to take part in a team training camp. While he is there he will compete in three races.

Fraser said: 'It's amazing to get some good quality racing done before the World Cup season starts.'

'The first of seven World Cup rounds is in Lourdes, France, at the beginning of April, so this will be the best prepared for a season I will have ever been.'

## Stunt cyclist looks at McCaig's Tower

### Trials cycling

A PROFESSIONAL trials cyclist from Skye, known for fearless stunts, has said he would consider riding across McCaig's Tower.

Danny MacAskill, 30, has racked up more than one hundred million views online for his street trials biking montages.

In his latest video, Cascadia, Danny flips from building to building in a journey across the rooftops of Gran Canaria.

And when filming Way Back Home, he performed and filmed all over Scotland and at the time had a look at the Oban monument. Danny said: 'I actually had my eye on that [McCaig's Tower] when filming Way Back Home - but never got round to it. Maybe some day.'

## Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

### Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s no game; Drumchapel United 2, Under 14s 11. Scoring for Saints were - Aidan MacPhee (3), Aaron McKay (3), Keni Gray (2), Euan Finlay, Jamie Forgrieve and Daniel Sloss. Under 15s v Loch Lomond, postponed; Under 16s no game; Milngavie 2, Under 19s 1. Saints goalscorer was Inny MacColl.

Next weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v West Park United; Under 14s v Westerton; Under 15s v Ardencaple; Under 16s v Port Glasgow; Under 19s no game.

# MARTIAL ARTS

WITH IAIN RODGER

### Kyokushinkai Karate

THE KYOKUSHINKAI classes started back after a two-week break on the January 7. With the upcoming Scottish Open Knockdown Championships on February 27 in Glasgow, it was straight back into the hard work and preparation.

The Caledonia clubs have seven fighters entered in this event which is growing by the year. The event has fighters entered from eight different countries and 15 different associations and has become very popular as the first knockdown event each year.

The tournament is a truly open event which any fighter from any organisation can enter (many karate tournaments are only open to members of certain groups) and so the winners in each category can confidently call themselves the Scottish Open Knockdown Champion.

Club Instructor Iain Rodger is running a knockdown karate training course on Saturday February 13 which is open to anyone from any style or association. The course covers fighting fitness, strength, conditioning and knockdown skills.

For course or club details contact Iain Rodger on: iain@ikku.co.uk or 07584 166542.

### BJJ/MMA

OBAN BJJ held its first seminar of 2016 on Saturday January 16, which covered submissions from side control. The Monday classes continue to develop fundamentals of BJJ while Tuesday classes are back to doing Mixed Martial Arts. Thursday night's class in Atlantis is 'no gi' rolling. Friday evenings at the Oban Martial Arts Centre is children's BJJ at 6pm followed by 'Open Mat' for adults from 7pm - 8pm. For club details contact Coogie Potter on: coogiepots@gmail.com

### Shukokai Karate

ARGYLL Martial Arts (incorporating Argyll Shukokai) classes continue with coaches Kenny Gray, Flo McBurnie, Andrew Lawson and Andrew Buchanan passing on their knowledge to the students. For club details contact Kenny Gray: kenni.gray@btinternet.com

### Kickboxing

THE SENSHI Do Kickboxing classes continue to flourish with club coach Wullie Rodger putting everyone through their paces on Wednesdays and Sundays. The club has one fighter entered in the Scottish Open Knockdown tournament on February 27 in Glasgow.

Sharon Dickison's ladies only class is proving popular and anyone thinking of trying this out should contact Sharon on 07508 726334.

For Kickboxing club general enquiries contact Wullie Rodger on: shihanwill@gmail.com



Members of Oban BJJ/MMA are put through their paces at a seminar held last Saturday.



Mateusz Grabiec and Jarek Cimuszuk were among those practising their moves at the seminar.



Lee Williamson and David Brown, front, and Blake Brown, white suit at the back at the Oban BJJ seminar.

# Oban Filling Station Cup fever grips Oban Pool League

LAST Thursday evening the remaining eight sides entered their respective Oban Filling Station Knock-Out Cup quarter-final match-ups full of optimism.

As last orders were called the obligatory cup heartache and disenchantment had consumed the four losers who joined The Wide Mouthed Frog and Gluepot, whom had previously exited the competition.

The glamour of the cup is the perfect tonic to break-up the monotony of the league championship and with the title challengers looking almost preordained, provides the only realistic chance for those on the periphery of lifting silverware. However, with the top four sides currently in the table remarkably avoiding each other, there was a sense of inevitability prior to commencement, with most coupons suitably forecast.

Indisputably the tie of the round, league pacesetters The

Lancaster A were paired against their 'Theatre Of Dreams' compatriots The Lancaster B, looking for their rich vein of form to continue. To date The Lancaster A have blazed a trail of destruction, literally dissecting their opponents and leaving nothing other than dismembered carcasses behind them. Unless sympathetic to the plight of their junior comrades, The Lancaster A looked like adding another edition to the growing list of victims.

A combination of the jovial atmosphere, a heterogeneous start from the favourites and some inspired pool from the unfancied Lancaster B, saw the latter take the early initiative. Finding themselves a couple of games to the good and unexpectedly flirting with qualification, albeit briefly, The Lancaster B regrettably saw the playful nature of the match predictably change.

The Lancaster A response was imminent and annihilating as the

executioners of excellence simply showcased their irrefutable talent which has slain all before them and ran out comfortable winners. This was the second time the Lancaster B had felt the wrath of their cohabitants this season and will not take much solace from the fact their paths will cross again on league duty within the next few weeks.

The David and Goliath fixture of the round was undoubtedly The Outreach welcoming OFS Cup holders The Lochavullin's Cellar into 'The Pool Pit'. Without being disrespectful to The Outreach, with Storm Imogen on the horizon a sighting of Noah's Ark beyond Kerrera was a more plausible biblical story re-enactment than that of the aforementioned.

Despite the pleasantries the visitors were all business and simply stalked their less experienced opponents from the offset, praying on the mistakes

and clinically dispatching the plentiful opportunities. The Lochavullin's Cellar might not of marched on two by two but they clinched their spot in the semi-final just about in time for the mid-break delicacies and had the luxury of relaxingly scouting upcoming league opponents Lancaster A.

The Lochnell were back in Combie Street again; on this occasion they were the strong favourites, as The Lochavullin themselves provided the hospitality. Some of North Connell's finest had to atone for the previous week's behaviour prior to the opening lag, but their performance was far less apologetic.

Romping all the early doubles allowed for a couple of big name casualties in the singles section before easing themselves into the hat for the semi-final draw.

A satisfactory performance from The Lochnell in terms of their professionalism, who will

be looking to string together another sequence of victories as they challenge on all fronts.

With the top trio entered into the upcoming draw, all that was left was for Markie Dans A to conclude the line-up.

Markie Dans B was all that stood between, but if they were under any illusion that their Corran Esplanade companions were going to concede their own ambitions, they were mistaken.

After inheriting Markie Dans A status from the previous disbanded outfit, the former B team left behind some players that they deemed surplus to requirements.

Now those players form the nucleus of the new Markie Dans B, solely motivated in proving their exclusion by the prima donnas was folly on their behalf.

Bar staff remained impartial throughout the evening as the players lubricated their throats numerous times as cup fever gripped the establishment. In

### Pool

their prelude league encounter honours were even, much to the dismay of Markie Dans A who let a healthy lead slip away; how they would have wished to have been in the same position.

Fleetingly aligned at four games a piece after winning the previous couple of singles, Markie Dans A had no answer for a purposeful Markie Dans B, who reeled off the required three games to win for many their own cup final.

Results: OFS Cup Quarter Finals - Markie Dans B 7-4 Markie Dans A; Lancaster A 7-3 Lancaster B; Outreach 0-7 Lochavullin's Cellar; Lochavullin 2-7 Lochnell.

Fixture February 11 2016 - Lochavullin's Cellar v Lancaster A; Outreach v Markie Dans A; Gluepot v Lochnell; Markie Dans B v Wide Mouthed Frog; Lancaster B v Lochavullin.

# Rally time trials to return to Fishnish Forest after 12 years

MULL Car Club have announced that the Rally Time Trial will return to Fishnish Forest this year, after a break from the wooded area of nearly 12 years.

The trial will take place on Saturday March 12 and will cost £150 to enter, with a limit of 40 entries.

Drivers will get a minimum of four and a maximum of six attempts at the course, which is 1.7 miles in length and has a series of technical aspects.

The event is driver only, but two people are allowed to share one car.

John Clayton, clerk of the

course, said: 'Because we are using forest land we have to pay a considerable sum so to make it viable we will need many small sponsors to help and they will be advertised in all our paperwork and obviously the more competitors we have the easier this burden becomes.'

Close proximity 'With Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) in place the cost of getting here is significantly reduced and also with the close proximity of both ferries it will be possible to turn up on the first ferries, compete on the event and leave getting home the same day with

### Rallying

no need for overnight accommodation.

'For those who wish to stay over the Saturday night is the car club's annual dinner dance at the Isle of Mull Hotel which has now become a 'not to miss event' for motorsport friends from near and far, so why not bring a car with you and make a great day of it.'

For more information, visit: www.mullcarclub.co.uk or phone 07765480045 or 07796281379 to purchase tickets.



Forest time trials return to Mull on Saturday March 12.

# SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £2000

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

J McNulty  
Ardtornish  
Tayvallich

I May  
Pulpit Drive  
Oban

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

### Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

### Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

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## City slickers no match as Saints progress to last 16 of Scottish Cup

<b>Stirling City</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Oban Saints</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Scottish Cup - 6th Round</b>	

OBAN Saints marched into the last 16 of the Scottish Amateur Cup with a convincing win over Central Scottish Amateur Football League side Stirling City last Saturday afternoon.

The match was played at Kings Park in the shadow of Stirling Castle on a grass park which started out soft and deteriorated steadily under the incessant rain.

Manager Alex Craik's run of good fortune in being able to name the same squad for consecutive fixtures ran out with Ross Maitland's non-availability due to family commitments forcing a reshuffle in the starting line-up.

Allan Mackay kept his place after an impressive showing against New Farm Loch in the West of Scotland Cup with Dean Smith getting the nod to replace Ross Maitland on the right of the front three.

Saints started well playing some great football and had the home side pinned back in their own half straight from the kick off.

The visitors made the deserved breakthrough in the ninth minute after Mackay won a corner kick on the Saints right.

Scott Maitland's in-swinger was headed clear but returned immediately by Paul Kerr picking out Dean Smith on the right who was brought down by Harry Prescott giving Saints another dead ball opportunity.

Scott Maitland's delivery was excellent and Craig MacEwan forced his way in between Lewis McKinlay and Mark Donnelly on the six-yard line to power a downward header past Ross Graham.

City had their first real sight of goal in the 24th minute with Scott Younger making a good run into the box past Dougal Graham

and picking out Donnelly at the back for a powerful header which Thomas McCulloch saved well.

Saints immediately broke up field with MacEwan making a terrific run on the right hitting the bye-line and cutting the ball back for Donald Campbell to tap in from two yards to double Saints' advantage.

On the half-hour mark Saints survived a penalty appeal when Scott Younger got in behind the Saints back four and went down under a challenge from McCulloch.

The big Saints keeper was grateful to receive the benefit of the doubt with referee Dennis Cotterhill ruling that McCulloch had fairly beaten his man to the ball.

### Interception

The visitors carved open the City defence again in the 42nd minute and only a desperate last gasp sliding interception from Danny MacDonald prevented Scott Maitland from adding to the scoring.

Referee Cotterhill brought the half to an end and, unusually for this level of football, both sides retired to the dressing rooms for a 10-minute interval giving the bedraggled spectators the chance to seek out some shelter of their own.

City kicked off the second half in a more determined fashion keeping the visitors in their own half but without threatening the Saints defence.

MacEwan's afternoon came to a premature end when the heavy going finally took its toll on his niggling calf injury.

MacEwan's departure signalled a change of formation for Saints with substitute Willie Gemmell joining Campbell, Kerr and Maitland in the middle of the park leaving Mackay and Smith up front.

In the 59th minute Campbell



Craig MacEwan, No 8, heads the ball home to open the scoring for Saints in their Scottish Cup tie. Photo and match report: Derek Black

sent Smith tearing down the right wing again this time winning a throw in level with the penalty spot.

Gemmell's long throw was flicked on by Mackay and hooked goalwards by David McArthur, who couldn't believe his luck when McKinlay somehow managed to get back to clear the ball off the line just inside the far post.

The slippery conditions were making things difficult for both sets of players but certainly added to the old fashioned cup tie atmosphere.

In the 69th minute Campbell made a good run evading several lunging challenges before slipping a low left foot shot inches wide of the base of the keeper's right hand post.

City continued to press high up the park leaving space behind for Saints to break into. In the 72nd minute Smith sent Campbell racing through the inside right channel where he was headed off by Danny MacDonald.

Campbell refused to give up and closed down and dispos-

essed the tall central defender laying the ball back to McArthur who swung in a right foot cross which deceived everybody and hit the far post.

With 15 minutes remaining Dene Cassells replaced Smith up front with Dene's fresh legs immediately looking a threat to City's high defensive line.

### Counter attacks

With the clock ticking down, City pushed central defender MacDonald up front but the Saints defence stood firm paving the way for a wave of counter attacks.

McArthur led another charge up the right wing and picked out Gemmell's run through the inside right channel with Gemmell's low shot clipping the outside of the Ross Graham's left hand post with the big keeper rooted to the spot.

In the 79th minute Graham was on his toes to pull off an excellent save from Mackay at the back post after he had peeled away from McKinlay to volley a McArthur right wing cross net bound.

Saints profligacy in front of goal

was punished in the 81st minute when MacDonald volleyed home from the edge of the Saints box finding the bottom corner after Saints had only partially cleared another lofted long ball from Stuart White.

City's hopes of forcing an equaliser were short lived and within three minutes Saints restored their two-goal advantage.

Campbell picked out another surging run from Cassells, who powered into the box and fired a shot across the goalkeeper which the unfortunate Bryan White slid in and turned into his own net.

Manager Craik made his final change sending on Keith Millar to replace Mackay leaving Saints to complete the match with a very unfamiliar front pairing of Cassells and Keith Millar.

The unlikely lads combined to complete the scoring in the 88th minute.

Cassells closed down City skipper McKinlay and played in Millar racing through the inside left channel.

With just the keeper to beat Millar calmly slotted the ball

inside the keeper's right hand post making the final score 4 - 1 to Saints.

Manager Craik was delighted with the performance.

He said: 'We played some great football. I thought we knocked the ball about well on a difficult surface. Special mention though must go to the defence who hardly put a foot wrong all afternoon.'

Saints now turn their attention back to West of Scotland Amateur Cup duty for the visit to Oban next Saturday of runaway Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division leaders Colville Park, who remain unbeaten this season.

The Motherwell side, reckoned to be the best amateur team in the country, have the former Dumbarton, Clyde, Cowdenbeath and Albion Rovers striker Liam Cusack in their ranks along with several other players with top junior and senior experience so this will be a real test for Saints on Saturday.

The game will kick-off at 1.30pm with referee Kevin Nolan in charge.

## Scottish Amateur Football League results and fixtures

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup, 5th round - Stirling City 1, Oban Saints 4; Premier Division - Campbeltown Pupils v Goldenhill, postponed; Premier Division One - Dunoon 3, Motherwell Thistle 3; Neilston v Lochgilhead Red Star, postponed; Premier Division Two - Tarbert v Rosehill Star, postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup, 5th round - Oban Saints v Colville Park; Jimmy Marshall Cup, 2nd round - Drumchapel Amateur Colts v Campbeltown Pupils; Motherwell Thistle v Dunoon; Coronation Cup, 1st round - Port Glasgow v Dunoon Athletic; Premier Division One - Busby v Lochgilhead Red Star.

## Oban high pupils do well at Scottish championships

FOUR Oban High School pupils recently competed at the Scottish schools indoor championships at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow.

Ben Coates from Kilmore won a silver medal for second place in the O/16s 60 metres hurdles with a time of 8.36 seconds with the winner fractionally ahead in 8.32. Ben ran 8.32 in his qualifying heat.

Finbar Dunne was placed fourth in the U/16s shot putt throwing 12.34 metres.

Sisters Emma and Grace Thompson also competed with Emma clearing 1.51m in the O/16s high jump for ninth place and Grace was in the U/16s high jump [1.41m] and shot putt [8.05m].

## Indoor athletics across Argyll

A SERIES of Sportshall athletics competitions are set to take place across Argyll this winter.

The next event will be on Mull on February 13 at Tobermory High School starting at 10.30am.

The date for the Kintyre competition hasn't been confirmed, but it is hoped it will take place on February 27 at Campbeltown Grammar School.

The Oban area event will be held at Atlantis Leisure on Sunday March 20.

Each participant will receive a medal and additional awards will be handed out to the overall winner in each age group - under 7 years, under 9, under 11, under 13, under 15 and under 17. There will be an entry fee of £2 per competitor.

Qualifiers from the local area competitions will be invited to take part in the Argyll Final in Oban on Sunday March 20.

## Oban Lorne get back in action

OBAN Lorne will hope the weather relents to allow their home game against bottom of the table Garnock to take place at Glenruitten on Saturday. Kick-off is 2pm.

Argyll and Bute are also in action when they play host to Glasgow East. Game likely to be at Connel with a 2pm kick-off.



Daniel Cameron slots home Oban Camanachd's second goal in a 5-0 win over Inveraray in a pre-season friendly match held at the Oban community all-weather pitch. Photo: Kevin McGlynn

## Oban Camanachd prepare for new shinty season with friendly win over Inveraray

OBAN Camanachd began preparations for Season 2016 with a game against Inveraray played on the all-weather pitch at Oban High School.

Because the pitch is primarily for football, the teams were reduced to 10-a-side and the game was split into three half-hour sessions.

In the first session Camanachd took the lead through Andrew 'Papa' MacCuish.

Inveraray, who will play in National Division One next season, were proving to be a stern test for the Premiership side, who scored a second goal through Scottish internationalist Daniel Cameron to give the home side a 2-0 lead after the first session.

The second period proved to be much more even with a Lorne Dickie goal separating the sides.

With regulars Scott MacKillop and Gary MacKerracher unavailable, the defensive trio of Gary Lord, James MacMillan and Ross MacMillan looked solid at the back especially youngster MacMillan, who was outstanding.

In the third and final session two further goals from Daniel Cameron completed the scoring with youngsters Connor Howe and Daniel MacVicar showing much promise in the link-up play leading to the goals. Manager Ian Hay was pleased with the work-out as the season looms although they were missing a few regulars.

### Shinty

The team played well and the display of Connor Howe, Daniel MacVicar and Ross MacMillan in particular means competition for places in what will be an interesting season ahead. The refereeing duties for the three sessions were shared by Ian Hay and David 'Bingo' Robertson.

Next week Oban Camanachd head to Lochaber to take on Kilmallie, who themselves missed out on a Premiership spot losing to Kingussie in a play-off.

This will be a stern test for the Oban side as Kilmallie are favourites to win National Division One and return to shinty's top flight. Manager Ian Hay should have a full squad to pick from and training sessions continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays as the countdown to the shinty season continues.

Camanachd face a tough start in the Marine Harvest Premiership with games against MacTavish Cup winners Glenurquart followed by Celtic Cup winners Kyles Athletic at home and then newly promoted Skye Camanachd at Portree as the Oban club aims for a positive start to the season.

Reserve side Lochside Rovers are also in action on Saturday when they take on Lochaber at Ganavan.

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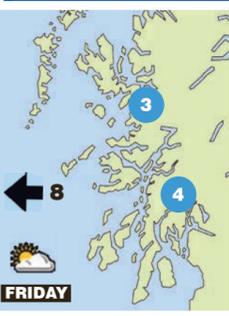
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**WEATHER**

**Thursday** Cloudy  
Winds light easterly  
Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.

**Friday** Sunny intervals  
Winds light easterly  
Temperatures -1°C to 4°C.

**Weekend Outlook** Cloudy on Saturday  
Cloudy on Sunday  
Winds moderate easterly  
Temperatures -1°C to 4°C.



**Stop Press:** New pontoons recently installed by North West Marine at Kyle Lochboisdale for visiting yachts

**TIDAL INFORMATION**  
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 11, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	01.23 0.4 07.27 4.2 13.50 0.5 19.35 3.9	
Fri	02.05 0.4 08.06 4.0 14.32 0.6 20.15 3.5	
Sat	02.51 0.6 08.49 3.8 15.18 0.8 20.58 1.2	
Sun	03.40 0.8 09.36 3.5 16.10 1.1 21.47 3.3	
Mon	04.38 1.1 10.35 3.2 17.10 1.3 22.49 3.0	
Tues	05.46 1.4 12.11 3.0 18.19 1.5 *** **	
Wed	06.25 2.9 07.06 1.5 14.05 3.0 19.35 1.6	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

**Ferry Crossings/Sea States**

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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# Fare price hike prompts call for bridge to replace ferry crossing

**CAREN MCPATE**  
 fort@obantimes.co.uk

A BRIDGE should be built to replace the Corran ferry, residents and a councillor have said.  
 The views were expressed following a decision to increase the fares for the crossing by two per cent.  
 It's the fourth hike in less than two years as Highland council, operators of the ferry

connecting the Ardnamurchan peninsula to mainland Lochaber, try to balance the books.  
 The council's capital programme contains an allowance of £8 million for a replacement boat in 2022/23.  
 However, Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor Brian Murphy believes the money could be better spent.  
 He said: 'There has been a long-held aspiration in Ardnamurchan for a bridge. I think it

deserves a more detailed and complete report.  
 'We need to look at the whole life cost of a bridge as against ferries and replacement ferries in the next 80 to 100 years.  
 'It cost £2.9m in 2001 and will be £8m in 2022/23, and I think it could be £10m.  
 'I think we need to look very seriously at a bridge. That to me is the way forward for the Corran ferry. Get rid of it and build a bridge.'

Pedestrians, cyclists and disabled drivers receive a free service on the ferry.  
 The fare increase means a single journey will rise from £8 to £8.16 from April 1. A book of 30 tickets is also currently available for £71.  
 Campaign group Free Crossing for Corran (FC Corran) has fought against fare rises and has appealed to the local authority to look at other ways to balance the books, resulting

in a meeting in May last year. Tony Boyd, chairman of FC Corran, said: 'We've not happy about the fare increase, but it didn't come as a massive shock.  
 'There needs to be a bridge. People have to make the crossing to go about their business.  
 'A fixed link would open up the area and make it far more enterprising.  
 'We need to keep the pressure on our local members as this is not going away.'

A report before Highland Council's community services committee said: 'Further work is required to assess the whole life costs of a new fixed crossing against a replacement ferry vessel and the council will work with HITRANS to secure funding for a more detailed study into future options.  
 'Further work on the introduction of more flexible fares and ticketing hardware will also be carried out.'

### TIMESLINE

#### Break-in leaves house damaged

AN EMPTY house in Glen Etive has been broken into and damaged.  
 The incident took place between 3pm on Friday February 5 and 10.30am the following morning.  
 Meanwhile, a window of a house in Blar Mhor Road, Caol, was smashed at around 1.10am on Sunday February 7.

#### Fence work closes single lane of A82

WORK to erect a 600m fence along the A82 trunk road at Primrose Bay, a mile north of Alt Sigh, begins on Monday February 15 until late March.  
 A single lane will be closed Monday to Friday, with traffic lights removed at the end of each working day.  
 Forest Enterprise Scotland's A82 Project apologises for this and further disruption, when it begins felling mature trees on the hillside above the fence later this year.

#### Ladders snatched from Free Church

THIEVES stole a set of extending aluminium ladders from the Free Church in Kilmallie Road, Caol.  
 The theft took place between 9pm on February 3 and 8am the following day.  
 Anyone with information should contact police on 101.

#### New restaurant at Inverloch Castle

TOP CHEFS Albert Roux, his son Michel Roux Junior and Michel's daughter Emily are to open a new restaurant at Inverloch Castle near Fort William later this month.

### Lochaber job fears in meeting spotlight

THE SCOTTISH Government called a meeting in Lochaber on Tuesday following news of potential job cuts in the area.  
 Minister for business, energy and tourism Fergus Ewing MSP met with the Highland Council leader, chief executive, senior officers, local councillors and representatives of the local business community and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.  
 Rio Tinto Alcan, which employs 170 people, is carrying out a review of its assets in Lochaber and Marine Harvest Scotland, which has plants in Fort William and Mallaig, is cutting 100 jobs.  
 Council leader Margaret Davidson said: 'The meeting was positive, with good engagement across partners and the community.'  
 Director of development and infrastructure Stuart Black added: 'Highland Council is keen to hear local concerns regarding employment and to further support the Lochaber economy.'



The groups were presented with certificates to thank them for their hard work on Fort William's war memorial.

## Fort groups recognised for war memorial work

THE HARD work of community groups to prepare the Fort William war memorial for the Legion Scotland Best Kept War Memorial competition 2015 has been recognised.

The town's memorial was judged as being the best in its category within the Highlands and Islands region.  
 To mark the achievement of Highland Council's Fort William community works

team, Fort William Town Team and the local branch of Legion Scotland, a ceremony was held this week. Certificates were presented by Danny Munro, president of the local branch, to each of the groups involved.

Prior to the presentation, Kevin Lane, branch chairman said: 'We were fortunate to have the full backing of the council in championing the preparation of the memorial. The community works team

provided the manpower and the expertise to prepare the fabric of the memorial and Fort William Town Team played a pivotal role in completely remodelling the flower bed adjacent to it.'



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### Community councils can still make a difference

IT IS better to have a community council than not. That is the view of a Spean Bridge resident.  
 John Fotheringham, chairman of Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council, spoke in a personal capacity about the recent resignation of Fort William Community Council.

Every member of the group stepped down last month saying they were 'tired of being ignored' by Highland Council.  
 The same members have formed a new group, Fort William First.  
 Speaking at his own community council meeting on Tuesday, Mr Fotheringham said: 'The decision seems counter productive. We have had disagreements

with councillors and Highland Council. It's not perfect and you get upset from time to time, but you're better in than out. You can have an influence.  
 'Fort William Community Council got more than anyone else, such as housing. We need housing for Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge. They seem to have had a crisis of identity. Good luck to them.'

### Tourist attraction toilets a possibility

A FEASIBILITY study into building new toilets next to a major Spean Bridge tourist attraction is to get under way.  
 Each year thousands of people visit the bronze statue and garden of remembrance at the Commando Memorial, a mile outside of the village.  
 Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council applied for funding for the study.

### Encourage sailors to use harbours

A PLEA to encourage yacht and pleasure boat owners to make greater use of Highland harbours has been made by a councillor.  
 Addressing members of the Highland Council's community services committee, Tain councillor Jamie Stone welcomed the council's commitment to increased spending on harbours, but added they should be vigorously marketed to potential users.

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Councillor Thomas MacLennan, centre, looks at the new plans for Tweeddale with principal housing officer Morag Cameron, Robertson project manager Malcolm Sinclair, senior architectural technician Iain Robertson, and Robertson's plant operator Tony Pinder. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## Work starts on new £2.9m Fort housing development

A £2.9 MILLION development is under way to build much-needed new homes in Fort William.

The Tweeddale site in the town centre has lain empty for some time and will be transformed into 22 flats for rent by Highland Council by January next year.

It's one of several housing projects planned for the town and brings the amount invested in Fort William over the last five years to £40m.

Leader of the Lochaber Committee Councillor Thomas MacLennan said: 'These are tough financial times for local government, but when you see the list of projects, it highlights just how much is being invested in our area.'

'This important investment comes at what is a most difficult time for the region with a fragile job market and economic uncertainty for many.'

He added: 'We also recog-

nise that the town pier needs investment and we need to create opportunities to attract more marine tourism which will help drive Fort William forward.'

Further housing developments include:

- 21 new build flats for Lochaber Housing Association at Upper Achintore in a £2.5m project due to start next month.

- £1.2m to build 10 new houses for rent by Lochaber Housing Association at Lochyside, to be completed in May this year.

- The demolition of the existing buildings at the former Whisky Shop on High Street site to provide 10 flats for council rent. The work, which is yet to be tendered for, is due to start in August 2016.

This year will also see work on the new council offices and civic hub at the former Fort William Secondary School.

# Skye's Ally K on the run in marathon charity challenge

CAREN MCPATE  
fort@obantimes.co.uk

A KIND-HEARTED dad is gearing up to run 120 miles in just under 35 hours to raise money and awareness for a charity close to his heart.

Alistair Macpherson will attempt to run non-stop all the way from his home town of Portree on the Isle of Skye to the capital of the Highlands in Inverness.

Alistair (known locally as Ally K) is no stranger to long distance endurance events after running around Skye in 2014 and raised an impressive £35,000 for Cancer Research UK.

For his latest challenge, the 37-year-old is running to raise cash for Maggie's Highlands, the charity that provides free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer and their family and friends from across the Highlands and islands.

Alistair has lost family members to cancer and wants to support charities fighting against the disease.

He said: 'After the success of Run Skye I wanted to get the old team back together.'

'I was approached by Maggie's Highlands to help it to raise funds and awareness of the centre in Inverness and I said yes pretty much straight away.'

Alistair, who is a second steward on ferry company



Alistair in training for the 120-mile run.

CalMac's MV Finlaggan, isn't getting complacent though, despite having already conquered 120 miles worth of running.

He added: 'This is a completely new challenge and unlike Run Skye I will have to run through two evenings which I have never done before. 'This adds an extra mental challenge but I am confident I can draw strength from the fact I have a superb support team with me with a lot of experience.'

The run starts at midnight in Portree square on Wednesday April 6. Alistair's route will take him over the steep climb on the back road into Inverness through to Garve where he will eventually run through Muir of Ord and Dingwall before finishing at Maggie's Highlands at 9am on Friday 8.

Asked how he thought the event would go Alistair responded: 'Anything can happen in running, especially when you are on your feet for so long. That's part of the challenge and what makes it such a great adventure. I have the right people with me and I will be drawing on my own experience to ensure I put in a good performance.'

To follow Alistair's progress, visit [www.skyetomaggies.com](http://www.skyetomaggies.com) or [www.facebook.com/skyetomaggies](http://www.facebook.com/skyetomaggies). Donations can be made via the event Justgiving page at [www.justgiving.com/skyetomaggies](http://www.justgiving.com/skyetomaggies).

## TIMESLINE

### Bike owner urged to come forward

A MAN who found a mountain bike in hedges in a Fort William park wants to reunite it with its owner.

Mark McGugan came across the bike in September last year in the park, near Alma Road, and reported it to the police.

However, no-one has come forward to claim it. Contact Mark on 07949 233137.

### Fight for towing vessel continues

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar is to continue the case, along with colleagues in neighbouring councils, for an Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV) to be based in west coast waters.

After the eighth storm of the season, Henry, battered Scotland recently, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency invited stakeholders to a meeting yesterday (Wednesday) to discuss the future of ETV provision in the UK.

### Climbers' lucky escape from peak

CLIMBERS had a lucky escape after they triggered an avalanche on Staghorn, Creag Meagaidh, Lochaber.

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team members were called to the scene where one of the men was swept 300 metres over crags last Saturday afternoon. He was airlifted and taken to Belford Hospital in Fort William.

The lead climber managed to climb down to the foot of the route and was picked up by team members and walked out.

### Relax and enjoy a candlelit swim

ANYONE looking for something different and relaxing to do this Valentine's Day can enjoy an evening candlelit swim.

Mallaig and District Swimming Pool is holding the swim on Sunday between 5.30pm-7.30pm.

Anyone wanting to attend must be aged over 14. Contact the centre on 01687 462 229.

### Relatives urged to consider staff

PEOPLE with relatives in Raigmor Hospital, Inverness, are being asked to consider staff when calling wards enquiring after patients.

Staff are asking that only one relative calls in. That person can then pass on any information to the wider family.

## Parking enforcement switch over

THE HIGHLAND Council is preparing for the implementation of a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Scheme this year.

Remedial works have started, including sign and road markings being replaced across the council area. The taking over of parking enforcement by the council follows the withdrawal of the traffic warden service by Police Scotland.

The implementation of DPE will aid traffic management of Inverness and towns across the Highlands, reducing congestion and emissions and allowing Highland Council to target enforcement.

A new enforcement team will include a minimum of 11 parking enforcement officers and two parking attendants, providing a seven-day service.



## Pupils mark Holocaust Day with assembly

A special open assembly to mark Holocaust Day was held by pupils of Lochyside Primary School.

The day recognises the events of World War Two and current atrocities still taking place. In a programme of stories, poems and songs and prayers researched by the children, the whole school, along with friends and family, recognised the effects of these events on people across the world and remembered them with a minute's silence.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## Residents and group representatives have their say on future Claggan improvements

RESIDENTS and groups came together to have their say on improvements and initiatives for Claggan.

The Claggan Matters community consultation brought together Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL), The Greenfingers Community Garden, Lochaber Environmental Group, Highland Communities

Credit Union and the Highland Council tenant participation officer. Improvements to the play park and community garden and the possibility of starting a tenants' association were among some of the projects discussed. Helen MacGillivray, from VAL's community action team, said: 'The consultation enables closer relationships

between the projects and Claggan. The feedback we got was that people are very enthusiastic and there is a lot of useful information. Each project has different things to go away and work with.'

Anyone who would still like to have a say can go to the VAL office, An Drochaid, Claggan, or call 01397 706044.



Residents are working together to improve Claggan. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

## Tests confirm shells are 8,000 years old

NUTS found during an archaeological dig on Skye were from the hunter-gatherer period more than 8,000 years ago, tests have confirmed.

The hazelnut shells were discovered during the five-day excavation by Staffin Bay in September 2015 when University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) archaeologists investigated a suspected Mesolithic structure, in collaboration with the Staffin Community Trust (SCT).

Radiocarbon dates have now confirmed the excavated lithics date to the mesolithic period, towards the latter half of the 7th millennium BC.

Two fragments of charred hazelnut shell both returned dates of circa 6800-6600 BC (calibrated). The hazelnuts were recovered from soil samples from the lower part of the sequence at the site, suggesting human activity may have occurred over a long period of time.

The north Skye archaeological excavation has yielded a fragment of worked bone, and several thousand flints which could provide a fuller picture of Staffin's hunter-gatherer period.

Dan Lee, archaeology institute UHI, lifelong learning and outreach archaeologist, said: 'We are really pleased to have such convincing mesolithic dates from the site. This hints at the huge potential for additional excavations in the area and presents a great opportunity to understand life in the Staffin area during this period.'

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## Police urge abuse victims to come forward

POLICE are encouraging victims of sexual crimes to report the incidents.

Last week a Lochaber man was sentenced to three years at Fort William Sheriff Court for sexual offences. Detective Inspector Richard Baird, senior investigating officer, said: 'We welcome the conviction and sentence of [this man] who took

advantage of young girls for his own pleasure. He has shown no regard or remorse for his actions and the impact they had on the victims. I want to pay tribute to the victims who assisted us with our enquiry, resulting in [him] being apprehended and brought to justice.'

He added: 'We continue to encourage victims

of sexual crimes to come forward and report to us and to have the confidence that we will take it seriously and thoroughly investigate.'

'Police Scotland is committed to identifying people within our communities who prey on young people and we will use all tools and resources available to protect them and prevent abuse.'

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# Fears for young carers as funding set to be pulled

Independent providers face cash crisis due to cuts

LOUISE GLEN  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A FINANCIAL crisis will see children as young as five deprived of independent support from the award-winning Argyll carer centres if plans to scrap funding goes ahead today (Thursday) at Argyll and Bute Council budget meeting.

Young carers networks in Argyll and Bute support children as young as five who provide care to family members. At the moment more than 200 children access these services.

Children care for family members who may have a physical illness, disability, a mental health condition or have a alcohol or drug misuse problem.

Heart-rending stories of youngsters being taught to inject parents with life-saving medication and of primary children having to go home at lunchtime to make sure their parent has food to eat are all too common in Argyll, say the leaders of the four independent carers' centres in Oban, Lochgilphead, Dunoon and Helensburgh.

Centre managers Morag MacLean from North Argyll and Eileen McCrory from Helensburgh and Lomond will be the worst hit when funding finishes on April 22 and services for more than 180 children come to an end.

In the meantime, charity applications have been rejected because funders have said there is an obligation for the local authority to put cash into the services.

Ironically, while the two

services in North Argyll and Helensburgh and Lomond are at risk of coming to an end, funding has been found for children in Dunoon.

Catherine Paterson, chairwomen of the Argyll Carers Forum, said there would be a cash crisis in caring if independent services such as the carers centres were not funded.

Mrs Paterson is a former teacher who offers counselling support to young carers in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Isles.

She said: 'For every £1 the local authority puts into care services it benefits by the equivalent of £14.60 in the services that we can provide. I am not making up these figures, they are proven. We are the only organisations with time to be alongside those people in a truly non-judgemental way.'

The women point out that while other support services are shrinking, the number of people approaching the centres for support is increasing.

A holistic approach to care is top of their agenda.

Mrs Paterson continued: 'If we are not able to provide support for a young carer there are lots of other issues that come forward.'

'There are no real figures available for how many people care for a member of their family. If a family is coping they don't need help. The cost of that funding is then hidden.'

'People come to us in a crisis. Where will children and adult carers go if we are not here? They certainly won't run to officials for these services to be provided.'

'The gaps in the services will be quite alarming.'

'The children we advocate for are not all in town centres, so coming out to a nighttime meeting or to a club is very difficult. Our geography makes what we provide almost impossible if it wasn't for the way our carers and volunteers make it work.'

'What we do cannot be replicated by social workers or anyone else. We are independent. Carers' health and wellbeing is why I am here.'

Speaking about the young carer services in Oban and Lomond, Eileen McCrory said: 'After April 22 that will be it. No more services. We will do what we can to meet the needs of carers whatever age. But no particular service will be funded.'

'We have applied for funding and the reason we were not successful was because there is a statutory obligation for local authorities to provide for young carers. Charities will not fund things that should be provided. People often think this isn't real. But we work with children who go home to feed mummy at lunchtime, who have to make sure mummy is safe, who help granny to the toilet.'

'People don't want us to think about that - because there is no money to fund anything unless there is a crisis.'

Budget proposals for cuts to voluntary services will go before Argyll and Bute Council today (Thursday).

As part of the cost savings, more than 400 employees in the local authority have asked for redundancy.

## Hogwarts highjinks in Oban



Mull youngsters Eva, nine, and Oscar, five, had great fun at the special Harry Potter Book Night at Waterstone's bookshop in Oban last Thursday evening. For full story and more photographs, turn to page five. 15\_107harrypotter02.

## Family put marina on the market

THE OWNERS of Oban Marina, based on Kerrera, have announced they are to put the business up for sale, writes Louise Glen.

Peter and Katy Weir, from Le-daig, say their age and illness are forcing them to sell the business to someone who can expand and develop it.

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland's head of marine tourism, said the loss of the Weir family to the business 'marks the end of a considerable local effort to sustain and develop the business over several years'.

He continued: 'There have been some challenging circumstances for the owners, whose vision was to enhance Oban's reputation as a leading leisure maritime hub on the west coast of Scotland, and to provide the levels of service and type of facilities expected by today's sailors and boaters.'

'Oban Marina represents an opportunity for new owners to carry the Weir family's vision forward. The growth of marine tourism depends a lot on infrastructure, and the greater the number of places with appropriate facilities the greater the prospect of meeting the growth agenda.'

'The new owners also have an opportunity to build alliances and service partnerships with the Oban business community - making the most of combined local resources, experience and expertise to grow the visitor economy and advance the destination's reputation. I am sure the sale will generate significant interest. I wish the Weir family well.'

Mr Weir said: 'I promise to keep everyone fully informed of future progress and developments. I would personally like to thank all of our customers and friends who have supported us through the years.'

'We have all been through our ups and downs and I hope that the marina continues and finds a buyer who can fulfill its potential.'

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Agenda: THIS WEEK Mike MacKenzie  
Macaulay Cup match report and photos from the 2015 final

Nicola's class set to pay pupils as school visit leaves them on a high

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## Tiree council slams cuts as 'ill-judged'

ARGYLL and Bute Council's proposals to cut costs have been rejected as 'thoughtless, ill-judged and punitive' by Tere Community Council.

Convenor Dr John Holliday declared the island's community councillors had 'difficulty responding in any positive manner' to Argyll and Bute Council's consultation paper Service Choices, 'given both the style and overall presumption within the consultation toward low level service and job cuts'.

The local authority expects its Scottish Government funding to reduce significantly over the next five years and has imposed a target to save £9 million in both 2016/17 and 2017/18, with further future savings, to bridge a funding gap between £21.7 and £26 million. Its online consultation, which closed on December 31, set out its ideas on how money can be saved.

But rejecting all its proposals, Dr Holliday urged the council 'to urgently consider taking a more fundamental look at the way [it] conducts its business, with far greater emphasis and thought around strategic vision, and the longer-term future of the council area than these thoughtless, ill-judged and punitive proposals suggested to us'.

Furthermore, Dr Holliday claimed Tere Community Council was not invited to attend the council's workshops, adding: 'The proposals...appear to be entirely officer-led and do not reflect any serious input from elected members.'

He asked councillors to find a 'more thoughtful and innovative' alternative to the 'ill-conceived Service Choices scenario', advocating the 'sound advice' within the Accounts Commission Best Value Audit 2015.

'Rather than proposals for piecemeal and highly damaging low level cuts,' he argued, 'the council should seriously consider ways in which it can move away from an existing, and highly expensive centralised service, to a far more devolved range of services, where the council genuinely and proactively engages with communities to establish where, and how, services can be more efficiently provided.'

'Tere continues to experience significant population decline,' he concluded, 'with a resultant decrease of economically active residents and a growing propensity towards second home ownership and an increasingly ageing population. Despite investment in high speed broadband, and vastly improved ferry/air links, none of the proposals contained within the 'Service Choices' consultation recognise or take any advantage of these infrastructure investments.'

A report on the consultation findings is due to be read today (February 11) at a council budget meeting.

# Lorn mother backs Yazidi woman's plea to politicians

Iraqi woman tells MPs of her three-month ordeal at the hand of Daesh militants

LOUISE GLEN  
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A CAMPAIGNER from North Lorn has taken her concerns about women living under the Isis regime to Westminster.

Fiona Bennett, HR manager at *The Oban Times*, was in London on Tuesday to introduce a young Yazidi woman to politicians and to potentially meet with Prime Minister David Cameron.

Nadia Murad Basee Taha was among more than 5,000 Yazidi women taken captive when Isis swept through villages in north-eastern Iraq.

She spoke about her horrific experiences at the hands of Isis fighters, who bought and sold her, and women and children like her, as 'sabria' – slaves.

Speaking at Westminster about the need for money to help women in refugee camps, the 21-year-old described the persecution the Yazidi people faced under Isis and described the torture and rape she suffered at the hands of Daesh militants who held her for three months.

Ms Bennett has been instru-



Brendan O'Hara MP with Nadia Murad Basee Taha in Westminster this week, left, and above, Fiona Bennett with Ms Taha.

mental in setting up meetings for Ms Murad Basee Taha at both Westminster and Holyrood.

She said: 'I wanted to raise awareness and funds, but my main objective at the time was to make people aware of what was happening to this tiny minority of people. Genocide.'

Ms Bennett has already raised more than £5,000 for the US charity Yazda, which sends aid to refugees in Iraq, through the

gofundme.com website. The money raised is to be used to provide medical care, sanitary products and psychological help for the victims of sexual violence.

One of the meetings was hosted by Brendan O'Hara MP.

He said: 'Last night I hosted an event in parliament at which one of the bravest and most remarkable people I have ever met addressed a group of MPs and Peers.

and other Daesh strongholds. Nadia has spoken to the United Nations Security Council, US Secretary of State John Kerry and last week the Norwegian parliament. She has also been nominated and seconded for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

'Finally, a huge thanks to Fiona Bennett of Oban who first alerted me to Nadia's story.

'Shortly before Christmas she contacted me as her MP to see what, if anything, we could do together. Within days we were in touch with Nadia and quickly after that we invited her to Westminster. We helped sort out a visa and with the help of the All Party Parliamentary Groups on Religious Freedom and Genocide Prevention and with the support of Change.org we organised last night's very successful meeting.

'For me, that is a wonderful example of people using their MP to make a real and significant change and I thank Fiona for giving me the opportunity to help Nadia and the Yazidi women still currently held captive by Daesh.'

## Broadband issues continue across UK

BROADBAND issues are continuing to blight local communities, and if people don't complain the issues will remain unresolved, says MSP Michael Russell.

Last week's cross-party report from 120 MPs reveals that in spite of £1.7 billion of taxpayers' cash pumped into the construction of UK high-speed broadband, there are still 5.7 million people across Britain who cannot access the internet at the Ofcom benchmark speed of 10 Megabits per second. From a total of 650 UK constituencies, Argyll and Bute and the Western Isles are bottom for average download speed. Michael Russell MSP said: 'The present Highlands and Islands broadband project is now starting to deliver for Argyll and Bute with much better services available.'

## Police apologise for error

IN A police file in *The Oban Times*, January 28, we published an article stating a man had been charged with careless driving following an incident on a CalMac ferry on Saturday January 23.

The information we received from Police Scotland was incorrect. The man was never charged with the offence and Police Scotland apologise for any upset this may have caused.

## Arduaine Gardens stalwart set to kick off muddy boots and retire

THE HEAD gardener at the National Trust for Scotland's Arduaine Gardens near Craobh Haven retires this month after 24 years' service, writes Sandy Neil.

Former civil servant Maurice Wilkins, 67, first dreamed of gardening from his tax office in the Inland Revenue.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I remember looking out the window seeing a man cutting the grass and thinking I'd rather do that than be sitting here.'

In 1971, while working in London at Hampton Court's woodland garden, Mr Wilkins met his wife Sheila, from Glasgow, and moved to Scotland, where he got a job as a gardener at The Palace of Holyroodhouse. He studied at Elmwood rural college in Cupar, Fife, absorbing more horticulture than younger students. He recalled: 'I spent my lunches in the library – they spent their lunches in the pub.'

Mr Wilkins' enthusiasm paid off when he was appointed head gardener at Ross Priory by Loch Lomond, where he stayed for 16 years, and wrote a magazine gardening column, which funded his first plant-hunting trip to Nepal in 1990, closely followed by another in 1994 – to the world's third highest mountain Kangchenjunga.

When the head gardener position came up at Arduaine Gardens in 1991, after brothers Edmund and Harry Wright gifted it to the National Trust for Scotland, Mr Wilkins jumped at the job – and got it, moving his wife and two daughters Emily and Amy to a new house there. Mr Wilkins' first task was to map and extend the plant collection and build up visitor numbers.

'By the mid-1990s we got up to 24,000 [visitors] a year,' he said, 'but then it started to go down very gradually; by 2009 we had just 12,500. The national trust decided to mothball 11 of its prop-



Maurice Wilkins with Jean Ainsley of Arduaine Gardens' support group.

erties – and Arduaine was one, which was pretty shocking. They gave us a year to increase income and reduce expenditure, which we did, and the garden was declared safe. We're now up to 15,500, which seems to be stabilising.'

He said the national trust was again going through a regular exercise to be more financially stable, adding: 'We've got to make and save more money, and increase visitors, but that's on-going. I think the gardens are secure. Gardens are places people come back to: they change by the day.'

Arduaine Gardens, insulated by the sea against extreme temperatures, specialises in tender rhododendrons from afar as Yunnan in China, North Vietnam and Upper Burma.

Mr Wilkins said: 'These are warm,

temperate places, but the plants are very successful here.'

And he offered a word of advice for his successor: 'Gardening at Arduaine is not a job – it's your life. I'm too old and it was getting harder. My job is also changing. The trust can't justify employing both a head gardener and a property manager, so they're a combined position. Sometimes you get bogged down in admin, but that's common.'

'The house we've bought in Oban doesn't have much of a garden. I'm going to enjoy concentrating on a small area. I don't want to give up growing plants, but I'll be looking for people to take them.'

'I'll not give up links with Arduaine and will do anything to help without standing on anyone's toes, but I certainly don't plan to weed in the rain.'

## Watch this white space, says council

COUNCIL watchers will be aware that plans for the White Building on Oban's North Pier have so far come to nothing in spite of at least three public consultations and more than three years of waiting for the project to start.

But the end is in sight, claims Argyll and Bute Council, as new plans have been drawn up and the multi-million pound project for a town centre 'performance space' will be in the hands of councillors within months.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesman told *The Oban Times*: 'Following a legal challenge in January 2015 to the approved design for a new North Pier Maritime Visitor Facility the project was halted to allow for discussions between the council and the objector.'

'The challenge covered a range of issues but was primarily on the basis that the canopy in the original design restricted the objector's access to his business.'

'Discussions led to a provisional

agreement in September 2015, although the objector sadly passed away the following day.'

'The council is currently preparing plans which it believes are in keeping with the spirit of the provisional agreement.'

'These plans will include a range of options, containing similar facilities to the original design and scale, and will be presented to members of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee for consideration in April 2016.'

'The members will then select their preferred design and officers will proceed on that basis, seeking planning permission and amending the existing business case to reflect the new design.'

'Subject to the necessary statutory and members' approvals, and the conclusion of the legal matter, it is anticipated that construction on the new building will begin in the New Year of 2017, with it opening to the public in summer 2017.'

Oban Times newsdesk 01631 568000

## Texas tennis school shows its support for Oban's bid to revamp courts at Atlantis

DAVID MCPHEE  
dmphee@obantimes.co.uk

A TEXAS tennis ranch has spoken out in support of a campaign to upgrade the tennis courts at Atlantis Leisure in Oban.

Newcombe Tennis Ranch has a close connection with the town and every year representatives come and play in West Highland Tennis Week – a tournament held at the Oban courts.

Oban man Gregor Brydon moved to the states and joined the coaching team in Texas.

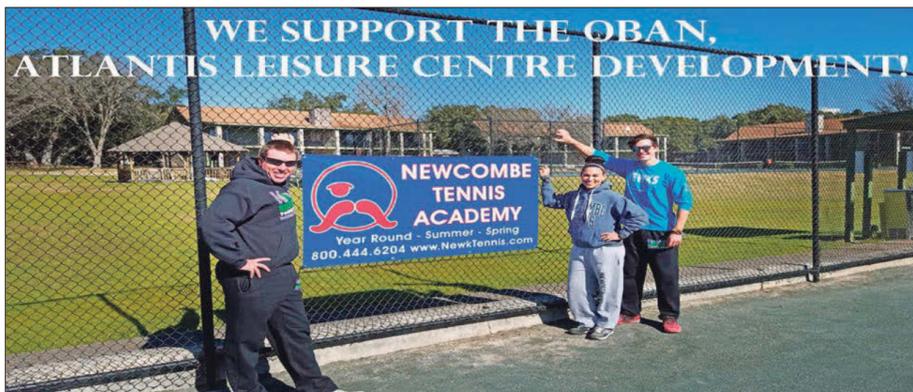
Newcombe head coach Chris Jacques said: 'Newcombe Tennis Ranch has a rich tradition of more than 15 years of bringing American representative teams to the West Highland Tennis tournament.'

'We are always treated so well and the kids get a great opportunity to play in Scotland's finest tournament.'

'One of the Newcombe pros this year is a home-grown Oban original.'

'We love the connection and our tour of Great Britain would not be the same without Oban.'

'We fully support the Oban and



Head coach Chris Jacques, left, coach Esther Delgado and Gregor Brydon from Oban.

Atlantis Leisure Centre development.' Neil Matheson, chairman of Atlantis Leisure, said: 'We are still trying to raise funds. We are getting closer to our target, but it's still a challenge.'

'We are grateful for the support we have received from both organisations and individuals.'

'People are still enthusiastic and we're determined to make it work.'

'Gregor Brydon worked with us in Atlantis Leisure, so he is integrated into the set-up.'

'It's a really good link between Atlantis and Newcombe and it's a link we hope to build on over time.'

Gregor Brydon joined the Newcombe team after becoming an ambassador to the Texas squad.

He joined them in training sessions and on sightseeing tours before Newcombe head coach Chris Jacques suggested that he go to the ranch and join the coaching squad.

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Winners of the Ten Pin Bowling League and the teams who have taken part at their prize giving in the Nevis Centre. Photography: Johnpaul Peebles, Abrightside Photography

## Fort's cup game at Forres falls foul of the weather

### Football

FORT William's Highland League Cup game away to Forres Mechanics was called off last Saturday due to a waterlogged Mosset Park playing surface.

The teams will try again this Saturday to get the cup game played which means the league game against Nairn County, due to be played at Claggan Park on Saturday, will be rescheduled for later in the season.

The winners of the Forres v Fort William game are away to Cove Rangers in the quarter finals of the Highland League Cup.

The Lochaber side are delighted to announce the signing of 21-year-old Richard Tawse.

The central defender featured as a trialist last season against Rothes and Deveronvale, but work commitments restricted his playing time.

As his work shifts have now changed, the former Clach youth-player has put pen to paper on a 12-month deal.

Manager Ally Ewen said: 'We've watched Richard a number of times and there is no doubting his qualities.'

'His is composed on the ball, very good in the air and his distribution is excellent.'

'He is another exciting player, adding real strength and depth to our squad.'

Meanwhile the club are looking for a part-time groundsman to work for a few hours each week at Claggan Park. This will be a paid position.

If anyone is interested please contact Stewart@stewartmac.com for further information.

Tickets, costing £45 each, are on sale for the club's annual sportsman's dinner which will be held on Saturday April 2 at the Moorings Hotel.

This year's guest speakers are former Celtic, Arsenal and Wales star John Hartson and ex-Rangers and Scotland legend Willie Henderson.

## Next race - Black Water Dam

### Athletics

RUNNERS from Lochaber Athletic Club will be pulling on their trainers this Sunday February 14 for the next winter league race.

The Black Water Dam Race (11-12 miles) starts at Ice Factor, Kinlochleven car park.

Registration from 10am, race starts at 11am.

For more information, visit lochaberac.co.uk

## Children's race

### Cycling

THE WEST Highland Wheelers Winter League on February 28 has been changed to Glen Loy and now includes a children's race.

This race is a new line (super muddy). Sign on 9.30am and race starts at 10am. The adults' race route is to be confirmed (to take account of fallen trees) - sign on 10.30am and race starts at 11am.

# Bowled over at the Nevis Centre

AFTER the final week of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats were crowned champions of the scratch division with 68 points followed by The Creeps with 55 points.

Ardtoe & Co were in third place on 49 points followed by Rotavators on 32, British Legion Fort William on 28, Mis Fits on 27 and Council on 22 points.

The handicap division was much closer where The Creeps were champions with 50 points and Ardtoe & Co in second place only three points behind on 47 points. Alleycats were third on 43 points followed by British Legion Fort William on 41, Rotavators on 38, Mis Fits on 36 and Council on 20 points.

The best individual scratch and handicap game of the season came from Tim Attack (Ardtoe & Co) with 213/257.

The top two-game scratch series of the season came from Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 377 and the top two-game scratch series came from Dave Cameron (Council) with 470.

**Rolled**  
The best scratch team game of the season was rolled by Alleycats with 637, who also rolled the top two-game scratch series of 1,258. Ardtoe & Co had the season's top handicap game

of 859 whilst Council had the top two-game handicap series of 1,651.

In the final week the best games were rolled by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with a 199 and 178. Pam swept the board with the top handicap game of 235, the top two-game scratch series of 377 (the season's high) and the top two-game handicap series of 449.

Team wise in the final week Alleycats swept the board with the top scratch

### Ten pin bowling

game of 609, handicap game of 792, two-game scratch series of 1,167 and two game handicap series of 1,533.

The top scratch average for the season went to by Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 157 followed by Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 153 and Ben Weller (The Creeps) on 148.



Members and prizewinners of Spean Bridge Golf Club who attended their AGM and prize giving recently. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## Mathew is Glengarry Player of the Year

GLENGARRY Shinty Club held their Players' Player of the Year 2015 presentation at The Bothy,

Fort Augustus recently where an excellent meal was enjoyed by everyone.

### Shinty

Club president John MacDonald presented the players' choice Mathew Clark with his well-deserved award.

Everyone agreed the club had had a good season, giving Newtonmore an excellent game in the Strathdearn Cup final and finishing runners up in North Division Two.

The juniors also did well with numbers increasing and it was acknowledged it was good to see them feeding into the senior team. This was down to the devotion of coaches, committee and volunteers who work tirelessly for the club. Glengarry are always looking for volunteers so if anyone local has some time to give get in touch with any player or committee member.



Glengarry Shinty Club president John MacDonald with Players' Player of the Year Mathew Clark.

## Skye B win Johnstone Trophy

THE EIGHTEENTH Glengarry Girls five-a-side tournament, sponsored by Ailsa Johnstone, for the Johnstone Trophy took place in the Nevis Centre on Saturday February 6.

Twelve shinty teams took part. Glengarry A and B; Glasgow University; Glasgow Mid Argyll; Dunadd; Skye A and B; Ardnarmurchan; Lochaber A and B; Glen Urquhart and Lovat.

Teams were split into two groups of six. League A was won by Skye B with Lochaber A runners up. League B was very close with

Glasgow Mid Argyll winning and Skye A edging Glengarry A out on goal difference for runners-up slot.

The first semi-final was Skye B versus Skye A. Surprisingly Skye B won through to the final after a very exciting game.

The second semi-final saw GMA race into a 3-0 lead but Lochaber A fought back to make it 3-3 but GMA nicked a last minute winner taking them into the final.

In the final, Skye B were always on top against a very tired GMA

### Women's shinty

side who played the whole tournament without any substitutes.

Despite this, they gave a youthful Skye side a good game with the islanders running out the 2016 winners by three goals to one. Skye B's Rhianna Kirk was the referees' choice for Player of the Tournament.

The girls are indebted to Mrs Johnstone who has sponsored them for 18 years and referees Duncan Kelly and Graham Cameron.



Ailsa Johnstone presents the Johnstone Trophy to Skye 'B' captain Catriona Gibb, with fellow team members, back row from left, Isla Campbell, Sarah Corrigan, Abby MacLean; front from left, Rhianna Kirk, Player of the Tournament, Catriona Kirk and Nicola MacSween. The Skye girls defeated Glasgow Mid Argyll 3-1 in the final. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

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**Friday** Sunny intervals  
Winds light easterly  
Temperatures -1°C to 4°C.

**Weekend Outlook** Cloudy on Saturday  
Cloudy on Sunday  
Winds moderate easterly  
Temperatures -1°C to 4°C.

**FRIDAY**

**TIDAL INFORMATION**  
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 11, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	01.23	0.4	07.27	4.2	13.50	0.5
Fri	02.05	0.4	08.06	4.0	14.32	0.6
Sat	02.51	0.6	08.49	3.8	15.18	0.8
Sun	03.40	0.8	09.36	3.5	16.10	1.1
Mon	04.38	1.1	10.35	3.2	17.10	1.3
Tues	05.46	1.4	12.11	3.0	18.19	1.5
Wed	00.25	2.9	07.06	1.5	14.05	3.0

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		

**Ferry Crossings/Sea States**

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate